

Brookline Solid Waste Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes for September 8, 2020

Submitted by John Dempsey

Meeting called to order online via Zoom at 6:30 P.M.

Committee members present: John Dempsey (Chair), Deane Coady, Mary Litterst, Kathleen O’Connell, Clint Richmond, Susan Rittling, John Schreffler

Staff: Kevin Johnson, Ed Gilbert, Tom Segear

Minutes from July 14, 2020, meeting were reviewed and approved.

1. DPW Report - Mr. Johnson, Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Segear

• July 2020 report

Solid Waste = 785.13 tons

Recycling = 385.45 tons

The July ACR was \$92.41

• August 2020 report:

Solid Waste = 713.4 tons

Recycling = 351.59 tons

The August ACR was \$92.11 down \$.30 from July

FY2021 Solid Waste = YTD: MSW is up 66 tons from August 2019. Recycling is down 20.2 tons

• Update on apps and website

Mr. Segear reported that there were 3000 widget views on the website. 248 people have downloaded the app. There were 1400 “material” views on the “Waste Wizard” feature. The top “asks” were freezers, couches, monitors/televisions, and “garbage.”

In response to Ms. Litterst’s question, Mr. Segear said that the app is designed so he can make changes easily (as opposed to making changes on the website). He used, as an example, the ability to “create a campaign” like he has done with Black Earth Compost.

• Update on recycling contamination

Mr. Segear reported that Casella conducted several waste audits in August. The results by collection day are below:

Wednesday 8/5/20 5.59%

Tuesday 8/25/20 6.58%

Wednesday 8/26/20 5.71%

Thursday 8/27/20 2.86%

• Update on composting

Mr. Gilbert explained why the Teen Center Drop-Off had to be closed because users were careless about disposing their food waste and the area was attracting rats. The receptacles will

remain the property of the Teen Center. The Teen Center would like to reopen the service if they can find students to run it.

Ms. Coady reported that Black Earth Compost has over 600 subscribers in Brookline.

Mr. Gilbert said DPW would consider plans to have organics drop-off at HHP.

Ms. Coady urged the DPW to be in contact with the school kitchens that are functioning. The assumption is that they are generating food waste that Black Earth Compost could collect. Mr. Gilbert will contact Sasha Palmer and Matt Gillis of the school department.

Mr. Dempsey reported that he spoke with Matt Baronas, Deputy Director of the Housing Authority. He appreciated SWAC reaching out to the public housing community. He said he would think about how the Authority could participate in, fund and manage a composting option for residents.

Mr. Richmond suggested sending information about Black Earth Composting in the quarterly bills (e.g. refuse fee bill).

• Update on HHP Drop-Off

Mr. Gilbert reported that they are getting an average of 35 visits per Tuesday – about the regular number as in normal times.

• Update on cart switching

Mr. Johnson reported that discussions about charging for cart switches was ongoing when the pandemic response shut everything down. They were working on details of when and how people would be allowed to switch – most likely quarterly so they could keep better track of switch requests and resulting charges. Talking with the comptroller.

Mr. Segear said that many of the carts are reaching their “life expectancy.”

• Update on “changeover” enforcement

There were 48 verbal warnings, 41 written warnings, 7 fines, and 5 tons of material collected (mostly furniture, mattresses and metal/electronic items)

Monday, August 31, 2020, was the biggest day.

Mr. Segear theorized that a lot of the furniture had been left over from mid-March when renters left it as they abandoned town. New renters put it on the curb for collection.

Fines (\$300) were given out in clear cases of refuse blocking public ways.

• Update on separating OCC

Mr. Johnson reported that there are no plans to separate OCC from the single stream system. To do so would be entail expensive modifications to the transfer station and the cost of a new bailer. Brookline would have to negotiate with a buyer.

Mr. Richmond opined that we should be doing something – perhaps on the civic campus when business returns to normal. Mr. Dempsey rued that we were not able to be “nimble,” to be able to pivot quickly when market conditions changed (e.g. sudden increased value of corrugated cardboard.)

• Info on regional glass grinding

Mr. Gilbert reported that he has been in touch with MassDEP’s Brooke Nash about glass grinding in Groton and Dennis. He plans to visit the sites to speak directly with those involved.

2. Response from Public Health about encouraging/enforcing sustainability bylaw for takeout restaurants

Mr. Dempsey said that Dr. Jett, Director of Public Health, is calling the shots. Dr. Jett wrote that nothing will change until at least after September 30, 2020. Mr. Dempsey pointed to research reported in several media outlets that there was no danger from handling reusable bags at stores.

3. Solid Waste Master Plan

Mr. Richmond said he would share the comments that he sent in during the winter of 2019-2020. Mr. Dempsey urged members to check pages 10-15 of the Master Plan as those are the sections most relevant to SWAC.

4. Slash Trash Initiative

The “Slash Trash” program is a new effort of Conservation Law Foundation. It is to call attention to waste reduction. Ms. Coady suggested that it be promoted in the Recycling Corner.

Ms. Coady suggested that SWAC ask Kristi Pecci to attend the next meeting and report about waste issues that CLF is working on.

Meeting adjourned at 7:49 P.M.

Next Meeting (virtual): Tuesday, October 6, 2020 at 6:30 P.M.

SWAC Meetings/Minutes Rotation – Updated as of 9/8/20

John D. – 9/20
Kathleen – 10/20
John D. – 11/20
Clint – 12/20
Susan – 1/21
John S. – 2/21
Deane – 3/21
Mary – 4/21