

Middletown given extension for transfer station site

By Matt Sheley/Daily News staff

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Middletown has another year at the transfer station.

Town Administrator Gerald S. Kempen said the town completed an agreement Monday with the Navy, approving an extension on the lease for the Burma Road facility until Nov. 30, 2007.

That will give the town enough time to launch a new curbside trash pickup program, a plan recently endorsed by the Town Council.

The old deal with the Navy was to lapse at the end of the year. The news came at a council meeting later in the day in Town Hall during a discussion of a proposal from Councilwoman M. Theresa Santos about opening the transfer station Wednesdays, a matter expected to be addressed again Dec. 18.

A volunteer board continues to study different alternatives about how best to implement the curbside trash program, with a series of recommendations from that group expected early next year.

"We're fortunate and happy they extended it," council President Paul M. Rodrigues said. "Ideally, they'd extend it permanently."

It is the second time the Navy has extended the town's lease since it announced in late 2005 that the transfer station is not in the long-term plans for the site overlooking the East Passage of Narragansett Bay.

After hearing the results of an in-depth review of the trash situation in town from DSM Environmental Services, the council chose curbside pickup in October as the best alternative.

The Ascutney, Vt., firm reported curbside pickup could save the town about \$238,000 a year when compared to the combined costs of operating the transfer station and those who contract curbside hauling on their own already. That study was sponsored by the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission and paid for through a Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corp. grant.

Rodrigues - who was out of town when the council approved the shift to curbside pickup - has said

he would like research done into creating a new transfer station. That includes the possibility of teaming with Portsmouth if Middletown's neighbor to the north decides to relocate the town transfer station from its Hedly Street location, which has been described as overcrowded and outdated.

Kempen said he would like to see the curbside program running by Sept. 1, 2007, the day the existing stickers expire. The details of the program need to be determined by the volunteer board and the council.

"We'll just have to see what shakes out from the study and with the council," Kempen said. "I know everyone is really happy that things worked out."

MEETING MINUTES

MIDDLETOWN TOWN COUNCIL

When: Monday.

Where: Middletown Town Hall, 350 East Main Road.

Present: All.

Action: Continued discussion on charges for the Slate Hill Farm sewer, water and drainage project until the next council meeting; appointed council Vice President Shirley R. Mello and Councilwoman M. Theresa Santos to the School Committee budget subcommittee; tabled on seeking federal funding for the new Valley Road police station to discuss the matter with U.S. Rep. Patrick J. Kennedy, D-R.I.; appointed Frank Bozyan to the town's Board of Tax Assessment of Review; renewed its hauling contract with Waste Management from the Burma Road transfer station.

Next meeting: Monday, Dec. 18, 7 p.m.