

## Matawan, Holmdel sign on to waste collection study

Boro also looks to join energy purchase collective

BY ERIN O. STATTEL Staff Writer

Matawan, in conjunction with other Monmouth County towns, will participate in a feasibility study regarding solid waste disposal. The Borough Council approved a resolution seeking grant money for the borough's participation, along with other participating municipalities, in a solid waste collection feasibility study aimed at consolidating services.

"There are 32 municipalities participating in the study, and it was initiated by the Central Jersey Council of Governments, which is comprised of 37 municipalities or members," Mayor Paul Buccellato explained. "Matawan is a member of the council and signed its charter, but Marlboro Township is the lead municipality regarding the study."

According to Buccellato, Marlboro is applying next month to the state for the grants to commence the study.

"The waste cooperative will reduce operating expenses for each municipality, and the group will benefit by reducing and establishing fixed surcharge fees such as fuel, recycling fees, etc., and there is no cost to the borough of Matawan regarding the study," he said.

The solid waste disposal line item is a large one in the municipal budget every year.

"We spend about \$660,000 a year to M&S Waste Services [of Middletown]," said Borough Administrator William Garofalo. "If this study comes out the way I think it will, even conservatively a 10 percent decrease would mean a savings of \$66,000 a year to the borough. But I do think the savings will be greater."

Other towns see the benefit of sharing waste removal costs as well.

"We are part of the Council of Governments, and the study seemed like a wonderful way to share costs," Holmdel Mayor Serena DiMaso said of her town's participation in the study. "It is a more expanded version of a program [Assemblywoman] Amy Handlin [R-13th District] and I tried to start a few years ago with just the 13th District towns. But if we can all share services, then in the long run we may just save the taxpayer some funds. In Holmdel we are always looking for ways to save money and tighten our belts a bit."

As for Matawan, Garofalo said the borough's attempts at cost savings don't end with the waste services study.

"We have also become part of the New Jersey Sustainable Energy Fund," Garofalo said. "We are part of a group that is trying to get over 200 New Jersey municipalities together to enter a reverse energy auction. We are hoping to see a 3 to 5 percent savings in our electric and natural gas costs."

By participating in a large-scale study, Buccellato said, the borough is trying to realize savings with group purchasing power.

"The hope is that we can get a reduced rate to lessen the burden on taxpayers," he said. "It's addressing shared services in a positive way, and we can all win."

Other municipalities participating in the study are: Marlboro, Aberdeen, Asbury Park, Atlantic Highlands, Bradley Beach, Colts Neck, Eatontown, Englishtown, Freehold, Hazlet, Highlands, Holmdel, Keyport, Lake Como, Little Silver, Long Branch, Manalapan, Middletown, Monmouth Beach, Neptune, Ocean, Oceanport, Roosevelt, Sea Bright, Sea Girt, Shrewsbury, Spring Lake Heights, Tinton Falls, Union Beach and Wall Township.