



City of Cambridge

Communication No. 21

IN CITY COUNCIL

May 15, 1989

COUNCILLOR WALSH

ORDERED: That the memorandum, dated May 11, 1989, as recommended by City Manager Robert W. Healy be accepted and that the Environment Committee recommends this to the full City Council for adoption said memorandum and its strong support for the recycling program.

In City Council May 15, 1989.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of 9 members.

Attest:- Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Joseph E. Connarton".
Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.



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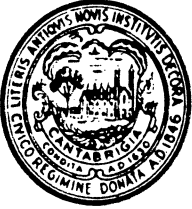
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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL. 498-9011

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

ROBERT W. HEALY

City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI

Deputy City Manager

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Subcommittee on the Environment

FROM: Robert W. Healy
City Manager

DATE: May 11, 1989

SUBJECT: Update on Recycling in Cambridge

Status of Materials Recovery Facility (MRF):

Since the last meeting of the Subcommittee in January, we have been investigating the various possibilities for an interim recycling program in Cambridge due to the delays the state is experiencing in constructing the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF). Currently, the state Department of Environmental Quality Engineering is conducting a Chapter 21E site assessment of the proposed location for the MRF on Smith Place. This assessment is the first step towards the state's taking of the site by eminent domain. It is estimated that the eminent domain process and construction of the facility will take approximately three years. In the meantime, the state is attempting to locate other sites in neighboring communities.

Regional Planning for MRF:

We have also been meeting with DEQE staff and representatives of the surrounding communities which will participate in the MRF to engage in pre-planning efforts and to discuss possible interim recycling arrangements. A committee of citizen representatives from these communities has also been established with Tom Clinton and Powell Woodward (alternate) representing the City of Cambridge.

In these meetings, we have been able to share information and questions on a variety of recycling topics. All of the communities have been experiencing difficulties in locating and maintaining contracts with vendors due to the fluctuations in the market for recyclables, particularly newspapers. The number of end-markets (companies which actually recycle the materials) is extremely limited as are users for the recycled materials. The committee has urged the state to develop economic incentives for recyclers and to promote the use of recycled products. Until the end-markets are sparked in such a manner, there will continue to be a glut of recyclable materials in the state. Particularly with newspapers, we anticipate periods where we will be forced to pay a broker to haul the commodity away.

Recently, we met with several representatives of companies which dispose of trash or collect recyclable goods. Several companies expressed an interest in working with the City of Cambridge to develop a pilot curbside recycling program in one or more neighborhoods in the city. Since there are many issues to be addressed before we engage in curbside recycling in our more congested areas, we have asked the DEQE staff to assist us with our planning efforts. It appears that there may be some funds in the FY90 budget to assist us with planning a pilot curbside program.

Voluntary Drop-off Program:

As a result of the delay in opening the MRF, we will initiate an interim recycling program in June. This program will involve the voluntary drop-off of glass and newspapers by Cambridge residents on the second Saturday of each month with June 10th as the opening day. BFI has agreed to set up containers at their site in East Cambridge and a second drop-off center will be established at the salt storage area on Sherman Street. Residents may bring newspaper bundled with string or in paper bags. Clear glass must be separated from colored glass (brown and green).

BFI will be responsible for transporting the materials to an intermediate processing facility and will receive payment for the materials. (The price for newspapers is currently very low and we may have to pay to dispose of this material in the future). The City will receive a credit toward our tipping fee at the transfer station; we are hopeful that the volume of materials recycled will result in savings to the City since our tipping fee is currently \$70 per ton. At a similar drop-off center in Jamaica Plain, approximately 30 tons of newspapers and glass are collected each month (although it should be noted that participation is not limited to J.P. residents).

My office has been meeting with interested residents since January and an enthusiastic pool of volunteers are prepared to assist with the planning and implementation of the interim program. We are currently preparing an extensive publicity campaign using local media, cable tv, community newsletters, and a flyer to notify residents of the upcoming program. The Public Works rubbish trucks will also carry large posters advertising the program. In addition, committee members are developing a recycling curriculum for use in the public schools to educate Cambridge youngsters on the growing need for resource recovery.

Composting of Leaves and Yard Waste:

Public Works Commissioner William Sommers has been investigating the possibility of developing a composting program with representatives of DEQE. They have located what appears to be a useable site on city property near the reservoir in Weston, pending approval by the Weston Conservation Commission. DEQE has funds for such a program but we must first survey the site, devise a plan for pick-up and disposal of the leaves, and conduct an analysis of the costs involved. Public Works is currently developing plans for this program.

Plastics Recycling in the Cambridge Public Schools:

A firm called Plastics Again is working with the School Department to recycle the plastic trays and utensils used in the school cafeterias. The polystyrene is made into tiny pellets which are used in insulation and packaging materials. A pilot program in Lexington has proven to be successful, not only recycling the plastic but also reducing the community's waste stream.

A processing plant has been built in Leominster but all of the permits have not yet been granted. In the meantime, company representatives have toured all of the Cambridge schools to investigate the storage and disposal of trash.

Recycling in City Hall:

As outlined in a March 20th report to the City Council, we have developed a plan for recycling in City offices. Computer paper has been recycled in City Hall since 1983. Currently, an employee in the Data Processing Department is responsible for collecting waste paper from the department's computer mainframe as well as computer paper from the Revaluation office and the Payroll Department for recycling. The City has a contract with a vendor who pays the City for the paper (approximately \$1000 per year at current levels).

Each department will have a Recycling Coordinator who will educate fellow employees and ensure participation. Both computer paper and white memo paper will be saved in separate boxes. The program has not yet been initiated as we are negotiating an amendment to the current contract. By expanding our recycling program in City Hall, we will not only profit from this innovative reuse of our own generated trash but we will also set an excellent example for the community.

In City Council May 15, 1989

The Committee on Environment conducted a public hearing on Thursday, May 11, 1989 beginning at 7:10 p.m. in the Ackermann Room, City Hall.

The purpose of this public hearing was threefold: 1) To receive an update on the Recycling Committee's activities; 2) to receive recommendations by the City Manager regarding the establishment of an Interim Recycling Program; and, 3) to receive a briefing on the current activities of the C.J. Mabardy Company as it relates to its site.

Vice-Mayor Alice K. Wolf, Chair of the above Committee, convened the hearing, introduced all members present and stated the purpose and format of the hearing.

At this time, the Committee heard from Mr. Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager, who proceeded to outline the City Manager's recommendations as it relates to recycling and to provide an update on the status of the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF). Mr. Rossi stated that it was the City's goal to reduce up to 25% of its solid waste collection and costs. He commented that the stated goal was a realistic one and would result in providing both an environmental and economical benefit to the City and to its residents. Mr. Rossi touched on the following issues: status of the MRF; regional planning for the MRF; voluntary drop-off program; composting; and public sector involvement in plastics and paper recycling.

Vice-Mayor Wolf, commenting on the MRF, stated that even though its completion is three years from now that the facility and proposed Smith Place location has strong neighborhood and citizen support and such support should be reiterated to the DEQE.

The Committee then heard from Ms. Maura Smith, Executive Assistant to the City Manager, who provided a detailed account of the Recycling Committee's activities and described some of the difficulties that have been encountered by other municipalities in the recycling effort. Those problems include entering in and maintaining contracts with vendors, market saturation and storage/disposal issues.

Ms. Smith then described the education campaign that the City was planning to promote the voluntary drop-off program, slated to commence on June 10, 1989. She further stated that this drop-off program was not negating curb-side pick-up and that the Recycling Committee would be considering a pilot program for implementation in the future.

Vice-Mayor Wolf questioned the role of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as it relates to the purchase of trucks for curb-side pick-up.

Deputy City Manager Rossi stated that funds might be available in the next State budget.

Public Works Commissioner William Sommers outlined the proposed composting program that his Department will experiment with during the Fall of 1989. This pilot program will be limited to the public sector and not residents because of the need to collect and analyze needed data (i.e. costs, site survey, etc.) before a large-scale program could be offered to residents.

Vice-Mayor Wolf questioned the roles of the universities in the recycling program.

Ms. Smith responded that the universities have recycling programs in effect on a school by school basis and would not be involved in the City's efforts

Councillor Francis Duehay strongly urged for a concentrated and ongoing public education campaign to inform and encourage City residents to participate in the recycling programs.

Councillor Sheila Russell questioned safety issues surrounding the drop-off program at the East Cambridge site.

Ms. Smith responded that cones would be in place to separate truck and residential traffic.

The Committee then heard from Mr. Mitchell Goldstein of 17 Normandy Terrace, who described the frustrations and concerns of area residents with the current operations of C.J. Mabardy.

Mr. Rossi informed the Committee and Mr. Goldstein of the most recent investigation by City personnel regarding this Company. Mr. Rossi, at the request of Vice-Mayor Wolf and Councillor Russell, will provide the full City Council with a detailed report of the City's enforcement policies and activities at this site.

Councillor William Walsh offered the following motion:

That the memorandum, dated May 11, 1989, as recommended by City Manager Robert W. Healy be accepted and that the Environment Committee recommends this to the full City Council for adoption said memorandum and its strong support for the recycling program.

The hearing was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

For the Committee,

Vice-Mayor Alice K. Wolf
Chair

Enclosure: Memorandum from Robert W. Healy, City Manager dated 5/11/89

21. S-367

Comm. from John E. Flynn, Deputy City Clerk,
transmitting the report of Vice-Mayor Alice
K. Wolf, Chair, Committee on Environment Re:
Recycling Committee's activities; City Mana-
ger's recommendations on establishing an
Interim Recycling Program & activities of the
C.J. Mabardy Co. (Order Adopted Filed within).

In City Council,

May 15, 1989

5-15-89

Placed on file.

Order Adopted