

Trash contract controversy

From A1

Management, Inc. Although the city did not perform the studies, it has reviewed the results, he said.

The city's current 25-year solid-waste disposal contract with Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority will expire Dec. 31. Under the contract, CRRA operates the transfer station off Crescent Street. Garbage is weighed at the station and hauled away to be burned at the Wheelabrator Technologies, Inc. burn plant in Bridgeport. The contract is losing the city at least \$2.1 million annually. That loss could be cut to \$1 million or less under the proposed City Carting proposal, according to Alvord.

Under the proposed 10-year contract, the city would lease the Meadow Street transfer station from City Carting and operate it as a commercial solid-waste transfer station. The Crescent Street facility would be used for resident drop-off only, and recycling capabilities would be expanded there.

On June 10, after hearing residents speak, council members tabled action on the proposal and scheduled the public hearing that was held last Wednesday.

Votes to pass the City Carting proposal, however, appeared lacking at the June 10 council meeting. On Friday, two council members expressed doubt that measure would come to a vote this Tuesday.

"Until those traffic reports and environmental reports are in, I don't think it's going anywhere. Maybe there will be some answers. I want to see what the traffic reports say," said Councilman Douglas E. Hempstead, a Republican. "There's a lot of good things in this proposal too — the operation of Crescent Street as a recycling center, and the proposal cuts \$1.5 million in costs. (But) I don't see it com-

ing to a vote. I really don't."

Councilwoman Laurel E. Lindstrom, a Democrat, said she cannot see herself "being comfortable voting on this that soon after" the public hearing Wednesday and presentation by Alvord on Tuesday.

"My feeling is we're going to have to table it again. It's just too soon. You don't ever want to vote (shortly) after a public hearing. You really want to think through what the options are," Lindstrom said.

Alvord and Moccia have cautioned that inaction on the proposal could cost the city, if no new contract is in place Jan. 1. Securing the necessary permit transfers from the state Department of Environmental Protection will take much of the six remaining months, according to Alvord.

Critics of the contract allege that it is another case of "dumping" industry in South Norwalk. Last year, residents fought a plan by L.H. Gault & Sons Inc. to build a fuel-oil storage facility at the former Guard-All Chemical Co. property on Ely Avenue. Zoning commissioners rejected the site plan, and the decision is now under appeal.

Moccia declined to comment on the Gault application as it was under consideration, saying it would be inappropriate for a mayor to comment on a pending application. Afterward, in the wake of the uproar over the plan, Moccia recommended that Planning commissioners consider revising some industrial areas to "light industrial" in the city's Plan of Conservation and Development.

On the current City Carting proposal, Moccia has said misinformation is circulating.

"They're not dumping garbage in SoNo. And this (plan) will also allow us to free up the Crescent Street site" for additional recycling, Moccia said.

Diane Lauricella, president of The League of Women Voters of Norwalk, has criticized the pattern by which the trash-hauling contract was brought forward. She said there is concern about a "pattern of nondisclosure until the last minute" among some city departments and "especially public works."

According to Lauricella, the trash-hauling issue has spawned a group called Neighbors For Open Government. A petition is circulating asking the "Common Council to table the two City Carting items on their Tuesday, June 24, agenda and hold a second public hearing next week in order to continue the fact-finding process," Lauricella said.

"Every chance to better understand the details is a good thing," said Lauricella, referring to the presentation Tuesday. "However, again less than one week's notice is not enough, especially when these details (are explained) less than an hour before they are voted on by council."

Alvord and others, while acknowledging that details of the proposal did not become available until last month, point to nearly two years of public discussion among members of the council's Public Works Committee, as well as to a presentation last year and council approval to hire a consultant to look at the issue.

At the time, public discussion addressed broadly how the city should proceed after the CRRRA contract expires. Discussion about bids received by City Carting and two other bidders remained confidential.

"We see a part of our job as always looking for an opportunity to get the taxpayers of the city of Norwalk the best value for their tax dollar," Alvord said. "And that's what we did here, even though it took and year-and-a-half of effort."

Summer has begun

From A1

LaRose, the tournament commissioner.

In the age 16 and under bracket, 16 teams faced off for one of three spots in the association's regional tournament. The top two teams from that competition move to the finals in Marietta, Ga. The age 18 and under bracket had 7 teams that ultimately hope to compete in Moline, Ill.

The league consists of choose-your-own all-star teams, each consisting of top high school, or sometimes college, talent from around the state.

"It's travel softball, the best of the best," LaRose said.

Across town at Cranbury Park, the Norwalk Little League was capping off its season, which began in April, with a picnic. Kids of all ages claimed trophies of varying sizes and ate hamburgers, hot dogs, watermelon and snacks.

Instead of baseball, they



Hour photo / John Nash
From left to right, Robert Kenez, Jason Sharkey and Sean Brennan help out with the cooking at Norwalk Little League's season-ending awards picnic at Cranbury Park.

played tug of war and capture the fish — a sillier variation on capture the flag — and raced in potato sacks.

The league's president, Larry Halloran, said at least 500 people turned out. Sprinklings of rain began to fall just as volunteers were

cleaning up. "It worked out good," Halloran said. "We were scared of the rain."

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Japanese defense ministry seeks alternative to cluster bombs

The Yomiuri Shimbun TOKYO — The Defense Ministry has decided to start procuring new weapons, including new types of cluster bombs, from next fiscal year to replace its stockpile of cluster bombs, whose production and use will be banned after a treaty outlawing such munitions takes effect, sources said Saturday.

Last month, the government endorsed a draft treaty banning cluster munitions that was adopted at an international conference in Dublin attended by representatives of more than 100 nations.

Its decision prompted the ministry to find alternative

weapons to cluster bombs, which were regarded as effective in defending this nation due to its long coastline.

Cluster munitions, which contain several to hundreds of bomblets, can be used to bombard wide areas. But they pose lingering risks to civilians.

Many people have been killed or maimed by unexploded ordnance after the end of armed conflicts.

New types of cluster bombs, however, will not be subject to the ban as they have fewer than 10 bomblets, which are equipped with self-destruct mechanisms, sharply reducing the risk of bomblets failing to explode.

The ministry is in the process of formulating a deployment plan that combines five to six measures to replace the cluster bombs in the possession of the Self-Defense Forces.

The measures are likely to include the replacement of cluster munitions currently loaded in multiple-launch rocket systems with new types of cluster bombs and those mounted in Ground Self-Defense Force helicopters with conventional munitions with a single warhead, the sources said.

The ministry plans to include the required costs in its fiscal 2009 budgetary requests to be made this summer.

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