

Open Work Session
Household Refuse Permits
June 21, 2016

Mr. Weston Young, Director of Public Works, came before Council. He explained that the Solid Waste Division of Public Works has a landfill for the disposal of trash and, citizens can purchase household refuse permits that they can then use at one of the multiple convenient centers. The convenient centers used to be called transfer stations and they make it convenient for trash disposal throughout the County. The permits, per County Code, run from July 1st through June 30th, and they cannot be prorated. The current fee is \$60 per fiscal year. The citizens pay \$60 whether they purchase the permits in July or May the following year. Currently, if you move into the County in June and purchase a permit, you have to pay \$60, and then it expires at the end of June at which time you would have to pay another \$60. Mr. Young said people are now buying the permits for Fiscal Year 2017. He would like to recommend legislation to change the time period the permits are valid to one year from the date of purchase. Mr. Young said they looked at changing the no proration section of the County Code, but that would still create a rush of people purchasing permits in the months of June and July as they are doing now. It would help spread out the purchases, if they could sell the permits throughout the year. Mr. Young said the permit he is most familiar is the over the sand portion at Assateague Island, in which you can buy a permit, which changes color each year, just like the household refuse permits, and if you buy the permit in September it is good until the end of the prior month the next year. The reason he is asking for legislation is because he thinks this is a fair way to issue the permits. He does not think it is fair to the citizens that purchase a permit six months into the fiscal year to have to pay for the full year. Also, the rush of people that come in to purchase the permit in June and July is pretty intense. They do offer some Saturday hours, so they pay some overtime, or the employees will earn compensatory time. The proposal is to try to make the process fair. He understands that there will still be a rush of people in June and July, but the process will spread out over time, so there will be a time when they will not need Saturday hours. Mr. Joe Holloway said he brought this process up seven or eight years ago, but there was a lot of opposition to the change. He thinks it is a good idea. It is a fair process and it will cut down on staff time. He thinks it will be easier for the attendants at the convenient stations. They have people drive up without stickers, and the people say that if they buy the sticker now, they have to pay \$60 for just a few months. Mr. Joe Holloway continued; he said with the cell phones accepting credit card payments now, perhaps one day each convenient center can put a poster up that says residents can purchase permits there. Mr. Young said they are a lot closer in getting credit cards accepted at the Solid Waste division. Once they get that in place, they will be in the very initial stages of offering the permits online, which he thinks is the ultimate convenience, so people will not have to show up in person to make the

purchase. They do need to see a copy of the driver's license and registration to verify that the person lives in the County, which is the biggest challenge, but he is confident that is something they can work through. Mr. Matt Holloway asked if the expiration date is printed on each sticker, to which Mr. Young said every year the County changes the sticker color, so it is easy for the attendants. What they are proposing is to handwrite the month on the sticker for the first fiscal year. The way Assateague handles the stickers is that they have the month printed on the color sticker. For example, in Fiscal Year 2016, the sticker color is purple, and he purchased his permit in September, so the attendants know that if they see a purple sticker with the month September (SEPT) printed on the sticker in Fiscal Year 2017, then the permit has expired. They are going to try to make it as easy as possible for the convenient center attendants. Mr. Joe Holloway said that was his next question. He asked how hard is it going to be for the attendants. Mr. Young said the attendants have stepped up with the stickers in that they are making sure the tag numbers match. There is a frustrating amount of people trying to cheat the system. If you pay for trash services out in the County, \$60 per year is not a bad price but, at the same time, they do not want to make it so people start dumping their trash in the woods or along the roads. Mr. Cannon said, if the legislation is adopted, it will take about 60 days before it goes into effect. He then asked Mr. Young what he intends to do from July 1st until the bill goes into effect, to which Mr. Young said they plan to write what month the permit was purchased on the sticker. They can make the change now, and it should be a flawless transition. Mr. Hall said that Mr. Young referenced Assateague Island for which he is a golden eagle member, which is a lifetime pass when you reach a certain age. He then asked Mr. Young if he would consider offering something like that. Mr. Hall said that could be used as a fundraiser. The County could sell permits for an extended period of time to people who know that they will probably be needing the pass for an extended period of time. Mr. Hall said, if you get into the actuarial of things like this where people do not live as long as they think they are going to live, so they buy a 10-year pass, and they only live 3 years. Mr. Joe Holloway said another problem is the County gets the money and spends it. Mr. Young said this is something they could consider to keep costs down. He said, if people over the age of 65 generate less trash and that was a proven fact, that would be the best way to look at it. Mr. Joe Holloway said the County should not charge hoarders as much because they keep all their stuff. Mr. Kilmer said he thinks this is a good process. He said he got lucky when he purchased his home as he bought it in July. He said as far as tipping fees, he has friends that live all over and Wicomico County has affordable tipping fees.

Signatures are on the following page.

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John T. Cannon, President



Matt Holloway, Vice President



Ernest F. Davis, District 1

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Marc Kilmer, District 2




Larry W. Dodd, District 3



John B. Hall, District 4



Joe Holloway, District 5



Matthew E. Creamer, Council Administrator