

Government Study Survey: completed by Brenda Black, Chair LRWDPR Committee with input from committee members, submitted 11/30/10

1. The missions of the Long Range Waste Disposal Planning and Recycling Committee (the LRWDPR Committee) is “To promote and encourage efficient long-range waste planning with a focus on recycling through the use of communication/education, facilitation, and best practices.”
2. The LRWDPR Committee is accountable to the Board of Selectmen
3. The three things that contribute most to the successful functioning of the committee:
  - a) Communication with DPW Superintendent and/or Transfer Station manager who attend meetings regularly
  - b) A clear agenda with specific projects for discussion through the following stages: idea, implementation, follow up and accountability with committee member(s) identified who have taken on action pieces of projects
  - c) Ability to interact and cooperate with other Town Departments and groups in implementing waste and recycling projects, such as the Schools, the Library, the Recreation Department
4. What three things would you change to bring about more effective functioning?
  - a) Keeping committee fully “staffed” – difficult to reach a quorum at meetings when several openings are unfilled (just received word that the position that has been unfilled since May was filled last week).
  - b) Clearer mission (how is the Committee accountable to DPW Superintendent and how is DPW Superintendent accountable to the Committee?) and setting of priorities from the BOS
  - c) The Committee has become concerned about the amount of time that the DPW Superintendent has been spending responding to residents who regularly bring repeated concerns and complaints to him to discuss. He estimates he is spending 10 hours a month in these conversations, almost 10% of his time – this seems highly inefficient for the head of a large department. We wonder if the town would consider an ombudsman system, a central place for persons to bring their concerns/complaints about any branch of town government where the concern can be recorded, researched, and potentially resolved or treated as a helpful suggestion. Perhaps an ombudsman could more efficiently gather information from the department and then put in the face to face time with the resident?
5. What challenges do you anticipate that might impact the work of your committee in the future and what changes would you suggest for addressing those challenges?

- a) Should the town propose to change the current system for managing waste and recycling, the Committee would likely need to support this effort through communication and outreach activities. To be effective, we would need a specific charge, authority to implement that charge, and potentially a budget for communication and training.
  
- b) Waste costs are likely to continue to rise over time and the need to continue strong educational efforts regarding the economic need for increased recycling will remain important. We have to date been able to gain cooperation from each town department we have approached about increasing recycling and they have made available small amounts of money for recycling equipment, but we anticipate this will get more difficult with budgets getting tighter for all departments. It would be helpful if a waste reduction goal were set by the town and each department asked to find ways to reach it, with best practices and other information offered by the Committee.

6. Anything to add? Not at the present