

**CITY OF BEVERLY
WASTE REDUCTION COMMITTEE**

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DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 5, 2023 at 6:30 PM
Beverly Public Library, Sohler Room, 32 Essex Street

Call to order: 6:31 p.m.

Committee members present: Bonnie Dean, Nancy Dillon, Amy Henderson, Joyce Herman, John Swain, Lisa Willwerth, Susan Higgins (Chair)

Committee members absent: Sandy Burgess

Invited participants and guests: Erina Keefe (City of Beverly), Brad Pillen (City of Beverly), Caitlin Smith (Republic Services), Alice Manholt-White (Manchester-by-the-Sea Sustainability), Tyler Finnegan (Republic Services), Gretchen Carey (Republic Services), Dean Berg (Green Beverly)

Review minutes for October 6, 2022 and November 3, 2022 meetings – VOTE to approve
Henderson shared typo for October; Swain moves to approve the October 6, 2022 minutes as amended and the November 3, 2022 minutes; Dillon seconded. The motion carried (7-0).

Administrative Business

- a. Reimbursements for past expenditures: reach out to Burgess to submit outstanding reimbursement requests.
- b. New expenditures: Higgins confirmed BWRC need not vote to reaffirm expenditures authorized and outstanding from last year.
- c. Pumpkin Smash raffle prizes: Henderson and Keefe held the drawing, have two winners, and are researching logistics to award the prizes with physical or electronic gift certificates.

Green Beverly update – priorities/plans for 2023 as related to WRC

Berg reviewed Green Beverly's whirlwind past year, and Higgins asked about the panel displays project discussed in 2022. Berg noted Green Beverly's office space at the Cummings Center moved to a third floor office with greater floor space but less pedestrian activity led to putting the project on hold, but it may still be in the pipeline to use displays as mobile exhibits. BWRC plans to compile the information for "How Low Can You Go" and where to locally recycle various materials either way. For the next 4-6 weeks Green Beverly is identifying projects for which to apply for grants for this year.

EarthFest will be in April 2023, and is a joint event between the City of Beverly and Green Beverly. Higgins highlights the opportunity to work with Republic Services to help with outreach and education at community events.

Green Beverly is identifying possible grant projects in three focus areas: (1) food sustainability / composting; (2) home energy; and (3) community engagement generally. If BWRC has potential collaborative projects in mind, Berg invites proposals in the next 4-6 weeks for Green Beverly to evaluate for the next grant cycle.

One funded project is the Restaurant Compostables Project that should pilot in mid-February, to help local restaurants move to compostable containers. It will require restaurants to use Black Earth curbside composting services to join the pilot. Higgins asks whether Green Beverly is looking at food sustainability relating to the public schools and waste-related projects. Berg noted he is aware of the concerns and has spoken with School Cmte. Rep. Lorinda Visnick about it as well, but it would not be a Green Beverly initiative. Keefe confirms the public schools are close to launching food share tables in the cafeterias, so that students can share food they would not eat to reduce food waste. Beverly's Food Services Director is purchasing refridgerators, and working with the Health Department to roll out the food share tables in the schools.

Berg shared that Green Beverly's food diversion program includes rescuing food from Whole Foods, storing it in a cooler, and redistributing it to organizations who feed our food insecure residents. For the past two months, Green Beverly primarily partners with meal programs through churches and Ellis Square Friends, but is expanding to make food available at other places (River House, YMCA Housing, Bootstraps, etc.) as the program grows.

Recycling discussion by Republic Services

"Recycling with Republic Services: An in-depth look at Beverly's recycling world"

Carey and Smith from Republic Services present an in-depth look at Beverly's recycling world.

a. Current status of curbside recycling and regional markets: Carey begins by noting reports in the media have been misleading and discouraging about recycling, and she confirms in Massachusetts recyclable materials are still being sorted, baled, and sold to manufacturers. From what residents place in their recycling bins, roughly 75-85% is recycled, the gap includes pieces with food or drink residue inside or unrecyclable materials. In 2018, Massachusetts chose to simplify what should be recycled to guarantee an end market for the processed materials. They shared this Recycling Poster, and noted if it is not in the top line you don't recycle it, and recommended local municipalities share this poster to help standardize messaging. Massachusetts bans people from disposing of certain materials as waste, rather than requires people to recycle materials.

For Beverly specifically, materials from recycling bins are brought to Greenworks, and Smith outlined the step-by-step recycling process that BWRC members also saw in the facility tour. Smith highlighted tanglers (plastic bags, holiday lights, ropes, cords, clothing) will stop the sorting machines, and are an area for public education and outreach to lower wish-cycling of tanglers. Members reviewed examples of plastic materials in the room with Carey to determine which were recyclable: if it is a not-black container with a lid that is clean, dry and empty, it is recyclable. That rule of thumb will generally work, though it may include some plastic containers that are not recyclable (smaller than a credit card, heavy like a Nalgene bottle, etc.).

Swain and Higgins shared interest in touring a film plastics facility, and Carey indicated a [podcast episode available through MassRecycle.org](#) explores the topic in depth.

For cardboard, pieces need to be larger than a credit card, clean and dry for proper sorting. For recycled glass, the last glass bottle manufacturing company in Massachusetts went out of business in 2018, so the glass is currently used as landfill cover in Peabody (4" thick cover daily) or ground into processed glass aggregate for DPW projects in some municipalities. For paper, pieces should be larger than a credit card, and if you can rip it you can recycle it (spirals from spiral notebooks are tanglers, cellophane windows on envelopes are fine). Generally, neither cups nor mixed-media containers (OJ, etc.), while conscientious recycling of clear, dry, cold cups is okay (no liquid, residue, lid or straw). For aluminum manufacturing, Carey notes the materials are sourced either through recyclables or by strip-mining a mountain top.

b. Material-specific recycling questions – problem areas, opportunities, etc.:

Higgins asked about takeout cups, and whether a municipality would likely be cited for a waste ban violation for a downtown trash barrel filled with plastic cups. Carey noted a barrel full of bottles and cans may catch their attention, but less so for cups full of liquid, and inspectors can recognize what comes from public spaces. Generally, her advice is not to recycle cups, because they tend to be full of ice, liquids, slush, straws and lids that would all make it non-recyclable.

Beverly-specific deep dive on where our recyclables go:

1. #2 plastic (laundry or milk jugs) go to an FDA-approved mill (in mid-Atlantic region) to make containers again
2. PET (water/soda bottles) go to make bottles (in Canada, NC or SC), carpets, or Mohawk carpeting (can request a tour)
3. Mixed ridges: Republic does not accept much
4. #3-7 (rest of the bale) can become automotive plastic (dashes) or margarine/yogurt containers

Keefe would like to share this information through social media posts, and asks about the relative values of the different bales relating to draft hauler legislation. Carey confirms it is a commodity market, so it fluctuates often, but generally in July 2022 the values were higher compared to currently about 70% less. Carey notes that while manufacturers have committed to using recycled plastic in their products, manufactures are currently decreasing their outputs anticipating a recession and less consumer demand, so the prices have dropped due to the lessened demand. Still, even selling at \$10/ton is better than paying to dispose of it as trash. Further, the state gained ~900 jobs after the food waste ban went into effect in November, and people recognize the environmental costs behind making products from virgin materials.

Finnegan offers to collaborate for an opt-in rate for businesses or landlords to contract with Republic Services for recycling service depending on the container size and pickup frequency. He noted based on the density and enrollments; it may reduce some hauler costs depending on what private haulers currently charge. Swain noted some issues with commingling in waste and recycling bins at developments, highlighting bin placement and other factors to encourage compliance. Keefe noted space constraints downtown, and Finnegan confirmed Republic starts

with 2-yard containers on wheels due to safety concerns, but two 2-yard containers would fit in one parking space. Higgins noted MassDEP published a list of every industry/business cited in 2022 including Notices of Noncompliance. Carey noted some businesses have lessened their food waste (making fries without peeling potatoes, as an example) to work around the food waste ban.

Answering questions about recycled glass, Smith noted GreenWorks produces about 30-40 tons of glass per day. Three towns in Southern Mass. banded together to use a glass drop-off with their own processing machine to make PGA-like sand that they all use for DPW projects. Carey found another possible use: Pozzotive is using recycled glass as a pozzolan in concrete. Using recycled glass as the pozzolan makes the concrete more sustainable and environmentally-friendly, both from manufacturing (less emissions, keeps glass out of landfills, reduces mining) to final product (lighter concrete reducing heat island effects, post-consumer glass contributes to LEED accreditation, more durable-less expanding/contracting in weather). Owens Corning also makes insulation from recycled glass, but Carey hopes Massachusetts can build a case for Pozzotive to expand into our state. Higgins asks whether Republic may expand into the pozzolan space, and Finnegan notes for the near future Republic focuses on plastics through the polymer center, but they are also always growing through mergers and partnerships. Higgins asks to what level people should be concerned about recycled glass versus plastic, and if another audit of Beverly's output could characterize plastics versus glass for volume and contamination.

Carey and Smith shared a spreadsheet showing Beverly's month trash versus recycling volumes and contamination rates. Higgins asks to what extent volume could be characterized in alternate ways beyond weight (where glass is much heavier than plastic), and how contamination rates are verified. Carey offers to share the spreadsheet after the presentation for people to study. Keefe and Higgins compare their understanding of the contracted audit process, and Smith shares her observations of how prior audits worked under JRM. The parties decide to review Beverly's contract for more clarification on the auditing process.

c. Possible strategies for outreach/education in 2023:

Keefe appreciates any support, tips and guidance Republic can provide on public outreach and education. Henderson asks whether a representative could come to EarthFest, and Carey shared she has tabled with "Stump the Experts" style for events before and is happy to do so again. Smith notes Republic also presents at local schools, and Carey has presented library talks on "The Truth About Recycling," that can help address local skepticism around recycling. Carey is comfortable being recorded for later viewing online, and Berg noted on his way out that Green Beverly wants to collaborate with BevCam and would like to explore possibilities with Carey later. Dillon asked whether Republic has educational videos available online, and Smith explained recycling varies throughout the country, and Carey notes she has videos available online through Burlington Cable Access Television's Green Corner.

Smith shares they present at senior centers and assisted living facilities, and welcome groups to tour GreenWorks including seniors, boy and girl scouts, local schools, etc. Looking further ahead, Finnegan clarified the funding for projects he referenced in a prior meeting can only be awarded to non-profit organizations, not municipalities. Higgins suggested the educational

panels project for Green Beverly may fall under that type of grant. Other towns hold DPW Days with touch-a-trucks, Bedford has a shredding day, and for electronic waste Republic works with ERI (Electronics Recycling International) so nothing is exported. Finnegan used to work as an e-waste recycler, and is passionate about the topic as well. Higgins notes MassRecycle will hold a conference on March 23rd and BWRC may want to consider having members attend. Carey notes 3+ people attending are eligible for a group discount, and Higgins shares that MassRecycle members can be included on extended producer responsibility calls through its Mass Products Stewardship Council.

Higgins and Keefe thank Carey, Smith and Finnegan for the presentation and their insights and expertise. Keefe asked how much capacity Republic has for community events, and Smith shared they can pull presentations together with some advance notice and welcomes all invitations to present locally – noting they will share if it becomes too much to handle. Keefe notes the local enthusiasm both through an operational sustainability committee and recycling working group through the school district, public forums, senior center events, etc. and appreciates the opportunity to collaborate with Republic.

City updates (Erina Keefe)

a. Styrofoam Recycling Event: is set for Saturday, January 14th from 10am to 1pm at Beverly High School and will include access to the building for bathrooms and warming up, from volunteer feedback from last year's January event. They've also included Danvers and Lynn because they did not completely fill the truck last year, and the cities asked to join. Keefe asked BWRC for volunteers who could help, and she will follow-up directly with Henderson, Higgins, Swain, and Willwerth.

b. Local Hauler Ordinance: no updates, but Keefe renewed her interest to connect with Finnegan later to review Republic's potential pricing to haul recycling.

c. Recent State Grant: Dillon asked what the grant is going towards, and Keefe confirmed the City received a \$500,000 grant from the Department of Energy Resources Green Communities Program for upgrading the library HVAC system. Carey asked whether Beverly participates in and receives RDP money, and Keefe confirmed the City receives approximately \$44-45k from RPD money. The money went towards Rathe's staff position, that will be reposted and Carey offered to help publish the job posting through her networks as well.

Old business and miscellaneous items: N/A

Upcoming events

a. Styrofoam Recycling, Saturday, January 14, 2023 (10 AM – 1 PM at BHS)

Other updates and discussion items by Committee members: N/A

Adjourn: Swain moved to adjourn; Willwerth seconded. The motion carried (7-0) at 8:30 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: February 2, 2023 at 6:30 PM at Beverly Public Library, Sohler Room