

SalemRecycles Committee

Meeting Minutes, November 7, 2023

6:30pm City Hall Annex
1st Floor, Large Conference Room

Appointed Members

Mari Alix, Jen Birenbach (Clerk), Bruce Cohen, Joel Dashnaw (Chair), Catherine Deo, Demi Fox, Cameron Fullerton, Nancy Gilberg, Carol Hautau (Vice-Chair), Daniell Hepting, Sandy O'Donnell, Lucie Patrowicz, Brian Romer
City Liaison: Janelle Rolke

Attending: Mari Alix, Bruce Cohen, Catherine Deo, Demi Fox, Carol Hautau (Vice-Chair), Daniell Hepting, Sandy O'Donnell, Lucie Patrowicz, Brian Romer
City Liaison: Janelle Rolke

Absent: Jen Birenbach, Joel Dashnaw, Cameron Fullerton, Nancy Gilberg

Guests: Helpsy, textile recycling service, Lisa Sciannella & Judith Reilly

Recycling Committee Mission Statement

The mission of SalemRecycles, a committee appointed by the Mayor, is to reduce trash tonnage in the City of Salem by increasing recycling, diverting reusable items, and motivating city stakeholders through education and information.

September and October 2023 Minutes

September Minutes

Motion to approve: Mari, Second: Catherine

October Minutes

Motion to approve: Brian, Second: Sandy

Votes not taken, vote to approve these minutes tabled for December Meeting

Helpsy Presentation - What happens to the clothes?

Mission: Mission: keep clothes out of the trash - driven by environmental issues, collects about

Mission driven with environmental focus

Collects 31 million lbs of textiles/year, Massachusetts is 1st state to ban textiles in trash & helps

Helpsy is a 2nd chance employer and pays livable wages

Work with non-profits and donate coats

Used clothing:

Myth: "Most clothes go to charity" - reality- charity gets 10% at most BUT due to lack of space, condition, size, etc, they have to throw out most of it

Thrift stores only sell about 24% of what comes through their door, 1/2 aren't good enough to sell 1/2 don't sell at all

6% of landfills are textiles

Thrifting is becoming more popular, but 85% of textiles are still going into the trash stream

3 lines of business

Collecting - 30 million lbs/year - working with 6,000 thrift stores & resellers (clothing, shoes, rags)

Source Tech - sorting supplies the come in - can group by brand, material is desirable, seasonal? etc

Trading- 12 million lbs/yr - finding homes of odd items like stuffed animals or large volume trader that may use 1,000lb bricks of textiles

Collect textiles via: bins, clothing drives, pick ups

1,000 collection locations in 10 states

95% sold or used for recycling, 5% are contaminated

90% of what Helpsy collects is sold in bulk to recyclers to make wiper cloths, etc.

Global market, but their partners are domestic, sorted at facility in NJ

Outreach

They enjoy many types of activities: Public education, classrooms, lessons, tours, events, fundraisers

Their goal is to change people's behavior

Q&A Session

School lost & found: coats, etc -Helpsy can do school clean outs or events, etc

Extended Reuse law may happen in NY - "end of life" plan for textile retailers in the state, unsure of what that means before it passes - goal: puts responsibility on the retailer

Sorting: Helpsy is only sorting a small amount right now, they're working to increase resale value

—Presentation Complete—

Committee discussed the textile process in Salem, the textile drive success in the past and how Helpsy's presentation clarifies what happens to textiles when it leaves people's homes.

Ongoing Business

Repair Cafe & TerraCycle Collection Event (11/4) Demi

Event Task Force management method worked well, recommend it moving forward

A few new fixers, Brian provided music but the event is also loud

Booked 79 appts, 21 appts on a waitlist, additional walk-ins, 19 no-shows

Reservations is complicated - Fixers availability is a key element of the puzzle

Customer tickets w/feedback form: average rating (1-5) avg 4.8

Fixed items: 54 Partially fixed items: 6 Could not repair: 7 Advice only: 1

There are notes for how to improve the process in the future

Adding a sign-up cut off date will be added to next Repair Cafe

Bring your own mug efforts: not successful - would like to focus on that for the next Repair Cafe

City Hall To Go was present taking questions as an add-on

Essex Tech Students: the students may want to add to the newsletter, feedback on them was very positive

Next event: February 10, 2024, will discuss further at the December meeting

Textile Drive & TerraCycle Collection (11/18 rain or shine) Janelle

Riley Plaza - 2 shifts of volunteers- 7 for shift 1, 12 for shift 2

Press Release being sent out by Janelle - Using Code red method for recycling, perhaps a "Code Green" - perhaps

Neighbor complaints due to location, considering a different location to ease traffic

There are many cars with volunteers directing traffic at entrance and exit flow

Considered a fun event to volunteer for - fast moving traffic as they just drop off and go

Volunteers mainly direct traffic

2022 Event saw a large uptick in TerraCycle drop offs, some only dropped off those items

Education around the event:

Receive many of the same questions repeating, considering updating flyer on event to answer these questions

New Business

Mayor Pangallo's Visit, 12/5 Meeting

Highlight Recycling's initiatives and events

Power Point slide deck for a presentation: Bruce, Demi, Janelle contributing

Subgroup will work together to create a short presentation due to limited time

Compost Discussion - new topic item in conversation

Curbside compost is important to Mayor Pangallo, Janelle is working on this

2 compost bins at Mac Park are serviced by Black Earth - Janelle wants to grow # of locations

Carol remembered past contamination rates and how this has become better over the years

WM did their audit in October - the contamination rate is 9.2% - below 10% is good to WM

Updates on Past Items - tabled for the December meeting

Newsletter

November / Fall & Thanksgiving Content

Discussion on items to be included in the Newsletter

Open Time

General discussion

Polystyrene ordinance

Balloon ordinance ideas

New York Times article.