



City of Laconia

The process of recycling changed dramatically several years ago when China stopped accepting most of the world's used materials. Municipalities, including Laconia, looked to rethink how we were handling recyclables in order to adjust to the changing times. There was an added emphasis on "clean" recyclables and the need to keep contaminants out. Some communities stopped recycling altogether because it was less expensive to landfill than to reuse these materials.

While recyclable commodities of aluminum, metal, corrugated cardboard and plastics were once a profit center – or at least a better environmental and financial option than landfilling for most communities - this flipped upside down and became an added expense to local budgets.

Laconia made adjustments.

There was an educational effort to stress the need for keeping contaminants and items that do not belong out of the recycling stream so that we had "clean loads". Even though we knew glass had the ability to be reused, the reality was that there was no market for glass in any of the New England states and that we were paying more to sort glass out of the single-stream recyclables only to have it end up in the landfill anyway. Laconia focused on "Glass is Trash" until better options came along. We continued to recycle all other appropriate materials.

The City constructed a cage behind the DPW garage on Messer St. where residents can drop off clean, flattened corrugated cardboard 24/7. We also lease a compacting dumpster and City staff load the cardboard in and have it hauled away when the dumpster is full. We are at a point now where we take in enough clean cardboard material to resell on the open market, where it pays for the cost of the compactor and the hauling fee and is actually returning a few positive dollars per ton back to the City to assist in reducing other solid waste costs.

After a couple of years, the market for clean, contaminant-free recyclables has begun to turn and there are more options for putting these materials back to a productive reuse. The City's solid waste hauler, Casella Waste Systems, now has a process in place where they are crushing glass and using it as an aggregate in their operations as opposed to straight landfilling it. Based on this productive use for glass, the City is now asking you to place your glass back in the recycling bins.

Recycling still plays an important role in Laconia and our State. It is becoming increasingly difficult to get additional landfill sites approved in New Hampshire. If we run out of capacity, municipal costs will increase if we have to ship material out of state and possibly out of New England in order to landfill.

Just like the Bob Dylan song – The Times They Are a-Changin', the City is asking you to change with us. Please make sure that only proper items are placed in recycling bins. No plastic bags, no trash and no items that are not clean of food product. Flatten your corrugated cardboard and put it aside until you can drop it off in the cage behind the DPW garage. Please start placing glass in your recycling bins.

Thank you for assisting us in making the best use of your tax dollars.