

March 24, 2009

Mayor Devine and Common Council Members  
7525 West Greenfield Avenue  
West Allis, WI 53214

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Section 7.051 of the Revised Municipal Code is the Recycling Ordinance. Among other things, the Ordinance sets forth specific requirements for the storage of recyclables. Paragraph (10) in part states, "Recyclables which are prepared for collection, as described herein, must be screened from the public view". The paragraph goes on to discuss the specific times that recyclables may be placed at the curb or alley edge for collection.

In numerous locations across the City, residential properties abutting alleys have the blue recycling bags stored in the refuse area adjacent to the refuse container. Locating the "blue bag" in this manner relieves them of the need to take it out from the home or garage and place it at the alley on the collection date. While the storage of the blue bag in such a manner is technically in violation of the "screened from public view" portion of the ordinance, the Department has not enforced this provision since it is, as noted, a fairly common practice and heretofore has not created any real problems.

Recently, one of our alderpersons received a complaint from a resident relative to this issue. This may very well simply be a feud between two neighbors, however, for the first time, the issue needs to be addressed since the individual storing the blue bag outside is, in fact, in violation of the ordinance.

If the Department were to start enforcing this portion of the ordinance, I suspect that it would result in numerous complaints to their respective alderpersons. This seems to make little sense since it really is not a problem. Rather, it may be more prudent to simply modify the existing language slightly which could be accomplished by simply replacing the word "must" with "should". Such a change would basically allow everyone to keep their storage as it is but, at the same time, allow the Department to deal with any complaints relative to this subject by requesting the offending party to screen or relocate their bag of recyclables.

The Department recommends making this minor Ordinance change relative to the storage location for recyclables.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael F. Pertmer  
Director of Public Works