



Fox Point files

by Douglas H. Frazer



RECYCLING – Fox Point Picks It Up!

WE ALL RECYCLE in Fox Point. We have to. Since 1995, Wisconsin law [Wis. Stat. § 287 (2012), Wis. Admin. Code DNR § 544 (2012)] has mandated that local governments operate recycling programs for residential property owners. In anticipation of and consistent with this directive, the Village of Fox Point enacted its recycling ordinance [Fox Point, Wis., Ordinance ch. 36 (1994)]. Collectively, the laws require property owners to recycle: printed material, office paper, boxes, cartons, chipboard, glass, containers made of aluminum, tin, steel, and bi-metal, and plastic grades 1 to 7 (foam polystyrene, by administrative rule, is exempted).

The Wisconsin law also requires property owners to recycle lead acid batteries, major appliances (including computers and electronics), waste oil, and waste tires. Fox Point residents are on their own for the collection and disposal of these recyclables. Fortunately, the Wisconsin Recycling Markets Directory contains a list of recyclers for each of these materials. The Directory may be accessed at www4.uwm.edu/shwec/wrmd/search.cfm.

As for the weekly “standard” recyclables, the Village contracts with Veolia Environmental Services Solid Waste Midwest, LLC (recently acquired by Advanced Disposal Company, Inc.) to collect, transfer, and sell the materials to a sorting facility. The Village has contracted for “single-stream collection,” which means that property owners do not need to separate materials for collection – although, as we will see, separating paper products and placing them in brown paper bags makes the system more efficient.

From its up-the-driveway scooter pickup, Veolia consolidates the recyclables into a garbage-like truck that hauls the materials to its Muskego transfer station. There, the recyclables are weighed, consolidated with materials from other municipalities, and loaded onto semi-trailers. The already separated paper and fiber board products are taken directly to Wisconsin Paperboard Corporation at 1415 E. Thomas Avenue (Milwaukee) for processing. Veolia sells approximately 90% of the non-separated material to Resource Management Company (RMC), a sorting and processing facility in Chicago Ridge, IL. Veolia transfers (and ultimately resells) about 10% of the material to a Veolia-owned sorting and processing facility in Waunakee, WI.

The processing facilities are large. The RMC plant, for example, is a 120,000 square foot building that is 600 feet long and several stories

high. Machinery does most of the sorting along conveyers through a series of tipping floors, shaking frames, disc screens, optic scanners, magnets, and blowing air separators. The separated materials are bailed (or ground in the case of glass) and shipped to market. An online search using the term “recycling process video” will pull up links to well-produced videos of the process.

About 25% of Veolia’s municipal customers, in addition to agreeing to a monthly-per-residence collection fee, have arranged a profit sharing program to split the proceeds from the sale of the recyclables. Fox Point, on the other hand, has foregone this option in exchange for a lower per-household rate.

The Village’s recycling efforts are funded principally through recycling user fees (65% of revenue). In addition, the recycling fund is supplemented by tax levy assistance (11% of revenue), a recycling grant from the State of Wisconsin (22% of revenue), and miscellaneous income (2% of revenue). For the 2012 fiscal year, residential users paid \$17 per-quarter for the service.

On the expenditure side, the contract with Veolia makes up 98% of the cost; the remaining 2% are administrative costs.

In 2011, Fox Point collected 265.6 pounds of recyclable material per capita. According to the DNR, this is more than double the standard for the DNR’s “effective program” designation.

The Village also participates in a recycling performance measurement program. In 2011, of 56 communities studied nation-wide, Fox Point had the 6th highest collection rate for recycling with 33.9% of waste collected being recycled. It had the highest rate of the five participating Wisconsin communities.

It is generally agreed that recycling is a net-plus for the environment. It is also agreed that recycling is here to stay. However, until the market value of the recyclables exceeds the cost of collection and sorting, we will continue to pay for the privilege.

This too is clear: measured by participation and commitment, Fox Point leads the way.

Douglas H. Frazer is a trustee on the Fox Point Village Board. The views expressed are his own and not necessarily those of the Village, the Village Board, other Village Board members, or Best Version Media, LLC.