

**City of Philadelphia Solid Waste and Recycling Advisory Committee (SWRAC)  
MEETING MINUTES (FINAL)**

**DATE:** July 21, 2022

**ATTENDEES:**

**SWRAC Members**

Fern Gookin (Chair), Revolution Recovery  
Kyle Lewis, City of Philadelphia – Streets Department  
Bob Anderson, Retrievr + Closed Loop Partners  
Maurice Sampson II, Clean Water Action + Niche Recycling  
Paul Kohl, Philadelphia Water Department  
Chuck Raudenbush, environmental consultant

**Others Present:**

Helena Rudoff, City of Philadelphia – Office of Sustainability  
Kearni Warren, Energy Justice Network  
Maria Horowitz, Philadelphia Water Department  
Mike Ewall, Energy Justice Network  
Nina Morris, University of Pennsylvania  
Sarah Shea, Pennsylvania Resources Council  
Laura Cassidy, Department of Prisons  
Andy Shea, RNG Energy  
Dylan Radley, Office of Sustainability: Penn Sustainability Fellow  
Koye Situ, Philadelphia Recycling Office: Temple University Intern  
Traci Confer, Energy Justice Network  
Amy Cornelius, GreenBeams  
Nidhi Krishen, Office of Sustainability

**Call to order**

The meeting was called to order by SWRAC Chair Fern Gookin at 3:34 pm.

**Introductions**

**May 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Meeting minutes from the May 19<sup>th</sup> General SWRAC meeting were approved as amended by voice vote.

**State of Recycling (Bob Anderson)**

- The overall state of recycling is not good and the immediate future does not look great.
- Dramatic shifts particularly in PET and HDPE pigmented
- PET has dropped ~80% of value in last 4 weeks. A lot of PET fibers go into carpet and production has slowed in anticipation of a recession. There are similar concerns in the processing of clothing.
- HDPE natural is holding firm.
- OCC is fairly stable, but the demand has been diminished.
- The Domtar paper mill in Kingsport, TN is coming on-line soon.
- Aluminum and metals have taken a strong hit; aluminum is down ~40%, tins have dropped ~50%
- The markets always have been volatile, but additional volatility is expected in the next few months.

- The US dollar is strong against other currencies, which puts downward pressure on the export markets.
- Kyle Lewis noted that there has been a \$20 increase in processing cost between last month and this month; main drivers are prices of PET and metals.

#### **Organics Subcommittee (Paul Kohl)**

- Subcommittee met on July 13<sup>th</sup>:
  - The report on co-digestion is not complete yet.
  - Philadelphia Parks and Rec reviewed their three scales of composting sites: the large organics facility in Fairmount Park, the medium scale Bennett composting facility (permit is still being finalized), and the small community composting facilities (13 sites are up and running).
  - Philadelphia Parks and Rec plans to release the Urban Agriculture Plan next month
  - Presentation given by Emerson about food waste disposers

#### **Zero Waste Subcommittee (Paul Kohl)**

- 25% of MSW is organic material
- Will be having a workshop in the fall about organics diversion; additional details and agenda are still being developed

#### **Department of Prisons (Laura Cassidy)**

- Composting program was featured on WHYY recently: covered a success story about a former inmate that was hired by Bennett Compost.
- Their 3-acre orchard receives compost from their compost program; the garden produces fruits and vegetables to donate to food pantries.
- Bennett Compost is operating their aerated compost piles right now due to staffing shortages in the program.
- Finished compost is available for free; material is not certified since they don't sell it. Contact Laura if you would like some.

#### **Parks & Recreation Update**

No one from Parks & Recreation was in attendance. No update was given.

#### **Office of Sustainability (OOS) Update**

- Food waste programs
  - Wrapping up partnership with NRDC and USDA this summer; moving into maintenance now
  - Wrapped up food waste business challenge; final event this week at the Drexel Food Lab
  - Final report is in the works
- Zero Waste Microgrant program
  - Grant agreements are out
  - Plan to announce recipients in August
- Zero Waste Action Plan
  - Plan focuses on actions that can be accomplished in the next 2-3 years
  - Completed one-on-ones with city departments
  - Hope to release plan this fall

#### **Streets & Philadelphia Recycling Office (PRO) Update (Kyle Lewis)**

- Commercial Waste Regulations

- Still reviewing with various departments
- Reach out if you are interested in giving input, invites for additional meetings will be coming out soon
- Litter Index
  - Last index was 2019, goal is to get this started again
  - Will have a meeting on the litter index soon, invites are starting to go out
- EPA grants are not yet open
  - Grants for recycling infrastructure
  - Grants for education and outreach
  - Grants are willing to fund public/private partnership projects
  - If anyone has ideas or thoughts about projects, please forward to Kyle
- Chuck Raudenbush asked for comment on the Billy Penn article last week regarding the mixing of recycling and trash; Kyle Lewis says when the mixing happened the decisions were often made same day in response to staffing and weather conditions. If it is still happening, it has not been at the direction of the operational staff of the department. Kyle asked if anyone sees this, please email her directly to address: Kyle.lewis@phila.gov.
  - Mike Ewall asked how the department tracks if the directive is given to put recycling in the trash trucks. Kyle Lewis replied that the department is not directing anyone to do this.
- Paul Kohl asked about areas of the city that have low recycling rates; Kyle Lewis shared maps showing the changing rates over time. It is not a pocket, but most of the City's recycling rates have dropped significantly. The diversion rates were about 20%, now they are about 10%. PRO has done outreach in areas with less than 16% diversion.
  - Maria Horowitz asked how Philadelphia compares to peer cities? Kyle Lewis says it's unclear, but she can look for more data on that.

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

- Kyle Lewis: PROP conference will be in person for the first time in a few years, Weds through Fri next week in Lancaster. Registration is still open.
- Maria Horowitz: opportunity from NOAA for marine debris removal grant, PWD supports anyone who may be interested in applying by providing information or assistance.

#### **Next Meeting Date**

September 15, 2022 on Microsoft Teams

#### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:06pm.