

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES - SEPTEMBER 29, 2008**

7:00 p.m. - Selectmen's Meeting Room, 63 Main Street, Northborough, MA

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dawn Rand, Chairman
Jeff Amberson, Vice Chairman
Leslie Rutan, Clerk
Fran Bakstran
William Pantazis

*Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 8, 2008 REGULAR MEETING

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to accept the Minutes of the September 8, 2008 Regular Meeting as submitted; Selectman Bakstran seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

7:00 p.m. - NICHOLAS MICHAELS SPA
Presentation by Police Chief Mark Leahy.

Chief Leahy introduced Nicholas Olivieri and Michael Abdella of Nicholas Michaels Spa. He asked that they attend tonight's meeting in order to acknowledge their fundraising efforts and subsequent donations to both the Northborough Police and Fire Departments following a devastating fire that destroyed their business in October 2007.

Chief Leahy informed the Board that because of their generous donation, the Police Department was able to purchase and equip each patrol vehicle with a defibrillator. In addition to these seven units, the Department was also able to purchase one for the station and one dedicated training unit.

Following the Chief's presentation, Sergeant James Bruce provided a brief overview and demonstration of how the defibrillators work.

Members of the Board thanked Nicholas and Michael for their generosity.

**7:05 p.m. - PROCLAMATION – 136th HOMECOMING DAY
NORTHBOROUGH HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

Richard Sargent was present to inform the Board that the 136th Annual Homecoming Day for the Northborough High School Alumni Association will be held on Saturday, October 11, 2008. The Reunion Homecoming will include the following events:

- Breakfast in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at the Town Hall.
- Luncheon at the Trinity Church at 12 Noon.
- Dinner at the Courtyard Marriott in Marlborough at 7:00 p.m.

Selectman Amberson moved the Board vote to proclaim October 11, 2008 as Homecoming Day for the Northborough High School Alumni Association; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

7:10 p.m. - PUBLIC HEARING
Set Fees for Plowing/Sanding Private Ways.

DPW Director Kara Buzanoski proposed that the base charge for plowing and sanding/salting of private ways and unaccepted streets which are 100% complete be increased approximately 3.4% from last year to cover the increased costs of labor, equipment maintenance, sand, salt and other materials, and diesel and gasoline fuel.

Residents of the private ways that received plowing and sanding/salting services during the last Winter Season were notified of tonight's public hearing to increase the fees. None were present.

Selectman Pantazis moved the Board vote to set fees for the 2008-2009 Winter Season for services to private ways and unaccepted streets which are 100% complete at the following rates:

Streets less than 3,000 feet in length - \$150 per storm for snow plowing
- \$150 per storm for sanding and salting

Streets 3,000 feet or greater in length - \$300 per storm for snow plowing
- \$300 per storm for sanding and salting

Selectman Amberson seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

7:15 p.m. - SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Final Report.

Selectman Bakstran, who served as the Board's representative on the Solid Waste Advisory Committee, introduced fellow members Brian Harrigan and Scott Mahoney. The Committee's final report entitled "Town of Northborough Solid Waste And Recycling Program Report 2008" is attached and provides details of their presentation. Also present in the audience were Committee members Bill Halter, Howie Stone, Justin Fisher and Kevin Carroll, as well as Town Engineer Fred Litchfield.

Following the presentation, a discussion ensued amongst members of the Board and members of the audience.

Town Administrator John Coderre thanked Selectman Bakstran and the members of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee for their efforts in exploring other alternatives, adding that this report validates the fact that we do have a good program and a high rate of recycling.

On behalf of the Board, Chairman Rand echoed Mr. Coderre's sentiments.

REPORTS

William Pantazis

- Announced that Whitney Street has been paved and thanked everyone for their patience.
- Attended the Applefest celebration and noted that it was a huge success this year.

Fran Bakstran

- Requested that the SWAC Report that was presented this evening be posted on the Town Website.
- Attended the Applefest celebration. Suggested that the Recreation Department consider the sale of stickers promoting Applefest Pride as a fundraising effort for next year's fireworks display.
- Noted that the Historical Commission will hold its second public hearing on October 15th at the Town Hall regarding the proposed demolition of a historical building at 88 Ball Street.
- Announced that the Fire Department will hold its Annual Fire Prevention and Open House on October 18th from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Fire Station.

Leslie Rutan, Clerk

- Attended the Applefest celebration and spoke about the many successes of this year's event.
- Suggested that the Board of Selectmen carry a banner indicating who they are while marching in next year's parade.
- Announced that the Northborough Rotary Club will be hosting an auction to benefit the community assistance program, which will include assistance for fuel this year.
- Thanked Chief Durgin on his Fire Services Quarterly Report.

Jeff Amberson, Vice Chairman

- Thanked the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk, as well as the election workers for working the recent State Primary Election.
- Requested that a discussion be scheduled on a future agenda on how the board wishes to fund Applefest in the future, considering the lack of donations for this year's event.

Dawn Rand, Chairman

- Noted that the Rotary Club will turn up the heat on October 25th by hosting an auction to benefit the community assistance program. Announced that they are still looking for businesses and residents to donate either a particular item or service. Noted that the Rotary Club has requested that the Board of Selectmen make a donation to this important cause.
- Congratulated Elaine Kelly for being honored as the Applefest Parade Grand Marshall.

John Coderre, Town Administrator

- No report.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kevin Carroll of 45 Auger Avenue distributed to members of the Board a recent news article regarding a Recycling Center sponsored by different communities.

TRANSFER OF CEMETERY DEED A573

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to transfer Cemetery Deed A573; Selectman Bakstran seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

APPROVAL/EXECUTION OF CEMETERY DEEDS A783 – A788

Selectman Bakstran moved the Board vote to approve and execute Cemetery Deeds A783 through A788; Selectman Amberson seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Selectman Amberson moved the Board vote to adjourn; Selectman Bakstran seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Wackell
Executive Assistant to the
Board of Selectmen

TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING PROGRAM REPORT



**REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE
2008**

Presented by the Solid Waste Advisory Committee:

Bill Halter
Brian Harrigan
Brian Swanson
Fran Bakstran
Howie Stone
Justin Fisher
Kevin Carroll
Scott Mahoney

With special thanks to Fred Litchfield, Town Engineer

Town of Northborough Solid Waste Citizens Study Group

The Board of Selectman appointed the Solid Waste Citizens Study Group (SWAC), in September 2007. The scope and charge of the study was to review and evaluate the current Town Solid Waste Program, review and evaluate alternative programs and prepare a report including recommendations to the Board of Selectman. The SWAC goal was to seek methods to improve the participation in the town's solid waste program, increase recycling, and to allow the program to be self sufficient in funding.

Background

Northborough, until the mid 1980's, had a town landfill on Southwest Cutoff where most town residents disposed of their household waste.

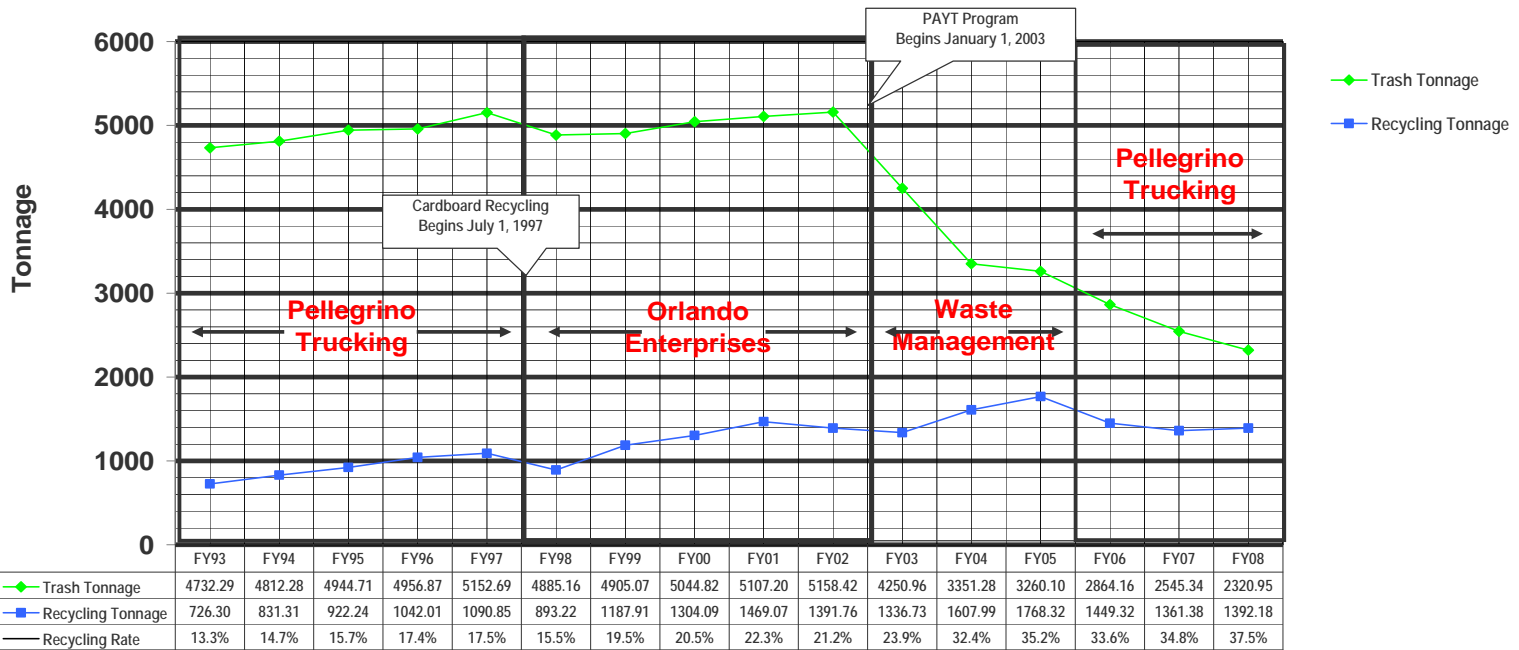
In 1987, a group of towns including Northborough signed a 20-year agreement with Wheelabrator in Millbury to accept the Town trash for the new waste to energy incinerator and the Town began a curbside trash pick up system paid for through taxation.

In 1990, a drop off recycling program began at the DPW garage with volunteers supervising the site; it was open limited hours with low participation rates.

In 1992, quotes for curbside recycling along with the recently established trash program were sought and the program was approved by Town Meeting. A pay (for trash) as you throw incentive to encourage recycling was also proposed at this meeting but defeated.

In 2003, the Selectmen removed most solid waste funding from the tax base by instituting a Pay as You Throw (PAYT) bag fee for the curbside solid waste program. The PAYT fees were to cover the cost of collection and disposal of solid waste and recyclables. The program had financial incentives for residents to reduce trash generated and increase recycling. Because of the program, the trash tonnage has been cut in half as shown in the following graph. This could be explained by the exodus of households from the municipal service and reductions for trash each household generated. The program has been successful in this area, with the reduction of solid waste and the increase in recycling as seen on the following graph.

Trash and Recycling Comparison Chart FY93 - FY08



While this change had the effect of increasing the recycling rate, it also resulted in a number of residents leaving the program reportedly for the following reasons:

- * The pay as you throw system was costly especially for high quantity generators.
- * The inconvenience of having to purchase the bags at various locations.
- * The trash bags would tear and were difficult for awkward or heavy items.
- * There was displeasure with town officials for switching to PAYS without input from residents.

In 2003 when the PAYS program began, there were approximately 4,900 households in town. Since that time, nearly 14% of households have opted to go with a private hauler providing pickup of a large trash tote for approximately \$30 per month rather than the town program for the above reasons. The private hauler is also responsible for the pickup of the recyclables of its customer base. Based on reported tonnage, the households that have chosen private haulers are those that generate highest trash volume and lowest recycling rates. In a large part, because of this, per bag revenues have been lost that would have made the town program nearly self-funding at current costs.

Present Status

A new contract was signed with Wheelabrator in 2007 for a 20-year period for continued incineration of our solid waste. Pellegrino Trucking is currently the Town's curbside hauling provider with a contract ending in 2010. The annual cost of curbside pickup of trash and recycling is approximately \$530,000 in addition to tipping fees to Wheelabrator of \$68.00 per ton or \$175,000. Currently in FY 2008, bag fee revenue covers approximately 70% of the program with the rest funded by taxation.

Overview of the Wheelabrator Contract

The Town of Northborough contracts with two corporations for the collection, transportation and disposal of municipal solid waste ("MSW") and recyclables.

The costs associated with the Town's solid waste collection and disposal services are a two-tiered system. A flat fee is paid to the collector of the waste and recyclables for curbside pick-up and transportation to processing facilities, and a variable rate fee is paid to the MSW facility.

P. Pellegrino Trucking Co. Inc., of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts ("Pellegrino") handles the curbside pick-up of MSW and recyclables and delivers these to disposal facilities.

The disposal of MSW is handled by Wheelabrator-Millbury, Inc., ("Wheelabrator") by burning the waste at their incineration facility located on Route 20 in Millbury, Massachusetts. The amount of waste collected and transported to the incinerator has consistently been less each year as the recycling rate increases and residents seek alternatives to the PAYT program.

Year	Solid waste (tons)	Recyclables (tons)	Recycling rate
2002	5124.99	1353.72	20.90 %
2003	3301.61	1480.89	30.97 %
2004	3364.64	1725.59	33.90 %
2005	2999.77	1587.46	34.61 %
2006	2800.00	1450.00	34.12 %
2007	2545.00	1361.00	34.84%
2008	2320.95	1392.18	37.49%

The Town of Northborough has a new contract with Wheelabrator, effective on January 01, 2008 for a term of twenty years. There is an option for either party to terminate the agreement at the end of ten years (i.e. December 31, 2017). The cost per ton of MSW

processed by Wheelabrator as of January 01, 2008 is approximately \$68.00 and each year thereafter the price is adjusted according to a formula using the Consumer Price Index ("CPI"). It appears that the rate is very reasonable, considering the spot market disposal price is much higher at this time.

The Town of Northborough is required to bring all MSW collected by the Town or its hauler (i.e. Pellegrino) to Wheelabrator. If at any time between now and December 31, 2017, the Town does not control the pick up and delivery of MSW, the Town would be liable for a Guaranteed Annual Tonnage ("GAT") of not less than 90% of the average of the preceding three years. That cost would be approximately \$200,000 per year until 12/31/2017, and would escalate using the CPI.

Examination of Alternatives

The group listed a range of alternative approaches to consider regarding solid waste and then began the process of researching the positives and negatives of each. They are:

1. Eliminate the municipal solid waste program
2. Continue with the present PAYT program
3. Establish a sanitary landfill
4. Set up a transfer station, where solid waste and recyclables would be collected for trucking to Wheelabrator for incineration and/or Recycling facility
5. Create a tote-based program.

(1) The SWAC agreed early on that eliminating the entire municipal solid waste program was not viable for the town, due to the desire to offer the service to the residents and the recent signing of a new contract with Wheelabrator. This option was removed from further consideration.

(2) Continuing the present PAYT program without changes was also not pursued. The issues raised by residents regarding the current PAYT program and the continuing shortfall in solid waste program revenues were the primary reasons for the SWAC having been formed. The need for modification and or improvement of the current program was deemed necessary in order for any PAYT program to be continued.

(3) SWAC looked at what was involved in a sanitary landfill but immediately found that environmental regulations have made it all but impossible. Even if the EPA and/or DEP allowed for it the town does not own sufficient land area to consider a landfill, and the cost to acquire land for this purpose was expected to be prohibitive.

(4) The Transfer Station option was thoroughly researched. This was done through contact with multiple communities with transfer stations including site visits. There are 232 open transfer stations listed in the Massachusetts Solid Waste Management Facilities database.

It was noted that most towns with current successful transfer stations implemented the transfer station immediately after they closed a landfill and usually the transfer station is located on or next to the former landfill. Municipal transfer stations have various methods of operation.

Southborough's is on Route 85, the land area totals 4 acres, with a dump hopper, a compactor and a large and well designed recycling center along with a SWAP SHED.

Two employees operate the transfer station and revenue is primarily through a vehicle sticker program. The trash collected is taken on a town owned truck to Wheelabrator and the recyclable material is sent to a recycling facility. Metal and appliances are also accepted. Deposit bottles are placed in a fenced enclosure. Local community groups sign up to take the deposit bottles and keep the proceeds.

<http://www.southboroughtown.com/dpw/transferstation.htm>

Acton has a similar system operated on the old town landfill. Acton has a much higher fee basis to support the operation as a smaller percentage of households are using that system. A long list of fees is used for specific metal, appliance and bulky items to fund the program. <http://www.town.acton.ma.us/content.aspx?id=512>

Groton has a transfer station again near the former landfill but it also bundles and markets its recyclables to maximize the financial return to the community.

Groton has large bailing operations to compact and package the recyclables for sale on the recycling market. Groton has extensive buildings to house their recyclables while waiting for a favorable market price. Groton has both a sticker fee and PAYT program to fund the system. <http://www.townofgroton.org/main?cmd=town-xfer>

Hudson, MA has a municipal built transfer station near the old landfill that is operated by a private contractor, and a fee schedule is used for all bags and items collected. http://www.townofhudson.org/Public_Documents/HudsonMA_Health/transfer

Transfer stations offer many attractive features to residents, including greater flexibility in disposable materials, a central meeting space for residents, and opportunities for exchange programs such as Southborough's Swap Shed. It is also an environmentally friendly service that encourages reuse as well as recycling.

Establishing a transfer station, however, would require a significant investment to secure at least 4 acres of land as well as to build, equip and operate the facility. An analysis of the comparably sized towns of Mashpee and Hanover found the costs of operating a transfer station averaged \$1 million annually. This does not account for the up-front expenditure for the land, physical structures and equipment such as loaders, dump hoppers and mechanical rammers to compact the trash. Therefore, in order to make transfer stations a viable option, the Town of Northborough would need to discontinue curbside collection, prompting a large number of residents to contract with private curbside haulers. In every town that we studied with a transfer station, they either did not have curbside collection immediately preceding the program or continued to offer the service after opening the transfer station.

In addition to town / municipal transfer stations-, a private concern is now entering Massachusetts to build regional transfer stations and use a rail line to haul trash out of state. Northborough is good candidate for such a facility because of the rail line in town. At this time without any immediate interest or clear opportunity, this would not be a short-term solution. It should be considered in the long-range plan.

(5) Curbside Collection using totes instead of bags was also thoroughly researched. One of the objections to the PAYT program is the requirement to use town bags to dispose of solid waste. The bags are available at various stores in town and at nearby supermarkets, but were not considered to be convenient to purchase. In addition, the bags are not as strong as some commercial bags, leading to torn bags or being under-utilized for fear of ripping the bag. It was clear that one of the reasons for residents opting to contract with a private hauler for solid waste disposal was the use of large trash barrels. These barrels are called totes by the companies that provide them.

The totes are wheeled bins with lids, and can be filled without the use of bags of any sort. These totes make bringing the solid waste to the curbside easier for the residents. They can make trash collection more efficient, as the trucks can be equipped with a hydraulic lifter to handle the totes.

One option that can be considered in conjunction with the tote for solid waste is the use of larger totes for recyclables. This works particularly well in combination with a single-stream recycling facility, since the resident can place all types of recyclables in the same tote – which reduces space requirements and simplifies bringing the recyclables to the curbside.

An example of a tote system with single stream recycling is in use by the Town of Holden. In 2007, the Town of Holden established just such a single stream recycling program in conjunction with Casella Waste Management, in Auburn. Single stream allows residents to co-mingle all recyclable items, including cardboard, paper, glass, metal, plastic etc. in one tote provided by the town. The totes used for recycling come in 2 sizes, 96 gallons and 65 gallons and are collected curbside every other week. All residents received a separate tote for trash, either 65 gallons or 35 gallons, collected curbside once a week. In quarterly bills distributed by mail, resident pay \$15 month (\$180 a year) for the large totes or \$11 month (\$132 a year) for the small totes,. This revenue covers the cost of the program. In exchange for a multi-year contract, Casella Waste Management provided residents with one of the totes at no additional charge. The other tote was already in the 5700 households from the existing trash program.

By making recycling easier and providing a recycling bin twice the size of a trash tote, the Town of Holden dramatically increased their recycling rates. Before the program, Holden recycled 13% of the total tons of collected materials. In the first two months of the new program, recycling rates climbed to 37%. Residents have been pleased with the convenience of co-mingling recyclables and the affordability of the program.

	Large	Small
Recycling Tote	96 Gallons	65 Gallons

Trash Tote	65 Gallons	35 Gallons
Cost	\$15 month (\$180 year)	\$11 month (\$132 year)

Positives and Negatives of this system:

This approach may meet the convenience and cost concerns of Northborough residents without undermining our exceptional recycling rates.

Though we have not received cost estimates from Casella Waste Management or any other provider for a tote system in Northborough, we can use Holden for comparison. If we could offer the program at rates comparable to the Town of Holden, most residents would pay the same or less than they do currently. Residents using a private hauler currently would pay significantly less than the \$25-30 now being billed, with many of them switching to the municipal service as a result. Households in the PAYT program generating very little trash, however, would likely pay more under the new system.

Currently only one local Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) provides Single Stream recycling, Casella Waste Management. Our current hauler, Pellegrino Trucking currently transports the town recycling to Casella Waste Management, though they have the option of other MRF's in the area. If the town went to the single stream, our current hauler would be restricted to hauling to Casella Waste Management. This would have a financial impact on them and in turn the town. Casella Waste Management is set up to collect recyclables in both single-stream and dual-stream. Other facilities in this area accept dual-stream recyclables only.

The impact of a fixed-fee, tote-based system on recycling rates is uncertain. By providing residents with a large tote for ALL recycling, one would hope the convenience of the program would encourage widespread recycling as it did in Holden. As previously mentioned, the Town of Holden recycling rates increased from 13% to 35-37% in the first two months of the program. Northborough had a 37.5% recycling rate in 2008.

The current PAYT customer could recycle slightly LESS under a tote system, since the economic incentive to recycle is minimized. The current private hauler customer would return to the cheaper municipal service and would recycle MORE, since the economic incentive to recycle is greater. Under a tote system, residents incur additional fees only when they generate more trash than will fit in the 35-65 gallon trash tote. These totes are larger than the green bags used by PAYT customers but a much smaller bin than the 96-gallon used by most private hauler customers.

Representatives of Pellegrino Trucking Co. also raised concerns about the integrity of the recyclables under a tote system. Fearing that residents could mix trash with recyclables with a large, closed tote they would require the Town of Northborough to be responsible if a load was "rejected" by Casella Waste Management as a result. We would need to assess the likelihood and related liability that this would produce.

Recommendations

Eliminating Municipal Solid Waste Services

At this point in time the Town could either continue to provide solid waste collection, in one form or another or discontinue offering the service altogether.

The Solid Waste Citizens Study Group's opinion is (1) the Wheelabrator contract is reasonable with cost benefits to the Town; and (2) the Town should reassess the Wheelabrator contract prior to December 31, 2015, (that is when the Town is required to notify Wheelabrator of its desire to cancel the contract at the ten-year date).

If the Town chose to eliminate its solid waste collection service altogether, the costs associated with such a move would be, as stated earlier, at least \$200,000 per year payable to Wheelabrator, unless the Town could control how MSW is collected and where it would be processed. Now, The Board of Health licenses private haulers, but there is no control on where the MSW is processed. It is the opinion of the SWAC that the Town cannot dictate how a private hauler manages this portion of its business absent some health related issues that affect the town as a whole. Therefore, this would not be recommended.

Alternatives to the current program

Continue with the PAYT bag program. Address the bag quality issues. Acknowledge the shared, financing between fees and taxes.

Bring Pellegrino Trucking, to the negotiating table and open current contract to change from bags to Single Stream tote system.

Before the hauling contract ends, put forth an RFP for curbside pickup with Single Stream tote system allowing Pellegrino Trucking and other companies the opportunity to bid.

Long range planning should include:

Prior to the 2017 end of first 10 years of Wheelabrator 20yr contract, begin looking into alternative incinerators, possibly as early as 2015.

Research other regional partnerships.

Explore a regional rail system with current or alternative regional group

Additions to the current program or alternative program

Over the course of the year, the Recycling Committee has held recycling events such as Hazardous Waste Day and Take It or Leave It Day. These events have been hugely

successful, run totally by volunteers, and donated services. We have also been successful with the mercury thermometer drop-off/exchange. The DPW is open for residents to bring yard waste and brush but due to budget constraints only a few days per season. While we are hoping that a fully funded curbside trash and recycling program would meet the ordinary needs of the residents, there are certain items that just cannot be placed on the curb for pick up.

A suggestion to the Town would be to create a Resident Recycling Sticker system to generate revenue to allow for these programs as well as additional recycling initiatives to grow and expand. The stickers could cost as little as \$10.00 per vehicle. The restrictions would be on vehicles registered to residents of Northborough. This would be easy to verify with the excise tax bills already generated by the Tax Collector. The revenue generated would be utilized solely for recycling programs and events. If necessary, a Revolving Account could be authorized at Town Meeting for the funds.

Final Recommendation

The Solid Waste Advisory Committee recommends that the Town pursue a Request for Proposal for a tote based trash and single stream recycling system prior to the one-year option of the Pellegrino Trucking contract. This would allow the current hauler to bid as well as other haulers. Within the next few years, it is expected that other Recycling Centers will accept "single stream" recyclables making the costs competitive. The single stream system would encourage many of the 14% non-participants to rejoin the municipal program. It would address both the inconvenience and the quality issues of the bags. The program would have the potential to be much less expensive for those currently paying for private hauling. The single stream recycling system would continue to provide the incentive to recycle with its easy tote system. The combination of the larger tote for recycling and the smaller tote for trash increases the incentive to recycle.