



# Salem Recycles Committee

## DRAFT Meeting Minutes

December 5, 2023

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

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

City Liaison: Janelle Rolke

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### **Attending:**

Mari Alix, Jen Birenbach (Clerk), Bruce Cohen, Joel Dashnaw (Chair), Catherine Deyo, Demi Fox, Cameron Fullerton, Nancy Gilberg, Carol Hautau (Vice-Chair), Sandy O'Donnell, Brian Romer

City Liaison: Janelle Rolke

Guests: Sorkadh Mustafa, Engineering Business Manager; Mayor Pangallo, Judith Reilly

Absent: Lucie Patrowicz, Daniell Hepting

### **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.

### **Old Business**

Approve past Meeting Minutes

#### September Minutes

Motion to approve: Cameron; Second: Brian; Roll call Vote: unanimous vote by all attendees

#### October Minutes

Motion to approve: Jen; Second: Mari; Roll call Vote: unanimous approval by all attendees

#### November Minutes

Motion to approve: Bruce; Second: Cameron; Vote: Approved with edits, with 1 abstention

### **Guest: Mayor Pangallo**

Presentation on the Committee and its work

Conversation with Mayor Pangallo about activities, focus and goals

Mayor Pangallo: appreciated the invitation and wishes to learn more. He sees the trash stream as a City Priority: Trash contract/bargaining agreement is coming up for renewal, costs have been going up - one goal is to drive down collection costs, thus reducing items in trash stream, thus increasing recycling and composting

He also wants to focus on engaging New recycling and compost users

**Committee Presentation to Mayor Pangallo** - Joel (Chair) introduced the committee members and presented the slides with Janelle, the City Liaison

Repair Cafe- Demi summarized the most recent event - 11/4 yielded 100 appts requested, 79 appts made, 54 items repaired, avg. response rating out of 5 was 4.8 The next event is scheduled for February. Lamps are the most common request for repairs.

Book swap - Janelle: Sept 650 attendees, some events have >700 attendees, 1,000s of books reused; over 2,000 lbs of books repaired or recycled after this most recent event. There are other items swapped as well: puzzles, reusable bags, cards, media. Many books also go to other places around the City of Salem: community locations, schools, kid programs through the engaged volunteers

Textile Drive - Janelle: typically happens at Riley Plaza but a new location is needed; redirects textiles out of the waste stream one event per year

Styrofoam Recycling: Janelle: Joint event Salem and Beverly - Typically >70 giant bags collected in the large truck, over 1 ton recycled, swapping locations with Beverly. This event is different because there is a fee to the City to cover the bags and truck- approximately \$1200 per event, however it may be divided with Beverly or other communities that join in. It's a good way to keep styrofoam out the waste stream- especially since it's quite bulky. However, without a City-owned machine there will always be a cost to gather and send it down to the Charlestown facility.

Mayor Pangallo wondered if owning, sharing or locating a machine is out of the question. Joel (Chair) believes a used machine can be around \$5-10,000 and come in a variety of types. Mayor Pangallo said the City is evaluating building a new DPW facility and depending on the finances, this could be pulled into it. Of course, there would be much research to do before hand.

Terracycle Recycling program - Janelle: This program focuses on hard to recycle materials, they are collected in bins, packed up and mailed to New Jersey for recycling. A subcommittee of the Salem Recycling Committee meet monthly to pack up the items. We receive points that turn into funding put toward Salem Public Schools. The details will be worked out in the future.

Committee Education - Joel (Chair)

The committee toured 3 locations in 2023.

**Material Recovery Facility (MRF)**- Billerica MA, where curbside recyclables are sent to and sorted.

**Tough Stuff Recycling** – Facility where Salem mattresses & box springs are sent to.

**CORe Facility**- organic materials (packaged and not packaged) facility in Charlestown

Guest Speakers:

ReSupply, a Furniture and household goods pick-up recycler/seller

Helpsy, textile recycler on where the textiles go after pick up

Community Education - Joel (Chair)

Joel gave a summary of the tabling events, newsletter, website, and social media presence of the committee

**2024 Goals** - Joel (Chair) The committee is interested in rolling out new programs and supporting the City's other initiatives

Mayor Pangallo's priorities/desires

Big priority: Divert material from solid waste tonnage. Specifically target new customers who are not already on board with the ecological value of recycling. Impress on people that it's cost saving.

Promoting cost saving message is important.

Bargaining agreements are coming up, costs will increase and the timing is good to begin now.

Styrofoam Owning a machine sounds like it could be a good idea over time.

City is considering building a new DPW building, this could be an opportunity to get new equipment.

We could approach another community about cost-sharing in the purchase. It may not reduce tonnage as much but it's a large ecological impact and could reduce cost over time.

Composting: decreases food waste in the trash stream. Twice a week pick up at Mack Park and it's \$200+/month in fees. City is investigating growing the locations and/or new sites for additional composting locations.

Janelle (Liaison): The city purchased 150 new bins for residents who can get the bin for free. There are 850 current subscribers in Salem, after 1,000 subscribers the pick up rate is reduced by \$10/10% for all in town.

School composting - Janelle: She is currently working on a pilot program. The costs can be challenging. 1 elementary school running phase 1 of a pilot program with a grant. Janelle is investigating grants to grow the program to more schools. Janelle sees school composting in 2 phases for each school.

Mayor Pangallo thanked the committee and departed

2024 Committees role in composting - The committee can lead this program if needed as there is capacity for it. It's within our wheel house. Phase 2 needs volunteers to guide their waste at the schools as the beginning to build the student's knowledge and habits. More people are needed for shifts in January at the Carlton School.

*ACTION: Janelle to send out needs for Carlton School so committee can participate*

Sink Disposals: Demi- these are NOT composting - anything down the waste stream can become pollution through the system to the ocean. Prevention of things going down the drain in any way is important. An older city with flat ground can also be very impacted by oils and fats into the drain and then it congeals. This definitely includes flushable wipes.

*Future Planning: Educate the public on this topic*

Event Recap: Textile Drive & TerraCycle Collection (11/18) Janelle

320 cars, 7,305 lbs of textiles collected in the rain

Held at Riley Plaza, the committee thinks a new location with better in/out process would be better

Educating people to not hold off donating until the annual event is needed, Janelle was educating drivers on all the options as they dropped off textiles.

*Future Planning: Educate public on textile choices & not waiting, but dropping locally more regularly or using curbside pick up*

Black plastic moving forward: From WM: laser readers cannot truly identify black plastic on the belts, but some does get recycled. At this time WM is not bothered that much by black plastic as it's not the biggest risk to their machinery or workers. Joel (Chair) believes the machines are improving as time goes by, though. WM's larger concern is soft plastic film- it's the biggest risk to staff safety and machinery.

Future Committee Education: Black plastic in the curbside recycling program. Once MRF machinery has been updated black plastic will be included in the curbside program. This is a 180° turn from prior education and will require updating information when this happens, sometime in the future.

## **New Business**

Upcoming Event: Styrofoam Collection (1/13/24) - Beverly High School

Volunteers Needed: Joel, Carol, Cameron/Maybe,

Beverly will have a sign up list - a sign up will be sent out for sign ups via email

Terracycle Programs Update - Janelle & Subcommittee

Public interest in the program is growing and there are a few program changes

-Toms of Maine & Colgate programs no longer accumulate points, but will still be collected

-Rubbermaid/black plastic is ending: all shipments must be sent by 12/15, 7 boxes went out last week

TerraCycle has many programs, some have fees & are sponsored by other companies

*\*Black Plastic education for the community is important here as well*

Plastic Bags/Film: Janelle

NexTrex Plastic Film Program, from Trex plastic products: New FREE program for Salem

50/50 plastic & wood dust to create composite lumber

3 drop off bins so far - 1 is in Annex, 2 other locations TBD - NexTrex supplies poster

Janelle will announce program soon, after compost announcements

Public Education needed on not putting these items in trash or recycling as well as reducing trash tonnage- how, when and why.

This program collects a number of items: grocery bags, bread & newspaper bags, plastic shipping envelopes, produce bags, resealable bags (lunch bags), bubble wrap, air pillows, retail bags, and Plastic films labeled with #2 or #4 recycling symbol (polyethylene films), Ice bags, Wood pellet bags, Salt bags, Cereal box liners (note: list from [NexTrex.com](http://NexTrex.com))

Question: Cut out or not cut out the paper labels? (From [NexTrex.com](http://NexTrex.com)) Yes, but labels, tape and adhesive strips should be removed if possible. You can simply cut off of the label as the integrity of the bag isn't important to the recycler.

There are things NOT included, a few examples: No pet food or frozen food bags

Store locations: for bag recycling: confusion about what people can put into the bins, only 1 type?

*Action Item: Catherine is going to contact Market Basket to find out why their instructions keep changing about their plastic bag collection bins*

*Action Item: Newsletter item educating the City Residents on Film Recycling*

*Action Item: TerraCycle crew could monitor the Film collections - BUT, to be decided by that crew at their next subcommittee meeting and report back to full committee*

### Update on Compost Collection

City purchased 150 bins- promoting a free bin with a compost subscription to Black Earth Referral Code Reward: both the subscriber and the new subscriber get reduced cost (\$5) on their subscription

Press release going out 12/6/23

Digital flyer (in both Spanish and English) will be sent to Nancy to share on Facebook

### Market Scrap Commodity Update - Joel - table to a future meeting

Goal: introduce background market for waste scrap commodities and how it effects the costs of waste services

### January Meeting Planning/Agenda Items: Joel

January Meeting: voted to hold as regularly scheduled, first Tuesday of the month

Winter Social Gathering? Joel to send out email

Work to do with 2 upcoming events: 1/13 Styrofoam & 2/10 Repair Cafe

### **Newsletter**

Discuss Content: December, Holidays, Early Winter

Compost initiative

December curbside collection calendar

Lucie, Joel and Janelle work on the Newsletter - seems to be flowing - BUT anyone on the committee at any time is encouraged to submit something - even an interesting book, podcast, book YouTube video (with facts,) send them to Janelle and Lucie for consideration

### **Open Time**

General Announcements & Guest Participation Welcome if time permits

To Go Items:

Cameron: Straws, styrofoam plates - further regulation? - school trays

Wants to focus on putting these & more into the compost stream

*ACTION: Joel will reach out to Swampscott's program/ban/requirement for to-go items*

If the committee is interest in learning more about their programs, Joel can reach out to them and report back to the Committee

*Action Item: Repair Cafe- Demi - sending out sign ups soon for next Repair Cafe*

### **January Agenda Items**

Follow up on action items above

Potential meeting future topics

Sink Disposable Education- including flushable wipes

Black plastic education: ok to put in recycle bin now

Plastic film

Nip Bottles: Cameron- Maine put a 10C on them, Cameron can try to find out how it's working

Committee's role/lack of role in the City's consideration in banning nip bottles

We have an advisory-type of role - The committee can write to the City Council as a whole with data on who the committee

*Action: Jen: sending image of Salem News article about banning nips at the City Council meeting*

Balloons: the City Council is discussing banning inflated helium balloons to reduce pollution and environmental waste. They're still workshopping the language. Possibly a topic for a City Council letter

OIG Free class on being in Committees or working with Committees

*Action: Jen will resend the link*

Committee By Laws: Jen suggests a small document for the committee, created by a subcommittee for us to lay down exactly who does what and when. Jen and Joel are interested in being a part of it.

Meeting adjourned