

## 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

## **Responsibilities & Programs**

In essence, we help develop and monitor Town recycling and waste management 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. We also oversee the Beautify Londonderry committee and maintain the five Welcome to Londonderry signs. Since 1987, the Committee has initiated or worked with the Public Works Department (and Londonderry Police Department\*) to launch and promote the following services for residents:

- The first town-wide curbside recycling program in New Hampshire (1988)
- Household hazardous waste drop-off days twice a year in partnership with Derry
- Londonderry's *Buried Treasure* recycling guide, available online (see link on Committee homepage; 1991)
- Free monthly disposal of used motor oil Saturday mornings at the Central Fire Station, and during regular business hours at Tisdell Transmission
- Passage of the Motor Vehicle Reclamation Fund ordinance to fund expansion of infrastructure and recycling measures at the Drop Off Center (2003), open Saturdays from April through November and summer hours on Wednesday from 3pm – 7pm:
  - Free resident drop off of the following recyclables: rigid plastics, corrugated cardboard, car batteries, rechargeable batteries, cell phones, tires, fluorescent bulbs and tubes, reusable textiles, and yard waste
  - Subsidized collection of scrap metal, major appliances, electronics and propane tanks for recycling
  - Subsidized collection of bulky waste and construction debris for disposal
- Beautify Londonderry program (2004)
- Establishment of Town's 5 Welcome to Londonderry signs (2008)
- Drop off bin for recycling books behind Town Hall (2008)
- Waste hauler automated curbside trash collection program for residents (2009)

- Publishing “Going Green” columns in the *Londonderry Times*, now in partnership with the Conservation Commission and their “Conservation Matters” columns (2011)
- Agreement with Benson Hardware in Londonderry to accept residents’ fluorescent bulbs and tubes during regular business hours at no charge (2015)
- Outreach to Londonderry’s small business community to provide access and promote their use of the Drop Off Center for recycling of fluorescent bulbs and tubes (2015)
- Automated single stream curbside recycling collection for residents (2016)
- \*Installation of the Drug Drop-off box at the Police Station (2016)
- Installation of the Medical Sharps kiosk at Town Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor (2017)

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 set out during four weekends in April and May each year to pick up roadside trash and plant organics or spread mulch on public spaces all over town. For more information on 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. Town historian Marilyn Ham and longtime resident Reed Clark participated in the unveiling.