

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

MEETING MINUTES

January 23, 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.
Sal Iadonisi, US Recycling
Chuck Raudenbush, Waste Management
Vivian Van Story, Community Land Trust

Others Present:

Maria Horowitz, Philadelphia Water Dept.
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
Nic Esposito, Zero Waste and Litter Cabinet
Kimberly Mann, RecycleDelphia
Kurt Sweet, RecycleDelphia
Winnie Branton, Pennsylvania Resources Council
Scott McGrath, City of Philadelphia-Streets
Ashley Cadilac, Clean Water Action
Danisha Heyward, Clean Water Action

Called to order by K. Offner at 3:10pm.

Approval of Minutes from November 2019.

State of Recycling Markets – Bob Anderson

- Paper / fibers
 - India had been filling a gap, now they have moved their contamination rate to 1%, which is very difficult for processors to meet
 - Mixed paper has been challenged, and movement has been difficult, but there has been some favorable movement in the market, of ~\$5/ton in most of the Northeast region
 - Corrugated cardboard is ~ \$25-30/ton, which has seen some positive movement in the near term with an expectation of favorable near term pricing improvement.
 - Cardboard has historically been stable, but there was a big drop. There are some indicators that it is artificially low, particularly with the robust US economy.
- Plastics
 - Of the container grades HDPE ‘natural’ is the real shining star right now at ~\$1260/ton

- Pigmented HDPE is ~\$200/ton, down from ~ \$340/ton in the fall. It is typical to see a drop this time of year because the material is often used to make pipe, which should pick back up in the spring.
- It's rare to see such a big gap between 'natural' and 'pigmented' grades
- PET is ~\$200/ton, up from ~\$170/ton in the fall
- Metals
 - Aluminum is down to ~\$990/ton from ~ \$1200/ton in September
 - Steel is ~\$145/ton, up from ~\$90/ton in the fall
- Glass – not favorable
- Investments
 - Pratt has committed \$1billion to build 2 mixed paper plants in the US, probably in the Midwest
 - Nestle has committed to \$1.5billion for recovery of PET, with a goal to increase recycled content in their bottles from 2% to 15% by 2025. Nestle announced a desire to start paying a premium for recycled PET.
 - India, China, and Vietnam have recently started accepting a “slurry” of confetti-like paper
 - Some Chinese and American companies are starting to invest in paper processing the U.S.
 - There is a proposed paper plant at the old US Steel facility near Tulleytown
 - A PET plant has been proposed in the Berks County area
- There was discussion about contamination rates and the difficulty to meet specs; the consensus was that education is needed to address contamination.

Organics Subcommittee – Paul Kohl

- The Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) is participating in a research project with the Water Environmental Technology (WET) Center at Temple.
 - Researching anaerobic digestion of food waste
 - Study findings may be helpful when applying for permit modifications
 - Trying to get EBS (engineered bio-slurry) from Waste Management as pre-processed food source; WM is doing a small-scale study in Philadelphia and the research will be done with Philadelphia EBS if timing is right.
- RNG facility update (Andy Shea)
 - Site of proposed facility on PES site; PES bankruptcy is in process.
 - There is a primary and secondary bidder; RNG is in active discussions with them about the lease so the new owner will be up to speed.
 - RNG is continuing to go through the permitting process for the facility; will keep this group updated as things progress. Targeting to have permits complete by the 4th quarter of 2020.
 - Site is processing waste and making a product; working to push for “certified organic” products for liquid fertilizer and bio-solids.
- Nic Esposito from the Zero Waste and Litter Cabinet updated the subcommittee about the community composting and urban composting permit at the meeting, which he will discuss in more detail later in this meeting.
- Neil Garry from the Streets Department updated the subcommittee on the waste audits; they will be looking at how much organics are in the ‘recycling’.
- Laura Cassidy from the Department of Prisons updated the subcommittee on composting at the Prisons. They are working to get the final facility to come online so all facilities have composting. They hope to have them including in the composting program by the end of the summer. On average, 1.4 pounds of raw food-waste is produced per inmate per day.

- Mike Giuranna from the US EPA updated the subcommittee on funding opportunities: \$53,000 for community composting and \$43,000 for public outreach and education related to organics recycling.

Zero Waste and Litter - Nic Esposito

- Progress Report is complete and on the website: cleanphl.org
- 2020 Litter Index will begin in a few weeks and will conclude in July; different Departments will be engaged to complete surveys of litter across the city.
- Plastic bag ban was passed; plastic bags are the 5th most littered item in Philadelphia; Cabinet will be doing outreach to residents and business to educate about the ban.
- Anti-Litter Enforcement
 - 35 active cases
 - Just prosecuted a notorious tire dumper; received a \$1000 fine, community service, and his vehicle was impounded
 - Another case will start prosecution tomorrow
 - Considering listing the prosecutions on the website; will have meetings about that soon.
 - Will be adding more cameras to notorious dump locations; will not be identifying where those locations are so people don't seek them out.
 - There is a list of fines and restitution in the FY19 report; FY20 fines and restitution is expected to be higher.
- Waste to energy is not included in diversion in zero waste calculations.
- Will be doing more Municipal Building Audits and will be making the Municipal Building Audit Report for all departments public in the very near future.
- Community composting network
 - PowerCorps is building (3) bins for each of the 12 selected sites; bins are 4'x4' and will start to be installed next week.
 - Community composting manual is open source and will be available to anyone who wants to start composting and be part of the network, even if the site was not selected through the RFP process.
- Vendor has been selected for the urban composting site; getting permitting and insurance in place before making an announcement; hope to have operation moving by the end of April; will be first urban composting permit in the state.
- Zero Waste Partnership Program – Rittenhouse Hotel has joined and a new big partner will be announced in a few weeks
- 2020 will be focused on reduction
 - Food recovery will be a big piece of this
 - Engaged with Thriving Cities Initiative to answer, "How can a city thrive while reducing waste and consumption?" Next workshop is in March.
- Pitch & Pilot Program is an alternative way to solicit ideas, rather than an RFP process. Proposals closed on 1/16/20; the proposals are being read now.

Keep Philadelphia Beautiful Update – Kelly Offner

- Presented select findings of Litter Cost Study, which will be coming out in February
 - Study done by Burns & McDonnell
 - Surveyed 7 counties in Pennsylvania, including Philadelphia
 - On average, it costs \$614/ton to clean-up illegal dump sites versus \$60/ton to dispose of material properly
 - More detailed numbers specific to the economics in Philadelphia will be available in the report.
 - Slides will be made available to the group

Philadelphia Recycle Office Update – Kyle Lewis / Neil Garry

- Education Campaign – Contaminations Rates (Kyle Lewis)
 - Contamination rates are still in the 24-25% range
 - The education campaigns will focus on one item at a time and target messaging around that. The focus this year is the plastic bag.
 - There will be a postcard campaign that goes out soon.
 - There was general discussion about how contamination rates are measured; they are based on the loads that actually go through the processing system. It was commented that the methodologies of WM and MSW Consultants should be compared to see if they are measuring contamination in the same way.
 - Waste Management had a fire at their MRF in early January. It is thought to have started from a lithium ion battery that was exposed to water, which would have created a fire. Lithium ion batteries can be recycled but should not be put in the municipal recycling stream.
 - A resident put an oxygen tank in a recycling bin for pick-up, and it exploded when compacted in the truck. It caused injury to the worker and damage to the equipment. The tank is metal but should not be put in the municipal recycling stream.
 - Tanks might be the focus of the education campaign next year.
 - There are 13 sanitation districts in 6 sanitation areas. Education campaign will be done in phases.
 - Messaging can be confusing; not everything with a recycling symbol can go in the bin.
 - Found that one of the most effective way of communicating messaging is going to community meetings.
 - There was a question about recycling pick-ups being done at PHA sites; Streets does curbside collection at non-high-rise and non-multifamily PHA sites.
- Municipal Solid Waste Plan (Kyle Lewis)
 - Plan is in process; have been doing audits at Waste Management
 - There have been some delays; there will be a special SWRAC meeting to review the plan on 2/20/20.
- Commercial Waste Report (Neil Garry)
 - Have gotten 10% compliance on the waste report so far
 - Are looking at the data coming in to see if additional haulers and processors should be contacted
 - Trying to figure out what waste is being generated, who is generating and who is hauling.
 - Will develop a 2020 Action Plan. Will try to get businesses that generate C&D waste to participate; the new L+I regulations that require contractors to list a hauler should help

Informational Items, Open Discussion, and Announcements

- Kelly Offner – will send calendar invites for the SWRAC meetings for the rest of the year, including an additional meeting in February to review the MSW Plan
- Chuck Raudenbush – Waste Management is working with the Phillies again to host “Red Goes Green”; you can sign up to get on the list to help with recycling at one of the 81 home games plus any playoff or World Series Games; SWRAC participated in the past and will look into potential dates for the group to participate this year.
- Philly Spring Clean Up is scheduled for 4/4/20
- Street sweeping will start in the summer

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

Next Meeting 02/20/20, MSW Plan Review