

Press Release

January 20, 2010 - For Immediate Release

To: The Woonsocket Call

From: The Burrillville Rubbish & Recycling Committee

Re: Burrillville Rubbish & Recycling Committee Activities

This past year, in response to a State mandate to improve recycling rates, the Town Council of the Town of Burrillville selected three citizen volunteers to form the Burrillville Rubbish & Recycling Committee. This committee has been charged with providing recommendations to the Town Council for improving the recycling rate in order to avoid exorbitant fees that may be levied by the state when new caps are implemented in the next fiscal year. Burrillville joins towns across the state that have been revising their recycling policies in an effort to avoid these additional costs. Because Burrillville already has a longstanding mandatory recycling program, the committee's task is really to increase rates by bringing recycling to the next level.

Voting members of the committee are Don Fox, Chair; Colleen Joubert, Vice Chair; and Robin Volpini, Secretary. Greg Mislick and Christine Mulligan are town staff members who attend meetings and assist with questions related to town government and provide administrative support. Mike Karmozyn and Wallace Lees are Town Council liaisons. The committee welcomes townspeople to attend meetings, which are held at 7:00pm on the third Monday of the month at the Jesse Smith Library. The next meeting is February 8th, due to the holiday.

At its startup meeting last August, Mike Wood, Town Manager, informed the committee that costs for curb-side pickup of trash and recyclables is the largest single line item in the municipal operating budget, and can be expected to increase if additional measures aren't taken. The high cost of rubbish removal might come as a surprise to townspeople who take their trash pickup for granted. The difficult task that the Rubbish & Recycling Committee faces is to raise the present diversion rate of 22.9% to 35% by 2012. The diversion rate is calculated as the percent of recyclables as compared to throw-away tonnage. So the goal is to reduce tonnage going to the landfill and increase what is disposed as recyclable or compostable. Recycling can also include donating reusable items. This can not be achieved without a concerted effort by all townspeople who will be called upon to raise recycling and reduce rubbish from their individual households.

Committee members have been researching the many avenues that can be taken that will create incentives to achieve its goals. Members also took a field trip to the Rhode Island Resource and Recovery Corporation (RIRRC), and invited Gina Barbeau, Smithfield's Recycling Coordinator, to a meeting in November to gain knowledge from her experiences. Research will continue as they will be attending the RI League of Cities and Towns Annual Convention on February 4th and have invited Sarah Kite, Director of Recycling Services for RIRRC to the February meeting.

Several programs, or a combination thereof, are being considered, including No Bin-No Barrel, Pay-to-Throw (PAYT), transfer station accommodations, rewards programs, increased capacity at the Whipple Avenue compost facility, and purchase of a wood chipper for brush disposal. Additionally, the committee is collecting data that will establish the present recycling compliance rate so a course of action will be chosen that will ensure success. Based on this data and the culmination of its research, the committee will put together guidelines for the Town Council to include in their Request for Proposal for the next Rubbish Removal Contract.

The committee welcomes input from townspeople and has posted updates, meeting notices, and other information on the town website at www.burrillville.org. Additional information will be provided in the town publication, the Burrillville Bugle. We look forward to working with our community to find win/win solutions.