



City of Watertown

Solid Waste and Recycling Advisory Committee

Date: November 5, 2025
Location: 124 Orchard Street or virtual
Subject: Minutes: Solid Waste Recycling Advisory Committee (SWARC) Meeting November 4, 2025

In Attendance:

Matt Bacon
Andrew Thompson
Eileen Ryan
Lise Paul
Russ Arico
Martin Solomon

Meeting commenced at 4:34 pm

- I. Minutes approved without amendment

- III. DPW updates
 - Republic Strike
 - The City is still in the process of negotiation with Republic to ensure that the taxpayers do not pay for extra costs incurred during the strike.

 - Other DPW Updates
 - i. Recycling calendar mailing by early December
 - ii. Recycling Event for Styrofoam, textiles and electronics will not be possible until Earth Day in April, 2026. Two additional events are planned for 2026: June or July and October or November.
 - iii. Swap Shop – Thanks to Watertown Faces Climate Change volunteers, an additional Saturday was added on November 1. The Swap Shop will start up again in April.

- IV. Committee member updates
 - Alana Solomon has an additional interview before hopefully being appointed thereby completing the membership of the committee.

- V. Compost Program
 - Composting enrollment numbers next meeting
 - Matt will send out a postcard next week
 - The City will consider a billboard advertisement on Main Street or Coolidge Square on Mount Auburn Street, or both next year, depending on the success of the mailing campaign.
- VI. Refrigerants discussion
 - Refrigerators, AC units and humidifier/de-humidifiers contain refrigerants that if are powerful greenhouse gases. If the appliances are not disposed of correctly, the refrigerants can leak into the atmosphere.
 - Matt has had discussions with staff at Republic. Republic stated that they evacuate the coolant from refrigerators, air conditioners and humidifiers/de-humidifiers. The coolant is recycled. Once coolant has been removed, the appliances are sent to Newbury Auto Sales in Newbury, which is a junk yard and will only accept appliances that have no coolant. Matt will follow up with Republic for more details such as the number of refrigerant-containing appliances picked up by Republic in 2025, whether they subcontract the refrigerant-evacuation process, and whether they have any documentation.
- VII. Solid Waste metrics included in the 2022 Climate and Energy Plan.
 - Reviewed the 4 metrics in the plan that related to Solid Waste.
 - Composting households: The City is already way ahead of the 2030 target.
 - Committee recommended the addition of annual targets to ensure that 2030 targets are met. 4% or 5% improvement will be required each year.
 - Committee recommended a few clarifications that Matt will review.
- VIII. “Skip the Stuff” ordinance – No update from last meeting. Still scheduled for City Council vote in November
- IX. Upcoming meeting format – in person for December, Virtual for at least the months of January and February. Further months’ format will be discussed at the February meeting.
- X. Open Discussion
 - Discussion of the economics of composting and recycling. Cost to the City of Watertown for recycling depends on how clean the recycling is (no plastic bags, etc.) City audits and follows up with non-compliance.
- XI. The meeting adjourned at 5:36pm

Minutes submitted by Lise Paul
