



Zero Waste Arlington January 2025 - Minutes

Date: 1/16/25

Time: 7pm

Location: Location: 51 Grove Street Arlington MA; 2nd floor conference room

Attendees:

Committee members: Priya Sankalia, Larry Slotnick, Paul Goldberg, Scott Mullen, Sarah Kmetz, Jennifer Campbell, Emily Dertz, Margie Bell, Jim Ballin, Charlotte Milan

Non-Members: Rachel Oliveri, Carol Lurie

Minute submitted by: Jennifer

Agenda

1. Old Business
 - a. Review and approve [December 2024 ZWA Meeting Minutes](#) (5 minutes)
2. Ongoing Business
 - a. Zero Waste Town plan next steps (15 minutes)
 - b. 2025 warrant article - due 1/31/25 at noon (25 minutes)
 - c. Town Day 2025 meeting preparation (15 minutes)
 - d. Recycling Coordinator update (10 minutes)
 - e. Arlington Schools Sustainability Project Manager update (5 minutes)
 - f. Subcommittee Reports (15 minutes)
 - i. Reduce Single Use
 - ii. Zero Waste Town plan
 - iii. Legislative
 - iv. Community Engagement
 - v. Residential Food Waste Diversion
3. New Business

Minutes

1. Old Business

Reviewed and approved December ZWA meeting minutes
Unanimous vote to approve (7 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions).
(Paul and Larry not present for vote)

2. Ongoing Business

2a. & 2b. Town Zero Waste plan & 2025 warrant article

Warrant article proposed language:

“To see if the Town will vote to allocate funding to develop a Zero Waste Plan for the Town of Arlington” (or language as otherwise approved by Town Counsel).

Unanimous vote to approve the proposed warrant article above (8 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions)
(Larry not present for vote)

Background:

ZWA is pursuing a Zero Waste Plan for Arlington through a Town Meeting warrant article because we are requesting Town funding; we also want to get Town stakeholder buy-in on our goals to better understand our waste metrics and be more strategic and impactful in our waste reduction initiatives.

We estimate this plan would cost \$40,000, based on other town ZW plans. We'll provide a \$35-50K budget range in the RFP. We won't ask for an exact amount in the warrant article but will need to ask for an exact amount when we go before the Finance Committee.

Margie and Emily have been in conversations with Eric Helmuth, who is supportive and recommended seeking distinct appropriations from the Town for this effort. Jim Feeney asked if this request was too soon, given the new waste contract.

Talia Fox, Sustainability Coordinator in charge of the Town's Net Action Plan, confirmed that this warrant article would not interfere with their funding request.

We discussed the question of who to approach first, Town Meeting or the Finance Committee, and determined this order was correct.

Priya spoke to Jennifer Susse on the Finance Committee, who thinks this amount of money will be a difficult ask.

Larry: Finance Committee might be wary of an ad hoc volunteer committee (vs. Town department under the Town Manager purview) being awarded these Master Plan funds (\$25-50K).

We decided it's still worth asking. Maybe the Finance Committee would approve partial funding. It will be important to present arguments about ROI, future savings, and how the Town's master plan and net zero plan will be positively impacted by ZW plan outcomes.

Next steps:

Margie will submit this language to Town Counsel for review prior to submitting the warrant article.

Margie, Emily, and/or Amy will file the finalized warrant article language to the Town by the deadline on 1/31/25 at noon.

The committee will prepare to present this warrant article to the Finance Committee in late February. This is likely to be the biggest hurdle. Eric Helmuth offered to write a letter of support in advance of this meeting.

Charlotte will check with Mike Rademacher, Director of Public Works, regarding potential RDP/state funding and any conflicts with the new containerization system.

Mully and Charlotte had a meeting with DEP regarding the ZW plan; notes and next steps forthcoming. There may be other sources of state funding available.

Significant RFP work will be needed. Carol Lurie does RFP work with VHB Consultants and may be able to offer guidance. Town employees Talia Fox and David Morgan also have expertise with RFPs. Margie has provided a [spreadsheet](#) with samples of local zero waste plans and RFPs, including the zero waste plans for [Cambridge](#), [Somerville](#), and [Lexington](#).

2c. Town Day 2025 meeting preparation & water bottle collection

We've started a [Town Day request document](#) to prepare our requests for Ashley Maher, Select Board Administrator, in advance of Town Day 2025.

Our priorities will be to:

1. Identify the top 2 or 3 things that would make the biggest impact for our booths.
2. Position these changes as something that would benefit those running Town Day and those attending Town Day (rather than something that furthers ZWA goals).
3. Have some alternative asks in case the primary asks are rejected.
4. Ask Ashley about the possibility of a ZWA seat on the Town Day Committee – Sarah expressed an interest and willingness to take on this role.

Water truck requests:

- Location request: corner of Mass Ave & Court Street (include map screen shot from last year), with confirmed access to electricity.

Reduce Single Use requests:

- Co-locate participating restaurants and RSU in the same zone.
- Checkbox on the Town Day application form so that restaurants can self-select to join (consider language such as Yes / No / If No, Why Not?).

No special request for the general ZWA booth, except for preferred proximity to these other two booths.

For this initial meeting, we will focus on specific doable asks and not large structural change such as Town Day wide single-use policies, etc.

Once we get our requests in order, we will decide whether to send them ahead to Ashley or wait until the meeting with her. Emily will follow up with Ashley on scheduling a meeting date.

Water bottle collection for 2025 Town Day:

Storage: per Charlotte, there will be plenty of storage space for water bottles in the new expanded recycling center at 33 Ryder Street, starting in March.

Washing: We decided that home dishwashers are sufficient, as long as the water bottles are fully dried afterwards and stored in covered containers or plastic bags. For future large-scale washing, Amy could coordinate a washing at First Parish; would cost around \$50.

Current collection: We have 2 (?) boxes of clean/dry water bottles currently being stored at 33 Ryder St. We have offered these to Rachel as needed for the Arlington schools. Amy has 2 boxes of unwashed bottles from Ottoson Middle School.

Future collection: plan a discussion on collection strategy and coordination with schools, Swap Shed, etc.

2d. Recycling Coordinator update

The recycling center and swap shed is moving into expanded space at 33 Ryder St, which will offer ample storage for water bottles, tabling supplies, etc. Charlotte hopes to move into this space in time for the next indoor swap shed on March 9. She will invite ZWA to a welcome event when they open.

No movement on the containerization contract.

2e. Arlington Schools Sustainability Project Manager update

Current zero waste efforts Rachel is coordinating at the schools:

- Lunch waste diversion: Gibbs and Dallin elementaries have switched from plastic utensils to reusables, a major win (the food services director is the gatekeeper for this and was supportive, especially after students got involved to make the ask). Gibbs, Ottoson, and AHS now provide ketchup pumps instead of single-use packets. Some schools are now providing food share tables for “give and take” packaged cafeteria food items; staff returns the excess to the kitchen.
- Green teams continue to do great work—elementaries are hosting monthly events with music and trash grabbers for fun outdoor litter pickup. Arlington High School has a “Slash the Trash” effort and is working on a climate resolution.
- Textile recycling continues at all schools except the high school.
- AHS-APS district office now has a Family Welcome and Resource Center, which functions as a swap shed for Arlington public school families. Provides clothes, water bottles, school supplies, etc. Supplies come from the Swap Shed manager, school lost and found, etc.

2f. Subcommittee reports

Legislative subcommittee: new session started January 1, but no committees have reconvened yet for Plastic Free MA or Mass Product Stewardship Council. Bills ZWA has supported (expanded bottle bill, extended producer responsibility, plastic reduction, etc.) haven't been filed yet, but Paul and Mully will keep us posted as the session moves forward. The bill filing deadline is in a few weeks.

In the meantime, Paul encourages us to call/email Senator Cindy Friedman and Rep. Sean Garballey to advocate for committee meeting transparency at the MA State House. Request more openness regarding committee meeting votes, how business is conducted, rules around the timeliness of bills being reported out and voted on, etc. Ask whether they support

reform, especially since MA voters passed a ballot resolution on this topic with a 72 percent majority in November.

3. New Business

Larry is in ongoing conversations with Sushant Bajracharya at the Mystic River Watershed Association, who is leading a policy discussion about trash reduction in the watershed areas, including a feasibility analysis on installing hydration stations. The project is 50 percent funded by the EPA. He invited Larry to present at a February 6 policy meeting at the Arlington MYRWA office regarding how to budget funding for their waterways protection project. Larry is sharing our ZWA experience with water refill stations, including the politics and financing of the project to date and getting \$50K earmarked in state funding. Fruitful connection.

Charlotte will get in touch with Sushant to see if litter collection in public spaces is also on his radar, since litter in the public spaces, parks, and waterways of the business district has been a growing concern from business owners.

Meeting adjourned: 8:33pm