

## City of Philadelphia Solid Waste and Recycling Advisory Committee (SWRAC)

MEETING MINUTES  
July 23, 2020

### ATTENDEES

#### **SWRAC Members:**

Fern Gookin (Co-Chair), Revolution Recovery  
Kelly Offner (Co-Chair), Keep Philadelphia Beautiful  
Bob Anderson, Retrievr  
Chuck Raudenbush, Waste Management  
Jack Embick, Interested Party  
Maurice Sampson II, Clean Water Action  
Paul Kohl, Philadelphia Water Department

#### **Others Present:**

Adam Hendricks, Philadelphia Water Department  
Amy Cornelius, Interested Party  
Andy Shea RNG Energy Solutions  
Daniel Lawson, City of Philadelphia – Parks and Rec  
Elena Fisher, PHL  
Haley Jordan, City of Philadelphia – Office of Sustainability  
Neil Garry, City of Philadelphia – Streets Department  
Laura Cassidy, City of Philadelphia – Department of Prisons  
Kyle Lewis, City of Philadelphia – Streets Department  
Mike Ewall, Interested Party  
Phil Bresee, MSW Consultants  
Peter Karasik, Interested Party  
Scott McGrath, City of Philadelphia – Streets Department  
Kathy Wei, Interested Party  
Maria Horowitz, Philadelphia Water Department  
Winnie Branton, Interested Party  
Terry Keene, Interested Party  
Melissa March, Interested Party  
Logan Welde, Clean Air Council  
Helena Rudoff, City of Philadelphia – Office of Sustainability  
Lynn Robinson, Interested Party

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Called to order by K. Offner at 3:05pm.

- Motion to begin: Bob Anderson
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Paul Kohl

Approval of Minutes from May 21, 2020 SWRAC Meeting.

- Motion to approve: Maurice Sampson
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Bob Anderson

#### **Financial Disclosure Filing – K. Offner**

Reminder that Appointed SWRAC Members must file their City form at:

<https://financial-disclosure.phila.gov/>

### **COVID-19 Updates – K. Lewis**

- Collection Schedule
  - If you live in the City of Philadelphia, collection is behind a few days
  - This issue is not unique to Philadelphia, please be patient with the process
  - Teams are currently handling over an additional day's worth of material each week
  - There are other departments that have been deployed to help catch up with the trash collection, should see improvement by next week
  - Maurice Sampson asked what percent of the workforce has been impacted? Scott McGrath replied that he does not have this information; the percent of the impacted workforce changes day-to-day.
  - Maurice Sampson also asked about the recent solution presented by a Council Member to bring in a third party hauler to assist with the work; is this feasible? Chuck Raudenbush and Scott McGrath commented that this is very unlikely and not actively being considered.
- Budget
  - The budget is in the same place right now, but challenges and opportunities are continuing to unfold

### **Organics Subcommittee Update – P. Kohl**

- Reviewed notes from subcommittee meeting on Tuesday 7/21/20; minutes will be circulated to the group once approved.
- Logan Welde requested a list of Community Compost Program locations; Daniel Lawson shared the link in the group chat: <https://thephiladelphiacitizen.org/foodizen-composting-in-the-city/> In this article, you can find a concise list of the sites if you click on pink box at the top that says "Do Something". Daniel noted that not all sites are open to the public and you should check with each site about their specific program before attempting to drop-off material.
- Laura Cassidy mentioned that composting is at a standstill at the Prisons, but they are still processing pre-COVID waste. They are going to start receiving again from one facility, in a limited capacity.
- Andy Shea updated the group on the proposed RNG project at the former Philadelphia Energy Solutions refinery site. The project is on hold during purchase of facility by HILCO. There will be an article out in the Inquirer soon that will discuss the re-siting of the RNG project; all of the permits will need to be modified for the new proposed location.

### **Office of Sustainability – Zero Waste Updates – H. Jordan / H. Rudoff**

- Haley and Helena's positions have been folded into the Office of Sustainability, work plans are still being finalized
- The Zero Waste and Litter Cabinet subcommittees that are continuing are: Waste Diversion and Reduction, Communications and Engagement
- The Zero Waste and Litter Cabinet subcommittees that are suspended for now are: Data, Behavioral Science, Enforcement
- The City was selected for a Food Matters project through NRDC. The project will take place over 2 years, and will be implementing 3-4 diversion strategies in the

EPA's food waste hierarchy (<https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/food-recovery-hierarchy>). There will be a working group for this under FPAC; the first meeting will be on the calendar soon. If you are interested in joining the meeting and/or learning more information on this NRDC regional initiative, you can complete this doodle poll <https://doodle.com/poll/ggbnmiqveu2d49cg> or you can email Helena ([Helena.rudoff@phila.gov](mailto:Helena.rudoff@phila.gov))

- Had a meeting with Rachel Mednick from the newly formed Philadelphia Task Force for Fashion. They are interested in finding ways to reduce textile waste in the City and would like help getting any data on textile waste generated in the City. You can email Rachel for more information or if you have information to share with her: [r.a.mednick@gmail.com](mailto:r.a.mednick@gmail.com)
- The group discussed the state of the single use plastic ban, which has passed but implementation is on hold. The City delayed implementation until January 2021 with enforcement set to begin in April 2021. This has been further delayed until July 2021. More information can be found at the following links:
  - Regulation (page 14) - <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/PN/Public/btCheck.cfm?txtType=PDF&sessYr=2019&sessInd=0&billBody=H&billTyp=B&billNbr=1083&pn=3865>
  - Reports - <http://paenvironmentdaily.blogspot.com/2020/06/reports-released-on-economic.html>
  - Article - <https://www.penncapital-star.com/energy-environment/legislative-plastic-bag-study-utilized-industry-research-finds-fee-effective/>

### **Pitch & Pilot – K. Lewis**

- Project with Retrievr has been collecting clothing and electronics in Philadelphia since June 8
  - 24% has been electronics, 76% has been clothing
  - Bob Anderson gave up-to-date numbers: about 29,000 total pounds have been collected from about 500 households
  - There has been an encouraging, positive response so far. They are focusing on increasing participation and are starting to work with Amazon to hire influencers to help market the service.
  - Amazon is interested because they started a 'Second Chance' site to start to begin to engage in sustainability; fashion and electronics is just one component and Retrievr is a featured partner on this site
  - More information on Retrievr can be found on their website: <https://retrievr.com/>
- Started working with Metabolic to work on Construction and Demolition waste data and solutions

### **Philadelphia Recycle Office Update – K. Lewis / N. Garry**

- Contamination rates are still hovering in the low 20% range
- City received a grant to reduce contamination rates; more information will be released soon
- Programming focused on reducing contamination in the City will be implemented in the fall

- Recycling has resumed but is still behind schedule; the program is going to continue to have hiccups during COVID-19 times; we need to remain patient as adjustments are made
- Maurice Sampson suggested that messaging is critical right now to set expectations; trust can be hard to repair and we don't want people to stop their recycling habits
- Commercial waste and recycling audits have been challenging during COVID-19 times: no face-to-face interactions are allowed and businesses have other things that need their attention. The audits are on hold for now; the Department wants to support local businesses as best as they can.
- Logan Welde commented that he has seen purchasing from businesses is shift to delivery-based services, which is increasing packaging waste and trash generated by individuals. He asked if there was a plan to handle the increase in this waste. Kyle Lewis responded that it's still hard to know what the long term impacts will be; they need to see how everything is progressing and adjust solutions along the way.
- Maurice Sampson commented that next year the Streets Department will be 100 years old; they are still dealing with many of the same issues using. He noted that the overall system has not changed much despite the ways the waste stream has changed.
- Several people from the group expressed frustration with lack of progress and ambition on addressing waste issues in the City. There was some consensus that it is not the fault of the Streets Department; they are doing as much as they can with limited resources. To see change, it was noted that this needs to be a conversation between Council and the Mayor.
- Logan Welde suggested that a working group form to address some of these issues. Several people expressed interest in doing this. Kelly Offner will follow-up with the group to get interest in forming this ad-hoc working group.
- Maurice Sampson mentioned that a Councilwoman Gilmore Richardson has started several environmental subgroups, including one on waste. This group is by invitation only, with at least a few people in attendance at this meeting in the subgroup. The first meeting is coming up next week and members at the next SWRAC meeting can give an update.
- Lynn Robinson also expressed frustration with the state of recycling in general; she noted that it's very hard to recycle and change bad habits.

### **Municipal Solid Waste Plan – P. Bresee**

- Comments about the plan should be sent to Kyle Lewis or Neil Garry.
- Kyle Lewis responded that the aspirational goals of ZWL are important, but this plan is reflective of capacity and how to handle waste today.
- Phil Bresee presented an update on the plan to the group; slides will be shared with the group.
- Daniel Lawson asked for clarification on a specific figure: has seen 1.0 tons/person/yr generated but this report shows 0.4 tons/person/year. Phil Bresee noted that the 1.0 tons/person/yr is residential plus commercial; 0.4 tons/person/yr is residential only.
- Kelly Offner asked about the waste hierarchy and if WTE is part of the plan; is the plan is to dispose of waste at these facilities for the next 10 yrs? Kyle Lewis responded that the goal is not to landfill materials or use these specific facilities, but this plan outlines the capacity for facilities to handle materials if needed.

- Paul Kohl wanted to discuss differences between types of 'waste to energy', which are sometimes conflated: anaerobic digestion, SpecFUEL (Continuous Materials), incineration are all very different and advocated that they should not be in the same place in the waste hierarchy.
- Amy Cornelius commented that the section that mentions RNG needs to be updated, as does the mention of the Zero Waste and Litter Cabinet that no longer exists. Phil Bresee replied that he is in conversation with the Streets Department about how to incorporate some of these major updates; this may be done in an executive summary.

### **Informational Items, Open Discussion, and Announcements**

- Daniel Lawson mentioned that of the 11 sites selected for the Community Composting program, about half have received and installed their 3-bin systems. Installation was just getting underway and was disrupted when COVID hit.
- Daniel Lawson also mentioned that Parks and Rec is doing a study on ways to extract more value from their wood. And, they have a lot of woodchips right now. If you know someone who needs them and can pick-up (Parks and Rec cannot deliver) they can have them for free, please email [Daniel.Lawson@phila.gov](mailto:Daniel.Lawson@phila.gov) for more information. He also noted that citizens have always been able to pick-up a set amount of materials they produce for free, in smaller quantities.

Called to close by K. Offner at 5:05pm

- Motion to adjourn Maurice Sampson
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Bob Anderson / Paul Kohl

**Next Meeting 09/17/20**