

NYC-BRANY Planning Meeting for 2012-2013
Wednesday, July 11, 2012
OROE Offices, New York, NY

The New York City BRANY Planning Committee convened at 10 am in the conference room at the Office of Recycling Outreach and Education, 51 Chambers Street, New York City. In attendance were John Halenar; David Hurd; Jayme Roskopf; Ben Rose; and new member Amy Marpman, with MaryEllen Etienne, Cathy Resler, and state BRANY coordinator Jim Gilbert phoning in and participating via speaker phone. NYSAR³ Region 1 board rep Ken Armellino was also in attendance to participate in the discussion about positioning NYC BRANY meetings as joint Regions 1, 2 and 3 meetings.

2011-2012 Summary

The meeting began with a recap of last year's program topics, including eco-labeling in September; adaptive reuse in November with a field trip to the Farley Post Office building, scheduled to become the new Moynihan Train Station; markets update in January 2012 (steel, textiles, glass); various solid waste management topics in March, including EPA's Sustainable Materials Management Program, an update on solid waste issues in NYC's PlaNYC, and the connection between waste management and climate change; legislative update in May, with Katherine Barbeau from the Product Stewardship Council, Resa Dimino, and Ken Armellino, representing NYSAR³'s Legislative Committee.

Meeting Dates

Meetings in 2011-2012 were scheduled for the second Wednesday of the month, with a couple of exceptions, and except for the field trip and one meeting at EPA headquarters downtown, were held at City College in northern Manhattan. The committee decided to maintain the second Wednesday schedule, except where noted, making next year's schedule: Wednesday, Sept. 12; Thursday, Nov. 8 (because the second Wednesday would conflict with the fall recycling conference in Cooperstown and the first Wednesday would be the day after Election Day); Wednesday, Jan. 9, 2013; Wednesday, March 13; and Wednesday, May 15 (because the second Wednesday would conflict with the Federation conference at Lake George, which next year is scheduled for May 5-8). Our next planning meeting would tentatively be held on Wednesday, July 10, 2013.

Dates are always subject to change to accommodate speaker availability; venue availability; and other unforeseen circumstances.

Regarding meeting locations, Ben noted that a major renovation project is going to be underway at City College and may make our normal meeting room there unavailable. He said he would check on the availability of other rooms and let us know. We also need to check with Shane Nelson at EPA to determine if the meeting space is available there and we discussed the possibility of securing meeting space at St. John's University's downtown site. Cathy Resler also said that she could make meeting space available at Columbia University, and we tentatively scheduled the Nov. 8 meeting for Columbia.

We also tentatively scheduled another field trip for the January meeting.

Tentative Meeting Topics

Then we began a spirited discussion on potential program topics, and eventually tentatively settled on the following:

--Sept. 12 (location to be determined) The Problem with Numbers: Our newest committee member, Amy Marpman from Great Forest, suggested that it would be good to discuss the problems associated with reporting recycling numbers, whether for municipal programs or RecycleMania or other programs that require reports. How do you calculate these numbers, how accurate are they, what do they actually mean? During the discussion, we determined that the City's Commercial Waste Characterization Study should be coming out soon, and we will try to use that study as the hook for this discussion. Subsequent to our planning meeting, an interesting discussion broke out on the NYSAR³ list serve regarding the comparison between NYC's diversion numbers and numbers that appear to be a lot better in other cities like San Francisco. That discussion seemed to point up the fact that this is an important topic for anyone interested in understanding what all the numbers mean. Amy volunteered to serve as shepherd for this meeting and will report back to us on what she finds out about the waste characterization study.

--Nov. 8 (Thursday) tentatively at Columbia University, School and College Recycling with an Emphasis on Food Waste. A pilot program in a small number of NYC schools has proved successful, with collected food waste being taken to Fresh Kills for composting. We can try to get one of the Moms from the group of parents that supported this pilot, and David said he would try to get someone from DOE to speak about the planned expansion of the program. Cathy also volunteered to show Columbia's new Rocket and talk about the university's food waste efforts. We have also had a request from Matt Malina to discuss school recycling in general. I'm not exactly sure what Matt has in mind, but I think there's enough confusion among school officials, parents, and the general public that it might be good to go over the recycling requirements in City schools, which are required by law to recycle paper and cardboard, beverage

cartons, bottles, cans, metal and foil, as well as “bulky” items. The DOE also has a new “sustainability initiative,” which could be covered during this presentation.

--Jan. 9 Reuse and Strategic Partnerships (field trip to Gowanus). There are several reuse facilities now located in the Gowanus area including Build It Green’s new facility, Film Biz Recycling, and a Lower East Side Ecology Center facility. We’ll talk about all of them and try to get one of them to host the meeting (preferably Film Biz Recycling because I think that would be the most interesting location). Ben and MaryEllen will try to set this one up.

--March 13 Markets Update. This time we’ll talk about markets that are being developed for e-waste as a result of the recently enacted product stewardship legislation. We will attempt to get a speaker from WeRecycle or perhaps Andriana Kontovrakis from SIMS. It was suggested that perhaps David Hirschler from DSNY would also be able to help us get someone to talk about the various collection programs in the City. To fill out the program, we’ll also invite Todd Ellis from RBRC to talk about battery recycling, both alkaline and rechargeable.

--May 15 Legislative Update. Since our regular attendees had requested that we include a legislative update annually, we tentatively designated the May meeting for that topic. We’ll monitor the legislative situation throughout the coming months and determine if there is enough legislative activity to warrant a full program.

If this or any of the other program topics fall through, a back-up program topic that was proposed was “public space and public event” recycling.

Miscellaneous

--It had been suggested that we might increase meeting attendance, especially among current NYSAR³ members, if we positioned at least some of our BRANY/Region 2 meetings as joint meetings with Region 1 (Long Island) and Region 3 (Mid-Hudson). As a starting point, we decided that when meeting notices are prepared and sent to our NYC BRANY mailing list, we will also send a notice to Ken Armellino who will get the information out to NYSAR³’s Region 1 members as well as ALIRO members. Ken also volunteered to get the notices to the NYSAR³ administrative assistant and Region 3 board rep with a request to send the notice out to Region 3 members.

--Jim Gilbert, who replaced Brenda Grober as the statewide BRANY coordinator, was asked for input. Jim said he’d like to see the BRANY meetings deal more with buying recycled and with market development and creating demand for recycled-content products. We agreed and said that we try to tie those topics in with our programs whenever possible, but because our BRANY meetings in NYC

are also positioned as general Region 2 meetings, we have sometimes gotten pretty far afield from the original topics that BRANY was designed to address.

We also talked briefly about the need for possibly “rebranding” the BRANY franchise and possibly renaming the program to make the purpose more clear to those outside of NYSAR³. It was determined that that would be a good discussion for another day, and the meeting was adjourned.

Please let me know if missed anything that we discussed or if I misinterpreted anything. Also, please let me know if you’d like to volunteer to help put together any of the programs or if you at least can try to line up a speaker or two.

If you already volunteered to handle one of the programs, please keep me posted on how the planning is going and if you need any help. We’ll touch base again via e-mail or conference call as we get closer to resuming our meeting schedule.

John