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We may see more recycling bins along the streets of Jamestown in 2010. Officials are urging islanders to increase their recycling efforts and also say they may charge for trash disposal at the transfer station. Photo by Jeff McDonough

## Jamestown may adopt 'pay-as-you-throw' trash disposal

By Phil Zahodiakin

The Jamestown Recycling Committee will examine the feasibility of requiring residents to use purpose-labeled bags for the household waste they bring to the transfer station.

A "pay-as-you-throw" system was one of the many topics addressed during the second meeting of the committee, which will explore ways to increase the

town's recycling rate.

The Dec. 16 meeting was attended by two representatives of the R.I. Resource Recovery Corporation, a quasi-public agency responsible for managing the state's solid waste and recyclables. The RIRRC operates the Central Landfill in Johnston, where the agency also sorts and manages recyclables at its materials recovery facility.

Sarah Kite, the RIRRC director of recycling services, presented data on the recycling rates for all Rhode Island towns. According to the data, 26.3 percent of all the waste hauled out of Jamestown in fiscal year 2008-09 was recyclable material. Although the rate is higher than it was in previous years, it falls short of the 30% recycling rate mandated by state law – not to mention the 35% mandate that becomes effective in 2012.

Meeting, and exceeding, that 30% mandate would save Jamestown money. That's because the town pays a commercial, instead of municipal, tipping fee for every ton of waste exceeding a cap for solid-waste disposal that the RIRRC sets for each town. The standard municipal rate is \$32 per ton; the rate for municipalities exceeding their caps is \$46 per ton.

Additionally, every town recycling more than 35% of its waste receives a \$3-per-ton rebate for every ton of waste sent to the landfill during a fiscal year, effectively reducing the municipal tipping fee to \$29 per ton. Keeping recyclables out of the bags that 40% of Jamestown households bring to the transfer station will help the town avoid paying the higher fee – and potentially save many thousands of dollars per year.

Requiring residents to purchase special bags for the trash they bring to the transfer station will discourage them from using the bags for materials they could just as easily put in their blue and green bins. Other towns with a "pay-as-you-throw" system require residents to buy stickers while allowing them to use any bags they like, which raises the question: Why force residents to buy special bags instead of stickers?

Because a sticker system invites counterfeiting, Kite observed. Moreover, the use of stickers would require someone at the transfer station to "police" all the bags that residents bring

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