

New recycling laws need more public education

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BEAUFORT — The town board of commissioners has asked for a recommended recycling policy from a committee that has yet to meet, but the public works department has already addressed in the town's newsletter new recycling laws set to take effect in October.

The board was prepared Monday during its regular meeting in the train depot to receive an update and recommendations from the recycling committee that was formed in the spring, but instead the board learned that the committee had yet to hold its

first meeting.

Town residents who make up the committee were in attendance and agreed to meet at 3:30 p.m. Wednesday at the train depot with Public Works Director John Young and Commissioner Robert Campbell.

And while the group appeared eager to meet, its charge is unclear. Mayor Richard Stanley said with new laws that take effect Oct. 1 regarding materials banned from landfills, the board needed a recommended policy by its regular meeting in September.

On Oct. 1, three specific materials will be banned from

landfills in accordance with state General Statute, which means they must be recycled. Those materials are rigid plastic bottles, where the neck is smaller than the rest of the bottle; motor oil filters; and wooden pallets.

But the issue of plastic bottles has already been addressed in the town's August newsletter that was sent to residents with their water bill earlier this month. The notice in the newsletter says if plastic bottles are seen in household trash, that trash will not be collected and a notice will be left informing the resident of the new law.

Mr. Young said Tuesday that

the motor oil filter ban isn't a problem because the company that collects motor oil for the town already takes motor oil filters.

So since a policy of sorts already exists regarding the new banned materials law, the recycle committee is likely to discuss the possibilities of recycling more materials, like batteries or office paper, in town. However, Mr. Young said Monday during the meeting that he didn't have space to collect any more materials than the town already does.

And while it was mentioned Monday night that batteries would be banned from landfills as part

of the new law, Bobbi Waters, the solid waste planner and outreach coordinator for Coastal Environmental Partnership, said Tuesday that was not the case except for car batteries, which have been banned from landfills for some time. CEP is formerly known as Coastal Regional Solid Waste Management Authority, and manages solid waste for Carteret, Pamlico and Craven counties.

The "three biggies," Ms. Waters said, are the rigid plastic bottles, motor oil filters and wooden pallets.

"It's pretty much all plastic bottles, except those that hold

motor oil or pesticide."

She admitted the new law would be difficult to enforce and said the "main tool" for enforcement would be education. As an example, she noted that already aluminum cans are banned from landfills in the state — a fact everyone may not know.

"But I think the purpose of this ban is to encourage and promote recycling," she said.

Ms. Waters said she has worked closely with Mr. Young in the past months regarding the new law and recycling.

"John is doing a great job of being proactive — he wants to do the right thing, and that's commendable," she said.