

# Cecil County raises landfill user fees

April 8, 2010

County residents, who previously were allowed to dump their household trash at the central landfill for free, so long as they also brought recyclables, will be required to pay \$5 per visit starting Aug. 1.

The county commissioners voted 3-1 Tuesday to implement that controversial new charge along with several other fees and policy changes at the central landfill near North East.

County Commissioner Wayne tome, who cast the lone vote of dissent, said he objects to charging residents who recycle \$5.

"I think many of the people who bring their own trash to the landfill are on fixed incomes," he said, echoing complaints several county residents raised during a May 4 public hearing on the proposal.

After postponing a vote June 2, County Commissioners Robert Hodge, Jim Mullin and Rebecca Demmler voted to approve it Tuesday, while Commissioner President Brian Lockhart abstained because he owns Signature Trash Co., which does business in Cecil County.

"The days of the county dump are gone," Hodge said after the vote, before adding that recycling services cost the county money, while additional funding is needed to pay back loans the county has taken out on several projects at the landfill. "We've made a lot of changes and improvements at the landfill in recent years and we have to pay for them."

Scott Flanigan, the county's director of public works, said the new charges are needed because the landfill does not receive any property tax revenue and relies on fees to operate.

He said the central landfill's fees had last been revised in January 2002.

"It's time for a change, but we will monitor this and make adjustments, if needed," Hodge said.

When the county commissioners held a public hearing on the recommended changes six weeks ago, the new fees and policy changes were proposed to take effect on July 1.

However, the commissioners decided Tuesday to delay the implementation of the new measure until Aug. 1.

The county commissioners also voted to require haulers to pick up trash and recyclables once a month to secure a license to operate in Cecil County.

Flanigan also added language to the approved version that is intended to clarify which companies are required to have a commercial haulers license.

"A hauler who handles more than 50 tons of trash a year will have to be licensed," he said.

According to the measure approved Tuesday, the tipping fees paid by commercial haulers will go from \$52 per ton to \$57.20 per ton, while disposing of construction and demolition debris will cost \$67.20 per ton.

As a result of the commissioners' vote Tuesday, the hours of operation at the county landfill's two substations also will be reduced starting Aug. 1.

The Woodlawn Transfer Station, which had been open six days a week, now will be open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays through Saturdays only.

The Stemmers Run Transfer Station, which also had been open six days a week, now will operate from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. only on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

(article by Cheryl Mattix, Cecil Whig, June 16, 2010)