

## **SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING COMMITTEE**

The Solid Waste and Recycling Advisory Committee was re-constituted in June 2006 to serve through 2009. The Committee works with the Department of Public Works (DPW) in developing a program for solid waste and recycling collection services. In 2006, the Committee worked in two areas: recycling in the public schools and preliminary consideration of a transfer station.

In the fall of 2006, the committee concentrated on creating a plan for increasing recycling in the middle and high schools. A trash preview at the Chenery Middle School was done. Classrooms have bins for paper; the lunchroom currently has no separation of recyclables; the kitchen recycles some materials. Committee members recommend changing from Styrofoam to paper trays, but, at present, consideration is being given to using washable trays in the lunchroom instead. Kitchen trash is picked up once a day; paper is picked up biweekly. Next steps are to briefly revisit the Chenery, do a preview at the high school and then a trash pick, i.e. separate trash, paper, and commingled recyclables (glass, plastic, metal) to determine weight of each category, at both schools.

To learn about a successful school recycling program, the committee met with Kelly Dunn (Project Manager for Cambridge Public Works Department). In 1994 the Cambridge School Committee ordered the schools to recycle. Custodians are responsible for emptying classroom bins into 95 gallon totes and putting the totes on the street. They must file work sheet reports, an unpopular task. In some schools students or teachers empty bins, but the programs in the schools where custodians perform these tasks are more successful. For a time, the schools had a grant that enabled them to reward schools which excelled in recycling. Schools in Cambridge recycle all the materials Belmont recycles, plus Styrofoam and corrugated cardboard. Ms. Dunn has a one page brochure to educate the teachers on recycling. She recommended that Belmont start recycling efforts at the high school, and let them trickle down.

Since the Warrant Committee was interested in construction of a transfer station, Paul Solomon, Chair of the Board of Selectmen, suggested the Committee study the issue and make a recommendation to the Warrant Committee. Implicit in building a transfer station is the elimination of curbside pickup of trash, including recyclables. This would save some money; however, there are substantial hidden costs, including drivers and trucks to haul the trash from the transfer station to the site of incineration, plus employees at the station to deal with the trash stream currently handled by curbside pickup. Although taxes would probably not decrease, fees would be charged. In addition, the Committee was concerned by the inefficiency of residents' weekly trips to the transfer station, the time consumed and the pollution generated by such trips. After further refinement of detailed figures, the Committee will make a recommendation in early 2007.

Other activities of the Committee during our first six months were a tour of FCR (the site where Belmont's recyclables are taken) and interviews with Russell (the current company that picks up and disposes of Belmont's trash, recyclables and yard waste) and Allied Waste Service (formerly BFI), the company that had the Belmont waste disposal contract for many years prior to Russell's current contract. From these interviews, we learned that the municipalities who have Pay As You Throw are the ones that see increases in volume of recycling. The Committee continues the practice of publishing a Recycling Tip of the Week in the Belmont Citizen Herald.

In 2007, the Committee will explore the possibility of increased recycling by non-profit institutions, including houses of worship and investigate regionalization of trash pickup.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Tinkham, Chairman