

Brookline Solid Waste Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes for October 4, 2016

Submitted by John Dempsey

The meeting took place in the Public Health Building Library at 6:30 P.M.

Committee Members Present: John Dempsey, Cynthia Snow, Clint Richmond, Susan Rittling, Amie Lindenboim, Ed Gilbert (staff)

Absent: Barbara Field

Town officials: DPW Commissioner Andrew Pappastergion, Economic Development Director Kara Brewton, and Precinct 5 TMM Claire Stampfer

Handouts: Agenda, Tonnages and commodity spreadsheets for September, Warrant Articles 25, 26, 5, 6, an explanatory note to SWAC from the petitioners of WA 5 and 6, and an information packet explaining the “Simple Recycling” program

Public Hearing on Warrant Articles 25 and 26 submitted for the November 2016 Special Town Meeting

1) Article 25 proposes that any adoption of a PAYT shall not be effected without the express prior approval of Town Meeting.

Commissioner Pappastergion gave a short account of the public hearings, meetings, votes, and plans that have already occurred in regards to the hybrid PAYT program to begin in the spring of 2017. It included the following:

- Hearings and a vote on Article 17 a nonbinding resolution to establish a waiver system for residents who, because of physical inability, medical conditions, or geographic impediments, need exceptions to the program.
- Hearings and votes of the BOS, the Advisory Committee, and Town Meeting on the DPW budget to purchase the sideloader trucks for hybrid PAYT.
- Public hearings and meetings about PAYT in Spring 2016 including BOS on May 17, DPW Forum on May 18, and Advisory Committee on May 19, 2016.
- The town administrator convened a study group over the winter of 2015-2016 about PAYT that helped to refine the program to include variable rates for variable-sized carts.
- A moderator’s committee met for four years to recommend the hybrid PAYT.

The Town has ordered the trucks and carts that were approved in the budget.

The DPW is working on the waiver /exemptions guidelines asked for in Article 17.

The commissioner will host public meetings – both townwide and in neighborhoods - about the hybrid PAYT and the waiver system before it is implemented.

2) Article 26 proposes that residents cannot be required to use wheeled receptacles for trash or recycling that weigh more than 10 pounds.

- Mr. Pappastergion said that neither program (trash and recycling) could operate without carts that weigh more than 10 lbs. WA 26, if it should pass, would kill the hybrid PAYT and the recycling program. Brookline would have to renegotiate contracts and pay penalties to cancel the trucks.

3) The Committee voted 5-0 to advise the Selectmen to vote “no action” on both warrant articles.

Mr. Dempsey will circulate a draft of a letter advising the Selectmen to take no action.

Discussion and vote on Warrant Articles 5 and 6 submitted for the November 2016 Special Town Meeting

1) Article 5 proposes amendments to expand the current prohibitions on polystyrene take-out containers and packaging and Article 6 proposes amendments to expand the current prohibitions on plastic bags at retail outlets.

Mr. Richmond asked the Committee to help close the loopholes in existing by-laws to further reduce plastic consumption in Brookline by advising the Selectmen to vote in favor of Articles 5 and 6.

- Recycling rates are low or non-existent for plastic products
- Plastic that is recycled is either recycled only once or is downcycled.
- Plastic that is landfilled does not biodegrade.
- Plastic food packaging and plastic bags are a litter problem.
- Plastic that ends up in waterways is dangerous for animals.
- Brookline needs to take responsibility for its share of plastic pollution.
- Plastic has climate impacts.
- The warrant articles will encourage the use of more sustainable alternatives.
- Brookline has a reputation as a leader in these issues.

2) The Committee voted 5-0 to advise the Selectmen to vote “favorable action” on both warrant articles.

Mr. Dempsey will circulate a draft of a letter to the Selectmen with wording such as: We advise the Selectmen to vote favorable action on Warrant Articles 5 and 6 on the grounds of increasing our sustainability and its attendant health, environmental, and solid waste benefits.

DPW Report

Mr. Gilbert reviewed the tonnage spreadsheet and commodity rates. Year-to-date, MSW is down about 100 tons from FY 2017. Some of the prices that Cassella sells our recycling for have improved slightly. (e.g Cardboard sold for \$8/ton more, mixed paper sold for \$11 more per ton, PET sold for \$4.50 more per ton.) We only had to pay \$2000 in September. The market is still volatile but the trend seems better.

Mr. Gilbert reported on the “Simple Recycling” program that he would like to start in March 2017. Simple Recycling is a private curbside collection program for clothing and household discards such as small appliances. The company distributes custom printed recycling collection bags and stickers to each household and then collects at curbside on the regular collection day. The company has its own customer service for residents’ questions and complaints. There is no cost to the Town or to the residents for the program. This would be one way for residents to reduce the amount of weekly waste they throw out for municipal collection.

The Committee asked Mr. Gilbert to invite representatives to the next SWAC meeting – November 1, 2016, at 6:30 PM.

Adjournment: 8:25 P.M.

Next meeting: November 1, 2016