



Town of Brookhaven Long Island

Brian X. Foley, Supervisor

August 15, 2007

Dear Manorville Residents:

Over the past few months, there has been much discussion about the Town's plans for our composting facility on Papermill Road in Manorville. At the request of Supervisor Brian X. Foley, I would like to take this opportunity to set the record straight regarding many of the issues that have been raised.

Starting this year, in an effort to keep costs down for the taxpayer, the Town of Brookhaven began managing half of our leaves in-house and contracting out the other half to a private firm that has had the Town contract for several years. The half we now manage will be composted at Town facilities in Manorville (Papermill Road site), Holtsville (Ecology Center) and Yaphank (Landfill), as well as a portion being delivered to the Town of Islip under an inter-municipal agreement.

The Town's Manorville site has been in existence for nearly three decades and has had a composting permit from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) since the early 1990's. While compost volumes have fluctuated over time, there have been years when the site was at near capacity (120,000 cubic yards). Therefore, what we propose to do this year is not an "expansion" of the facility as many have claimed, but rather providing resources to help better manage leaves at Manorville, as well as Holtsville and Yaphank. In fact, what started much of this dialogue was simply a Town Board resolution to install a scale in Manorville so we could, for the first time, accurately measure the amount of compostable material we take in, and charge commercial users who traditionally brought leaves to the site at no charge.

However, to address community concerns, the Town Board voted for a self-imposed cap of 80,000 cubic yards of compostable material at Manorville – one third less than the permitted limit issued by the state DEC.

As we heard directly from residents at a public meeting earlier this year, private composting operations are, by far, generating many more complaints than our Town facility, which to date have been few in number. In fact, last year we accepted 57,000 cubic yards of compostable material at Manorville, and there were only a handful of complaints.

Department of Waste Management

John Kowalchuk, Commissioner

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That bodes well for this year, as our current projections indicate that we will likely accept only 60,000 cubic yards of material at Manorville in 2007, an amount quite similar to 2006.

In addition, we've established an important partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Suffolk County to help manage the operations at Manorville. CCE, an outreach division of the renowned Cornell University, is arguably one of the nation's leaders in safe and effective composting. We are privileged and proud to have the opportunity to partner with them in this important endeavor.

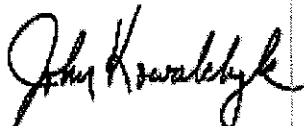
There has also been much exaggeration about the site's former "Superfund" status. The truth is that the Manorville facility – *along with every other landfill in New York* – was placed on the State's Inactive Hazardous Waste Disposal Site List after the law took effect in 1986. After the State had the opportunity to review each site individually, most were subsequently delisted, including Manorville. The site was never a federal Superfund site and any suggestion that it was particularly selected as a State site because of specific contamination or hazard at the facility is simply incorrect.

The potential community impacts – including odor and traffic – raised by many area residents are always concerns at any compost operation wherever it may be located. The Department of Waste Management takes these issues very seriously and is working to minimize the facility's impact on adjacent community residents, however small it may be. In addition, if composting were a bona fide public health risk, as some have alleged, we do not believe that the New York State DEC would issue permits for composting operations.

The Town of Brookhaven is committed to providing leaf and brush collection for our residents and managing this material in the most environmentally sound and fiscally responsible manner possible. Eliminating the Town's composting program, as some suggest, would simply put more of this material on private sites and likely result in illegal dumping of leaves throughout the Town.

Thank you for allowing me to communicate this information to you, and as always, my office is available to discuss this or any other waste management issue you may have.

Sincerely,



John Kowalchuk
Commissioner

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