Winsted to Eye Foam Ban, Again

10/2/90 LCT

By KELLY GROTEKE

WINSTED—This month, selectmen are expected to approve an ordinance that would place restrictions on users of polystyrene foam and ban the use of polyvinyl chloride—food packaging products that are harmful to the environment. The measure comes almost a year after support to ban the material first surfaced in this town.

"Sometimes good things are worth waiting for," commented Mayor James A. Pettit, who noted that Winsted will serve as an example to other towns.

Charlene LaVoie, the community lawyer retained by the Shafeck Nader Trust, drafted the proposed ordinance, which will ban products made of polyvinyl chloride foam and will compel businesses and vendors that use polystyrene in food packaging and utensils to demonstrate that they are engaged in recycling 75 percent of the material.

"That includes what is used on and taken off the premises," explained Ms. LaVoie. For example, she said, a significant amount of the packaging material is taken out of the McDonald's restaurant here on a regular basis.

Back in May, the town's efforts to ban polystyrene foam were stymied when the state legislature passed a law prohibiting municipalities from banning the material if users of it can demonstrate that they are engaged in "comprehensive" recycling efforts. The town ordinance was then rewritten in accordance with the state law.

"The state did not define what it meant by 'comprehensive' – that was a very big mistake," said Ms. LaVoie, who explained that the town took the opportunity to define "comprehensive" itself and decided on 75 percent.

If adopted, and not protested within 15 days, the ordinance would be effective Dec. 1.