

## Solid Waste and Environment Committee

### Origin

Londonderry was at a crossroads as to how to handle its solid waste in 1988. New Hampshire, like the nation, was running out of landfill space as dramatized in the media by the iconic Islip, Long Island garbage barge that had nowhere to dock.

In addition, the town was grappling with the cost and pollution of 3 Superfund sites—Auburn Road, Tinkham Garage and the Town Garage / Radio Beacon site—casualties from years of unmonitored toxic dumping and negligent handling of hazardous wastes. To increase controls over municipal waste while limiting residents' out of pocket expenses, the selectmen proposed a town wide curbside garbage collection at the March Town Meeting. They also recommended that the town host a regional trash-to-energy plant.

Residents passed the town wide pickup warrant article. However, a small group of petitioners presented a warrant article prohibiting the burning of other towns' trash, and a second article creating a citizens' advisory committee to assist the selectmen on municipal solid waste issues and to establish a municipal recycling program. Both petitioned articles passed, and the Solid Waste Advisory Committee was born.

In 2011 the Town Council approved our new charter and we changed our name to the Solid Waste and Environment Committee, to more aptly describe our expanded scope.

The community can thank the following Committee liaisons for their efforts over the years in helping Londonderry achieve and maintain a leadership role in municipal solid waste management and environmental protection in New Hampshire:

- Solid Waste & Recycling Coordinators: Gail Moretti, Liz Todd, Carolyn O'Connor, and Donna Limoli
- Environmental Engineers: Doris Beatty and Robert Kerry
- Town Councilor: Marty Bove

## Programs

A link to the Committee's charter is located on our homepage. In essence, we advise on the town's solid waste and recycling contracts, initiate and monitor Town recycling and waste diversion programs, provide opportunities for the safe disposal of hazardous waste, and educate the public on the importance of resource conservation and safe waste handling practices.

Since 1988, the Committee has launched the following services for residents:

- The first town wide curbside recycling program in New Hampshire (1988)
- Free monthly disposal of used motor oil at the central Fire Station
- Household hazardous waste drop-off days twice a year in April and November in partnership with Derry
- A subsidized Drop Off Center for bulky waste, construction debris and old appliances, open Saturdays from April through November
- Free disposal of yard waste, bulk plastic, car batteries and tires at the Drop Off Center
- A drop off bin for recycling books, behind Town Hall
- Londonderry's *Buried Treasure* recycling guide, available online (see link on Committee homepage)
- Publication of the *Recycling News* newsletter 2 - 3 times per year (see link)
- Recycling programs and education at the public schools
- Periodic sale of discounted compost bins and other special programs

In 2004, at the request of the Town Council, the Committee organized Londonderry's first town wide **Beautify Londonderry** event. Since then, dozens of community groups comprising hundreds of volunteers set out every year for several weekends in late April and May to pick up roadside trash, rake ball fields and plant gardens on public spaces all over town. This effort became a separate subcommittee staffed solely by volunteers in 2010. For

information on how you can participate in or help organize Beautify Londonderry, see the link on the Committee homepage.

In 2008, the Committee developed, procured and installed **Welcome to Londonderry signs** at 5 major gateways into town, designed with community input. The first sign was unveiled at a ceremony attended by Governor John Lynch and local officials at the Nashua Road (Route 102) welcome sign site on June 21, the 286<sup>th</sup> birthday of Londonderry's charter.

In 2010, the Committee created a 2<sup>nd</sup> subcommittee of volunteers who wished to address the growing litter problem in Londonderry: the **Anti-Littering Advisory Committee (ALAC)**. See our homepage for the link.