

Recycling cost to be covered by charge on Port tax bills

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Council OKs change that shifts expense from levy, helps businesses and condo owners

Port Washington residents will no longer pay for recycling through the city's tax levy, the Common Council agreed Tuesday.

Instead, the city will place a special charge on tax bills to pay for the service.

"The bottom line effect is going to be zero, basically," Ald. Dave Larson, chairman of the Finance and License Committee, said. "For a few people, it's going to be more — and I'm talking about cents more, not dollars.

"The only difference is that it will be broken out now."

Removing the cost of recycling from the general tax levy and instituting a separate charge for it is a measure being adopted by more and more communities statewide as they struggle to meet every tightening levy limits.

Locally, the Village of Saukville has funded both its garbage and recycling programs this way since 2009.

It's also a more fair way of paying for recycling, Larson said. The owners of many condominiums, as well as business and industry, who currently pay for recycling through their tax bills but don't receive collection from the city, will save money this way, he noted.

"If you're receiving the service, you should pay for it," he said, and if you're not, you shouldn't pay for it.

Port Washington households will be charged \$44 for recycling.

The city has looked at instituting a separate recycling charge in the past, but decided against it. However, with the state cutting aid for the program by \$11,000 for 2012, officials said it was time to reconsider the measure.

"It makes a lot of sense, especially with the reduction in state aid," Larson said.

"I think it's the right thing to do," Ald. Jim Vollmar said.