



Salem Recycles Committee

Approved Meeting Minutes

January 2, 2024

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

Attending:

Mari Alix, Jen Birenbach (Clerk), Bruce Cohen, Joel Dashnaw (Chair), Demi Fox, Cameron Fullerton, Carol Hautau (Vice-Chair), Daniell Hepting, Nancy Gilberg, Sandy O'Donnell, Lucie Patrowicz, Brian Romer
City Liaison: Janelle Rolke
Absent: Catherine Deyo,
Guest: Ward 7 Councillor Andy Varela

Approve December Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve: Jen
Second: Daniell
Roll call Vote: unanimous

Review Prep for Upcoming Events

Styrofoam Collection Event (1/13)

Sign up sheet went out, a few more folks needed, announcements and publicity is out - all set to go!
Members are encouraged to share the announcement to promote the event

Repair Cafe & TerraCycle Collection Event (2/10)

Demi gave an update, subcommittee meeting will happen 1/4, registration is ready to go, event is reserved, announcement is on Facebook

BookSwap announcement is up on Facebook already

New Business

Black Earth Compost Subscriptions - Janelle

On 12/5/23, Salem had 858 compost subscriptions, as of 1/2/24 there 909 subscriptions, most subscriptions in such a short time ever (51) - moving toward 1,000 subscription goal when all Salem subscriptions receive a reduction in cost.

Janelle is working to grow compost drop off sites at publicly owned locations- Mack Park is going well, it has 2 bins for \$247/month and they're well used. There are 2 new possible locations for compost bins: Pickman Park (Ward 7) and Palmer Cove (Ward 5.) Janelle is trying to locate low usage areas. Black Earth isn't so dense around Pickman Park.

Nips Proposed Ban and Balloon Ordinance, Councillor Varela

Nips: A ban happens through the licensing board, and this is currently held up with Board. The City of New Bedford is currently in litigation with liquor stores over this issue. The Salem Board wants to see what happens with that ruling before taking any action. Councillor Varela has talked with local liquor store owners and they are very concerned with this issue - they claim nips are 10-20% of their business, but have not provided any proof of this high percentage. However, there is also a concern related to active drinking while driving and keeping the empties in the car. One example: recently, a driver with nips at their feet was cited for hitting a pedestrian.

It was noted that Plymouth is putting a nip ban up for a vote this month. We'll keep an eye on what happens.
Bottle Bill: no action lately

Balloon Ordinance: Councillor Varela - In discussing "banning" balloons, Councillor Varela has found there are many small business people/balloon professionals who rely on helium and air balloons. They even take an oath in the trade to educate their clients on how to dispose of the balloons. Of course we do not want to hurt small businesses but the City could set usage-style limits on helium balloons, as they create the larger problem. Ward 5 Councillor Jeff Cohen will be the new Chair of Environment, Health and Safety Committee. It's anticipated he will want to engage on how to address helium balloons indoors and outdoors. One option for the City is to encourage non-helium balloons. The committee discussed that many in the public are not aware that balloons are not recyclable. The committee could provide some education on this issue.

City Compost Ordinance: Councillor Varela

Councillor Varela has been talking with Conor Miller at Black Earth Compost. They are currently working to create a pricing structure to incentivize businesses to keep costs low and not scare businesses about the cost. A major concern is being sure Black Earth can provide multiple pick ups per week to be sure there are no public smell, health, rodent or waste issues.

Letters of Support/Opinion: Nips, Balloons, Compost

When asked what the committee can do to support these efforts, Councillor Varela encourages the committee to know what's happening and spread the word to encourage active participation in the process. The largest worry is that the public won't be engaged.

In-Person only Meetings - Janelle

Janelle arrives 40 minutes prior and usually the video equipment for the zoom meeting works out - but it can take the entire 40 minutes to get it to work. She will try multiple lap tops, there are camera issues, sound issues, etc. It's very time consuming and frustrating. She requests that we consider having in-person only meetings. The committee discussed the pros & cons to in-person only these days. It was worked out that the video was the real problem, not the call-in. Conference room phones with speakers are no longer available. The committee along with Councillor Varela agreed unanimously to continue using Zoom for virtual attendees, but only use the call-in function until the camera functions are reliable. The committee can evaluate this decision at a later date.

Moving forward the language on the meeting announcements will now read: The primary method of conducting the Recycling Committee's business is in person. For anyone who would like to join the meeting virtually, they are welcome to dial in for audio only you can call: ###-###-####

ACTION: Janelle to update the Announcement/Agenda for the public

Newsletter - January, New Year, Winter

The newsletter has begun - There is content for reading and listening.

Idea: lots of people want to purge items from their house in the new year, let's provide ideas for how to sustainably get rid of unwanted items.

Christmas trees: these can be dropped off at Palmer Cove and will post when they no longer accept them.

Future topics and outreach:

Inform the public about where our trash goes and how it's treated, make it real for them - remove the "away" from "thrown away." Salem trash is sent to Saugus incinerator which meets capacity on some days, which means some of Salem's trash could be sent on a train to other states for incineration.

February: Why Waste Reduction Matters

Myth Busting - a great focus moving forward in the newsletter and using other methods.

Jen sending out informative video on lithium battery recycling

Communicating with the Residents:

Committee is generally interested in figuring out what communication and messaging to focus on moving forward Method is challenging - have to make it meaningful to the individual - they need to agree with the value of changing behavior and recycling properly

Mailer budget exists, but sending out information can be challenging. The WM calendars are mailed out in sections with the water bills- 1/3rd at a time. This method is not time sensitive.

Broadening our audience - The committee is interested in how to reach new audience/residents/businesses that are not currently dialed in.

Open Time/New Items

Upcoming MRF Tour in February: WM North Billerica Single Stream MRF - tentative date 2/7
Mayor Pangallo is attending - more information coming out

Film Plastic: Janelle is working on videos with the Mayors office and Regina from DEI. These will be in English and Spanish. The committee is not interested in getting a subcommittee on this, but letting it blend into current methods.

By-Laws: Jen will draft something (1 to 2 pages) and send out to committee for input

“Appointed by the Mayor” topic - Jen - many committees are also appointed by the Mayor, it’s not different from any other kind of committee/commission, etc. Recycling Committee was left out of the City of Salem Manual, Jen reached out to the City Clerk to find out why and the City Clerk did not know why. Janelle will ask the Clerk’s office about that. Jen will send a follow up note soon.

The committee does not have a dedicated City Councillor attached to our committee. Some committees do, some do not.

Other Appointed by the Mayor committees - we’re not alone but left out: Cemetery Commission, Historical Commission, Race Equity Commission, Planning Board, Community Preservation Committee (public members), Public Art Commission, 1 member of the Tree Commission, Salem Bicycling Advisory Committee, Scholarship and Education Committee, Winter Island manager.

Agenda Items for February Meeting:

Repair Cafe - Demi updating on event

Carlton School Composting - Janelle updating on how event went

Scrap Commodity markets - Joel discussing

BookSwap 3/23 - CLC - Janelle needs assist with managing some of the event

Zero Waste Day 3/22-3/24- multiple activities at the same time
Horace Man doc shredding & E-Waste

Public Education/Growing our Audience

By-Laws discussion

January Meeting adjourned