

Oakland Landlord Committee

Meeting Minutes

March 13, 2018

Landlords Present: Mike Kelly, Milly Sass, Patrick Altdorfer, Michael Orlando, Bob Kelly, Ken Eckenrode, Chuck Perlick, David Manthei, Elena Zaitsoff, Melissa McSwigan, Bob Eckenrode, Marius Altdorfer

OPDC staff present: Rebekkah Ranallo, Wanda Wilson, Jodi Lincoln, Liz Gray, Hannah Green

Click [here](#) to view the meeting slides

City DPW representatives present: Bill Klimovich, Shawn Wigle, Jerry Seifert

RRanallo began the meeting and thanked everyone for coming. She announces she is now point person at OPDC for the landlord committee.

RRanallo introduced the main agenda topic: improving waste management and recycling. Reported observations that most of the issues in Oakland are from inadequate containerization and lack of education. Most students are not just throwing trash around the property haphazardly. Need more bins and higher-quality lidded bins that last longer.

LGray reported on her observations of Oakland trash. Garbage can requirements: the can must be 35 gallons or less, have a secure, tight-fitting lid, and have a grip/handle. Lids help with pest control and handles help DPW crews lift the can. The slide presentation included pictures of bad examples; including overflowing garbage cans with no lids (see slide 4 of slideshow).

LGray presented the Toter 32 gallon EVR Universal garbage can as a recommended solution. They retail for \$59.98 (price is discounted when ordered in bulk), have a 12-year warranty, are extremely durable and are fitted with wheels and an attached lid (see slide 5). Toter also supplies recycling bins (see slide 6 for more recycling bin requirements). LGray suggested landlords watch video showing car trying to crush bin on Toter's website—shows durability.

LGray also showed models of good examples in Oakland of storing and screening the bins to make the neighborhood more attractive. See page 10 of slides.

There needs to be better education around recycling for student tenants. LGray mentions that she frequently finds recycling in garbage cans.

WWilson suggested that OPDC and landlords work together to place a bulk order of Toter garbage cans and recycling bins to get a significantly cheaper price. RRanallo mentions that participating landlords will be publicly acknowledged—great PR opportunity for all involved.

Landlords asked numerous questions regarding pricing and availability. WWilson asked if the landlords were seriously interested in purchasing; OPDC could help facilitate. Several landlords responded yes; survey of those present showed at least 100+ bins for those present. OPDC will follow up with formal survey of all landlords on email list—180 contacts—to get total number desired to order.

WWilson asked landlords to volunteer a location where the truck could come to unload the bins. Discussion of one day pickup to avoid storage of items. Suggested prepay for bins. BKelly offered to

Speak with Home Depot; possible discount and same day distribution at their location. He and many other Oakland landlords do business with them almost daily.

RRanallo transitions into discussion regarding improving student move-in/move-out process. Announces that OPDC will no longer sponsor the dumpster program. The dumpsters were a blight on the neighborhood and not sustainable—no reuse element, too much stuff to the landfill. Gave bad impressions of neighborhood and of Pittsburgh during time when lots of visitors from out of town—parents, new students, etc. People—especially contractors—from other neighborhoods would take advantage of the dumpsters and use them to dispose of bulk trash and renovation waste (dismantled car, carpet squares, tree branches etc.). Instead of dumpsters, OPDC plans to alleviate waste during student move-in/move-out through a greener and multi-pronged approach with several partner agencies—see the [proposal](#). The best way to minimize the amount of trash going into the landfill and decrease the amount of resources needed from the Department of Public Works (DPW) is to encourage tenants to recycle.

RRanallo asks landlords to support OPDC in various recycling opportunities to help students discard their bulk belongings in a greener and more effective way. OPDC is collaborating with the Pittsburgh Resource Council to host a [Hard-to-Recycle event](#) on **April 28th from 9:00 pm – 1:00 pm**. Need landlords' help—inform all tenants.

OPDC will coordinate several pick-ups throughout summer with partner agencies like Off the Floor, University of Pittsburgh Office of Sustainability, etc. Key to success is landlords helping us promote these opportunities to tenants. Pitt has not yet confirmed their role in this, but one concept would be for them to participate by providing truck crews to collect bulk items at locations identified by OPDC on specific dates throughout summer. There may be a possibility that an entity at Pitt would store items throughout summer, then hosting big garage sale style event for off campus students to purchase low cost items for their new apartments in August.

RRanallo asked Melissa McSwigan, an Oakland landlord, to discuss the ways she has successfully educated her tenants on trash and recycling.

MMcSwigan explained she provides tenants with move-out checklist a month prior to the end of the lease. She encourages her tenants to neatly leave behind, rather than throw out, sealed/canned food or clothes in good condition that MMcSwigan offers to bring to a donation center herself. Sometimes incoming tenants want unwanted furniture/appliances/electronics from outgoing tenants. She recognizes that some landlords own many more properties than she does and that this donation process may be more burdensome for them. RRanallo responds to this concern and states that OPDC will help connect landlords with the appropriate agencies, coordinate pickups, etc. For example, if there are three desks in need of disposal at one address, OPDC will coordinate with the appropriate organization to pick them up.

Representatives from DPW speak next. They explained that their department cannot provide enough resources to effectively manage student move-in/move-out. They encourage people to take advantage of opportunities to recycle. Also announced stepping up enforcement starting this year. Sending out a letter warning landlords of increased enforcement. Will enforce bulk pick up limits—only two bulk items can be left for pick up at one address or you will be cited. DPW asks that the landlords collectively determine two Saturdays before move-out for them to do extra pickups. Full crews will be made

available. Same bulk item limits. Landlords recommend doing additional pickups in fall only, April is less busy and they don't want city to waste resources or only load half a truck. DPW would rather be proactive. BKlimovich asked for more detailed information on when tenants are moving in and out; a list of dates so they can better plan the community needs. BEckenrode has July 25th as big move out and KEckenrode has Aug. 10th as move in. OPDC committed to facilitating communication about these dates to firm up additional pick-up dates for DPW.

Landlords note that move-in trash is difficult to control, because students often buy furniture that involves mass amounts of cardboard and Styrofoam. It will be helpful to schedule more days around this time to help minimize the amount recycling that piles up. Discussion by the group in general about the increase in cardboard and how it can be addressed. LGray notes this is a trend that is only going to increase with Amazon delivery and online shopping, Could DPW do a cardboard collection event?

Landlord Q: Is there any chance that recycling pick-up can occur weekly?

DPW: Unfortunately, there is no plan to make that happen but we'd like to move to this system eventually. We realize that there is more recycling waste than refuse and that it would be beneficial for the community to offer recycling weekly. However, DPW does not currently have the work force and resources to make that a reality. There is no limit to the number of garbage cans/recycling bins you can have – in Oakland especially, the more the better.

DPW and landlords asked about Pitt's absence at meeting. Requested they commit to attending these meetings. They have a role in this—their students. RRanallo clarified they are on the list and receive same invitations as landlords, but maybe this meeting was not on their radar. Will send personal invitation next time to remind them they are invited.

LGray emphasizes the importance of early intervention in educating tenants on trash/recycling and informing them about available recycling opportunities. Does lots of door knocking and "pink ticket" program telling them they are in violation, asking them to call OPDC for education. Does this before 311ing. One approach the landlords are interested in is instead of ticketing the residence, can the landlords be contacted first, giving them the opportunity to address the problem before receiving a citation. They also asked that information regarding disruptive properties be relayed to them early on in the process.

RRanallo suggests that we utilize OPDC's text message service geared towards students to remind them about recycling events. Students just text 15213MATTERS to 797979 to be automatically subscribed.

RRanallo asks landlords to help outline future meeting agendas. Landlords remark on the importance of consistency; in the past the ad hoc schedule led to participation fizzling out. Landlords also expressed interest in going over crime reports and problem properties report, so that they can inform their tenants about public safety issues and so landlords can stay aware of nuisance properties. They know other landlords and can help self-police one another. They requested that the officer in charge of security cameras in Oakland should attend landlord committee roundtables.

RRanallo mentions that a new student resident group, Central Oakland Student Council, has expressed interest in attending future landlord meetings. Landlords present at the meeting approved.

Next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, June 21, 2018 at 12:00 pm at the Hilton Garden Inn.

