



Suffolk County and Brookhaven agree to establish single stream recycling

August 25, 2014 - Green Buildings

Suffolk County executive Steve Bellone and Brookhaven supervisor Ed Romaine said that an Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA) has been signed between the town and the county's Department of Public Works (DPW) to establish a single stream recycling pilot program. Passed unanimously at a general meeting of the Suffolk County Legislature, legislator Sarah Anker's legislation authorizes the county to enter into an IMA with the town whereby the town will provide recycling containers to the Yaphank County Center, where it will be collected weekly and brought to the town's Materials Recycling Facility located at the nearby Brookhaven Town Landfill site. The pilot program will be for a period of one year. At the completion of the program, the county's DPW will determine the benefits and the potential for expansion.

The town's new single stream recycling system -- dubbed the "Green Stream Machine" - has the capacity to process up to 48 tons of recyclables per hour. Since the town's introduction of its single stream recycling program in January of this year, the recycling rate has jumped by 24.6%. As a result, Brookhaven residents have realized a savings of over \$287,000. The new program allows residents to combine their paper and co-mingled items, including glass, plastic and metal, into one container with no sorting required.

"Ensuring government is operating as efficiently as possible is paramount to good governing and serving the taxpayers," said Bellone. "This IMA is yet another example where the county and the town of Brookhaven has taken the opportunity to share services in an effort to streamline activities and reduce costs. I thank legislator Sarah Anker for introducing this legislation and I thank supervisor Romaine for his continued willingness to work collaboratively with the county."

Romaine said, "Getting the county on-board is a big step forward in our effort to promote single stream recycling in Brookhaven town and all across Long Island. I thank the county executive and the Legislature for recognizing that this pilot program is beneficial to both municipalities and that increased recycling rates are great for the taxpayer, the bottom line and the environment, leading us to a cleaner, greener future for generations to come."

Councilman Tim Mazzei, the town board liaison to the Department of Waste Management said, "Our single stream recycling program has proven to be very successful with rates performing above expectations since the January launch. This partnership with the county is the next step forward and I hope that other municipalities will join us."

"Through the reduction of waste at county facilities, we also reduce the cost of carting fees, ultimately saving money for Suffolk County taxpayers," said Anker. "This initiative is environmentally friendly and will encourage recycling at county facilities. As the first community on Long Island to establish a single stream recycling program, the town of Brookhaven has proven that this program can be beneficial to both residents and municipalities."

Will Flower, president of Green Stream Recycling, the operators of the town's Materials Recycling Facility said, "Single stream recycling makes it easier for residents to recycle. The new sorting equipment has proven to be extremely efficient at processing recyclables to produce high quality material that we are able to market to both domestic and international outlets. Since we started the new recycling system, we have created 16 new jobs at the recycling center and now have a workforce which is more than 40 strong."

Single stream recycling has been implemented in several communities throughout New York State and the country, however, Brookhaven is the first town on Long Island to successfully implement a single stream program. In addition to the environmental benefits that recycling provides, recycling in the town of Brookhaven has economic benefits. For every additional ton of material recycled, the town is expected to save in excess of \$125 through the sale of the material and the avoided disposal cost.

Shown (from left) are: Brookhaven supervisor Ed Romaine; Green Stream Recycling president Will Flower; county legislator Sarah Anker; Green Stream Recycling partner and co-owner Joe Winters; Suffolk County executive Steve Bellone; and Winters Brothers vice president Sean Winters.

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