

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

### MEETING MINUTES

May 21, 2020

#### ATTENDEES

##### **SWRAC Members:**

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

##### **Others Present:**

Adam Hendricks, Philadelphia Water Dept.  
Neil Garry, City of Philadelphia-Streets  
Laura Cassidy, Dept. of Prisons  
Tamika Davis, PHL Airport  
Daniel Lawson, Philadelphia Parks and Rec  
Andy Shea RNG Energy Solutions  
Kyle Lewis, City of Philadelphia-Streets  
Phil Bresee, MSW Consultants  
Christine Knapp, Office of Sustainability  
Peter Karasik, Interested Party  
Mike Ewall, Interested Party  
Mike Guiranna, US EPA  
Amy Cornelius, Interested Party  
Scott McGrath, City of Philadelphia-Streets  
Christian Walter, Interested Party

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

- Motion to begin: Kyle Lewis
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Bob Anderson, Chuck Raudenbush, Maurice Sampson

Approval of Minutes from January 2020.

- Motion to approve: Bob Anderson
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Kyle Lewis

Financial Disclosure Filing – Appointed Members to file City form at

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

- Will be available to complete on June 1, 2020 and will be due by July 15, 2020
- Just the City form is required this year; State form is not needed.

COVID-19 Updates – Kyle Lewis

- Zero Waste & Litter Cabinet

- As a result of the pandemic, the City of Philadelphia's tax base has been reduced, caused budgetary restraints, increased expenses (PPE). A difficult decision has been made to eliminate the Zero Waste and Litter cabinet, including the Director's position. Nic Esposito's last day is 6/1/20. Many of the programs and projects of the cabinet will transfer to Office of Sustainability; some responsibilities will fall to other departments as well. Hailey Jordan and Helena Rudoff's roles will remain focused on waste within the Office of Sustainability.
- Christine Knapp – working to absorb ZWL work plans and find synergies between their work and the work the OOS is already doing. Happy to provide a home to some of those programs. Very much a work in progress at this time.
- Discussion from group about wanting to know what programs will stay and go.
  - C. Knapp: Broadly speaking (since the details are still being worked out): 'Litter' programs will likely move to other departments – short dumping enforcement and strategy, for example, already has a good structure in place with other departments; 'Waste Reduction' will be more likely to stay within OOS realm. Hailey and Helena will continue to be the point-people for waste.
  - M. Sampson: asked about the plans for the plastic bag legislation. Law will go into place July 2, 2020 and the enforcement will be delayed until January 1, 2021. There is a lot of misinformation circulating in the media about why it is being pushed back and it may be influencing other municipalities.
    - K. Offner – messaging and communication will be key and will be part of the discussions.
    - S. McGrath – SWRAC will be asked to play a bigger role in legislation moving forward.
  - P. Kohl asked about the status of the composting projects.
    - S. McGrath – Block Captain work will continue to be part of the Streets Department.
    - D. Lawson – composting project is close to the finish line and will then become a Parks and Recreation project. They are currently working with consultant on the application for the DEP; intent to award a vendor soon; working to get site ready; material will be collected from Parks and Rec programs and Parks and Rec will have control of the end product.
- Recycling Collection Schedule – Kyle Lewis
  - Moved to every other week schedule when COVID-19 crisis hit, due to time and attendance and trying to manage resources
  - Looking at different iterations of collection schedule. There will be more scheduling changes to come, pending an assessment and budgeting process.
  - M. Sampson asked about weekly trash trucks picking up recycling. K. Lewis asked for this to be reported so it can be corrected.
  - M. Sampson is curious about quality of and volume of recycling. S. McGrath says there have been increased volumes in trash and recycling. C. Raudenbush noted they have seen a slight and consistent increase in quality.
  - M. Sampson suggested using QR codes to get messaging out; this is working well as a tool for voter registrations. Demographics are showing that black and brown communities are utilizing the QR codes. D. Lawson mentioned TikTok as a potential communication tool as well.

#### State of Recycling Markets – Scott McGrath

- The markets are currently volatile. The City's rate has gone down to about \$100/tn. This is largely because cardboard and paper have improved.

- Aluminum and PET plastics are really bad. Plastics are struggling because of how low fuel prices are. They are using natural gas to make plastics now, which is even cheaper than oil.
- There was a push to increase recycled content in plastic bottles – a lot of those initiatives are on hold right now. Hard to tell where it's all going to go.
- Hopefully cardboard and mixed paper will hold through the summer. Domestic markets are the primary consumers, in part due to demand for delivery of online products from Amazon and others.
- C. Raudenbush noted that the WM facility is adjusting to the new recycling schedule and how to process when material is received all at once, every other week, instead of more evenly received throughout the week.
- K. Lewis noted that most people are choosing to hold their recyclables instead of putting it out with the trash, which is a good sign.
- P. Kohl asked if it is known how long the current recycling schedule will last. K. Lewis said there is no end date right now. There are talks about changing to a new schedule on June 1<sup>st</sup>, but it hasn't yet been decided what that will be.

#### Organics Subcommittee – Paul Kohl

- Cancelled most recent subcommittee meeting
- Reviewed subcommittee notes from March meeting.
- Mid-Atlantic Bio Energy Council no longer exists. Bio Gas portion was absorbed by American Bio Gas Council, working to include more regional work.
- Water and Environmental Technology (WET) Center – PWD has been working with research hub at Temple University; project has been at a standstill due to COVID-19; everything is set up and ready to go at Temple but they are waiting for the graduate research labs to open again, which may happen in June.

#### Pitch & Pilot – Kyle Lewis

- Started by Office of Innovation and Technology
- First project will be waste removal; there will be an announcement about this on 5/28/20. That program will start it's collections right away.

#### Philadelphia Recycle Office Update – Kyle Lewis / Neil Garry

- Education Campaign & Community Outreach (Kyle Lewis)
  - Messaging around recycling contamination have been suspended until they get clarification on what the operational schedule will be.
- Commercial Waste Report (Neil Garry)
  - There have been about 40 entries since March 1, which is more than expected during the COVID-19 crisis.
  - There have been 1,380 reports submitted so far (some are from past years)
  - Not pursuing compliance aggressively because businesses are hurting right now; will wait until the economy comes back.

#### Municipal Solid Waste Plan – Phil Bresee

- Reviewed presentation with the group.
  - Questions from the group were posted in the chat. They were answered after the meeting and included in these minutes:
1. Q: Construction and demolition debris (C&D) makes up about 15 percent of the City's overall waste generation. How does that compare with the national average?

A: Because the US EPA and many states do not consider C&D as a municipal solid waste, it is difficult to determine a national average. However, MSW Consultants has reviewed MSW to C&D ratio data from a number of U.S. cities who have measured both quantities and can report a range from 11 percent to as high as 40 percent of total waste generation.

2. Q: Is the tonnage per capita reduction a reflection of the increase in plastic in the waste stream?

A: Per the US EPA, overall per-capita municipal solid waste generation has leveled off during the past 10 years due to changes to the solid waste stream, which include a decrease in paper generation (heavy) due to the influence of digital media, and an increase in plastics generation (lighter weight). We believe it is fair to say these same trends are occurring here in Philadelphia.

3. Q: Is there an expectation that the population will be leveling? Why would the level of waste stay the same over the next 10 years?

A: Solid waste generation is expected to remain relatively level due to a continuation of MSW composition trends (i.e. less paper, more plastics) and modest population growth during the planning horizon as forecast by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (approximately 4,900 new residents per year or a growth rate of .31 percent).

4. Q: Can this PPT be shared after the meeting?

A: The PowerPoint will be made available as part of the meeting minutes and shared with SWRAC members prior to the next meeting.

5. Q: What is being done with the glass collected for recycling? And how much of the material collected as recycling going to WM is recycled vs. landfilled vs. incinerated in trash incinerators vs. used for SpecFuel and burned (and where is it burned)?

A: All recovered glass is processed and shipped to PA-based manufacturer where it is then repurposed. There are instances where the glass might not meet the end-market's product specifications due to processing system limitations, which then might cause WM to dispose of the glass at a landfill. Glass is not a product that WM knowingly wants to dispose of or send to Spec Fuel or an incinerator.

Residue is delivered into the former Spec Fuel plant now known as Continuous Materials. Continuous recovers as much of the residual component as possible to repurpose into their proprietary finished product. What does not meet their spec. is discarded and shipped into waste-to-energy (Morrisville, PA) or landfill (Fairless Hills, PA) for disposal.

6. Q: How much of the trash that goes to WM's SpecFuel plant is recycled vs. landfilled vs. incinerated in trash incinerators vs. used for SpecFuel and burned? Where is it burned?

A: Between 200 and 400 tons of the City's residential trash is diverted for processing through WM's SpecFuel operation each day. Residues from this process are shipped into waste-to-energy or landfill (as above) for disposal.

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

- The group was asked to share any items with Fern or Kelly to include with these minutes:

- D. Lawson: Philadelphia Parks and Recreation (PPR) is in the final stages of working with consultants from Humanim, Inc., Quantified Ventures, and Comprehensive Land Services to produce a market analysis and business plan for an improved processing of urban wood. The preliminary pieces of the study show that PPR does in fact capture a significant portion of wood waste in the Philadelphia area but that the material can be processed into much higher value products. Materials produced this way have already been piloted all over PPR assets and partner departments and organizations, but these consultants will help identify how to scale these types of projects up. The final report should be complete this Summer.

Called to close by K. Offner at 4:30pm

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

**Next Meeting 07/16/20**

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