

Solid waste panel OKs plan to expand dump

Residents fear for their neighborhoods

By **KEITH BROWN**

COASTAL MONMOUTH BUREAU

FREEHOLD — A Marpal Inc. waste facility is one step closer to nearly doubling its capacity in an expansion project contested by residents of two towns and Tinton Falls borough officials.

The Solid Waste Advisory Council — an 11-member group that advises the Board of Freeholders on matters relating to the county solid waste plan — on Thursday instructed its secretary to draft a resolution approving the expansion of the Tinton Falls site at Wayside and Pine Brook roads.

The council can only make recommendations to the freeholders, which can accept or reject the advice.

"Those of us who have invested in our homes don't want to think that we live on the gateway to the dumps," Middletown resident Barbara Thorpe, 68, of Swimming River

Road told the council. "This expansion will lead to the destruction of the neighborhoods, and it is insane."

Marpal wants to increase the capacity of its site from 450 to 800 tons of debris daily, largely made up of construction material, large appliances and brush. The company, which sits close to several homes and now closes at 9 p.m., also wants to keep the site running until midnight.

After an hour-long discussion, in which several Middletown residents and the president of the Tinton Falls Borough Council spoke passionately against the project, the council agreed to several conditions the freeholders should consider if it grants approval.

Chief among them, is a restriction on truck traffic out of the facility at night and exploring the possibility of a left-turn lane into the site. The council also asked for a separate resolution recommending the immediate notification of police in surrounding towns that urges a crackdown on speeding trucks.

Swimming River Road in Middletown is renamed Wayside Road in Tinton Falls. Waste trucks, among others, often use the road to get to one of several facilities in the area, including Marpal's site.

Jerome Donlon, Tinton Falls Borough Council president, said the council would adopt a resolution against the plan at its Nov. 9 meeting.

Donlon, also a member of the Solid Waste council, has recused himself from the proceedings to oppose expansion.

Last night, Donlon gave the council an additional 50 signatures from borough residents on a petition he authored opposing the plan. Donlon handed over an earlier petition with about 800 signatures in September.

Mary Ellen Hintz of Middletown gave the council 100 petition signatures from Middletown residents who oppose the expansion.

But Larry Zaaygena, council secretary, said based on area traffic studies and data provided by Marpal, waste trucks going into the site daily accounted for less than one percent of the traffic there.

Marpal General Manager Rich Malo said Thorpe and others are right to be concerned about truck traffic, and it is a concern he shares.

But the number of trucks using Swimming River Road would not decrease even if his site didn't exist, he said.

"If they're not coming to me, they're going to the reclamation center (the county landfill on Shafto Road) or somewhere else," Malo said. "It would not reduce the number of trucks by even one."