

**HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
SOLID WASTE/RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF MEETING
NOVEMBER 18, 1999 @ 2:30 P.M.
Council Chambers, 2750 Dutch Village Road**

**Present: Councillor Reg Rankin, Chairman
Councillor Jack Mitchell
Councillor John Cunningham
Councillor Sheila Fougere**

**Others: Councillor Jerry Blumenthal
Councillor Ron Cooper
Councillor Russell Walker
Mark Bernard, Manager, Waste Resources
Jim Bauld, Operations Coordinator
Brian Smith, Director, Business Operations
Barbara I. Moar, Assistant Municipal Clerk**

**Regrets: Mayor Walter Fitzgerald
Councillor Gordon R. Snow**

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The Chairman welcomed Councillors Blumenthal, Cooper and Walker to the meeting.

6. CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Bauld noted that a report was to be circulated re Item 4.2. Rather than distributing a report, he asked if the Committee would agree to a presentation by staff. The Committee agreed.

MOVED By Councillors Mitchell and Cunningham THAT the Agenda be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. PRESENTATIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC - NONE

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 8, 1999

MOVED By Councillors Cunningham and Mitchell THAT Minutes of September 8, 1999 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

9. REPORTS

4.1 Illegal Dumping Action Plan

Mr. Bauld referred to earlier discussions at previous SWRAC and Regional Council meetings on the urgency to address illegal dumping in HRM.

By the use of overheads, Mr. Fred Wendt, Supervisor, Collection and Processing, reviewed a November 9th staff report. Mr. Wendt reported that a group of HRM staff, other government agencies and the private sector developed a Needs Analysis containing a series of recommendations which would form the basis of an Action Plan. The Needs Analysis was divided into five sections, each representing a task group of stakeholders which examined specific aspects of the illegal dumping issues.

The *Task Group Review and Findings* are included in the staff report identifying each of the specific aspects of the illegal dumping issues, including existing situations, and actions required. These are:

- A. Legislation/Enforcement
- B. Education
- C. Waste Disposal Practices
- D. Cleanup

E. Cost Implications: To identify the Direct and Indirect Financial and Environmental costs of Illegal Dumping

In concluding his presentation, Mr. Wendt read recommendations stated in the report which are:

- The five Action Plans included in the Task Group Review and Findings Report e implemented.
- Staff work with stakeholders outside HRM to allocate costs of clean up, education and enforcement and present recommendations for the 2000/2001 operating budget.

Councillor Cunningham noted that there is no municipal by-law to address illegal dumping and asked Mr. James if there was any plan to have a by-law. Mr. James said this was discussed throughout the Task Force meetings. However, at one of the last Committee meetings DOE stated that they were willing to take this on and enforce existing regulations. With this commitment from DOE, the Committee felt that there was no need for a municipal by-law. Unfortunately, there were no representatives from DOE and the Police Department present for today's meeting to respond to questions from the Committee.

Councillor Cunningham suggested that perhaps residents living in the rural areas would be more reluctant to report illegal dumping than people living in an urban setting. Mr. Wendt believes that publicizing enforcement of the regulations and also stating the amount of money it costs the public to clean up after the people who do the illegal dumping, could make a difference. Mr. Bauld said he believes it is more a combination of urban and rural residents that are doing the illegal dumping.

Councillor Cunningham referred to the inconvenience that currently exists in disposing of toxic wastes, paint cans, small renovation debris, etc. at waste depots, and asked if it would be possible for HRM to have a pickup once a year. Mr. Bauld stated this had been brought up at Council meetings and Mr. Bauld reported that staff would be preparing a full report identifying costs associated with an enhanced hazardous wastes program.

Councillor Blumenthal asked who can fine persons that do illegal dumping. Mr. James responded that there is no municipal by-law against illegal dumping, it comes under provincial regulations. The Police and DOE Inspectors enforce these regulations.

In response to a question from the Chairman in terms of enforcement, Mr. Bauld stated that the conceptual plan and recommendations contained in the November 9th staff report addresses the issue - short term and long term. The recommendations are for the Committee to adopt the strategy outlined in the report and take it forward for implementation. This would

clearly indicate to HRM departments, including the Police Department, that this is a priority for Council and the SWRAC, and that funding should be identified for enforcement in their 2000/2001 operating budgets.

Councillor Blumenthal suggested that the only way to stop illegal dumping is to implement a very heavy fine. He stated his concerns with the illegal dumping that is going on around the former Halifax Transfer Station.

Councillor Mitchell said he agreed with Councillor Blumenthal. He pointed out that communities in his District work with Clean Nova Scotia every year to clean up the mess left behind by illegal dumping. The Lions Club, other groups and business people are also involved in supporting these clean-ups. He suggested that it is always the same people that are illegally dumping and the only way to stop them is with heavy fines.

In response to a question from Councillor Cooper on the provincial regulations, Mr. Wendt stated that under these regulations, it is illegal to dispose of refuse in any place other than an approved site - a landfill. If a person is found guilty of illegal dumping on private or public property, he/she is fined, and made to either clean up the site or pay the cost to have it cleaned up.

Councillor Cooper asked what would be the difficulty in HRM having a by-law. Mr. James responded that at the initial Task Group meetings it was the intent that a municipal by-law on illegal dumping would be put together. But, at the last meeting of the Committee, it was his understanding that DOE committed to regulate illegal dumping under the existing Environment Act suggesting this would be the route to go rather than a municipal by-law.

Mr. Bauld reported on a conversation with Mr. Christopher McNeil, Police Services, and he advised that Police Services had the authority to lay charges under the Environment Act, but again there is the problem of their resources, priority and budget allocations. It was pointed out that the RCMP can also enforce this Act.

Referring to Councillor Cooper's question on whether the existing provincial regulation is an effective tool or whether HRM could develop a better one, Mr. Bauld suggested that staff could develop a paper to outline the actual legislation, tools and resources that are now available that the Police Department can utilize within the limits of the provincial legislation

Councillor Blumenthal had a concern with Police Services enforcing the Environment Act suggesting that they deal with other issues that would be given a higher priority than illegal dumping. He would prefer that a recommendation go to Council to put a by-law together, including fines high enough to pay for the By-law Enforcement Officers.

Discussion ensued on the problem of enforcement, concluding with the following motion:

MOVED By Councillors Cunningham and Mitchell THAT this item be deferred until the Committee receives more information on the enforcement issue. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4.2 Integrated Solid Waste/Resource Management System - Year 1

By the use of overheads, staff reviewed *HRM Waste Diversion Achievements* for the first 9 months of the year. In recycling, HRM is up 6.2% more than last year; organics 23,400 tonnes; residential refuse is 40% less, and ICI refuse is 8.3% less. A graph identifying weekly volume refuse to October 26 raises the questions on what rate will HRM be producing waste in the fiscal year 2000/01 and how is HRM going to manage the waste.

Staff had forecasted 130,000 tonnes of waste would have to be disposed of in the 1999/00 budget - approximately 120,000 tonnes dealt with at the HRM facility and 10,000 tonnes shipped to Queens. But, more waste was received than anticipated, totalling 142,000 tonnes. This is 12,000 tonnes higher than predicted at this time last year. Staff are forecasting that there will be 140,000 tonnes of waste for disposal in the year 2000/01, assuming no improvements in diversion and waste production increase remains. But, after further diversion programs are implemented, staff are predicting that this number will be reduced to 130,000 tonnes.

Mr. Bernard referred to some areas that staff are looking at to increase diversion from disposal, forecasting an initial 10,000 tonnes diversion in 2000/01 and 34,800 tonnes diversion in 2002/3. These included:

- condominiums and apartments organics and recyclables
- expanded communication and education programs to increase residential organics
- Eco-school program
- Halifax Transfer Station pre-sort
- recycling increases
- commercial organics
- other

Councillor Blumenthal stated that he needed assurance from staff that there would be no further odour problems at the Halifax Transfer Station as experienced this past summer. If these odours are not controlled, he expressed his concern on the effect this would have on the sale of homes that are expected to be built in this area. If Councillor Blumenthal does not receive this guarantee, he will recommend to Council that the Halifax Station be closed.

Mr. Bernard reported that the maximum capacity at Otter Lake FEP is 120,000 tonnes and he reviewed the only two practical alternatives for managing the excess waste produced in 2000/01. These are:

1. export the waste to a region outside HRM which is currently being done. HRM has a contract until April 1, 2000; or,
2. improve HRM's receiving/sorting capabilities at Otter Lake to be able to handle this in-house.

The benefit of continued export of waste to another region is that it is a proven option. The drawbacks include perceived failure of the strategy; costs are presently high (approximately \$135.00/tonne) and are somewhat unstable; another agreement defining quantities, price and conditions would have to be secured; and would require the continued use of the Halifax Transfer Station.

The benefits of improving the handling/processing capabilities at Otter Lake include the ability to handle present temporary overages; long term ability to handle daily and seasonal peaks; ability to handle future contingencies; increase in Otter Lake processing capacity (fep capacity remains 460 tpd, and there would be no negative impact on landfill quality); meets strategy objectives of handling HRM's own waste and HRM would be able to close the Halifax Transfer Station. The drawback would be the perceived failure of strategy.

Mr. Bernard reviewed the costs for the two alternatives. The cost to export the waste is approximately \$135/tonne. These costs include the operation of the transfer station, the shipping, disposal fee and post closure costs at Queens. The cost to do some potential construction work on the receiving area at Otter Lake would be about \$72/tonne and a \$2.0M capital investment.

Based on moderate diversion, samples of a cost comparison of excess waste processing options re export outside the region versus in-house over a 3 year period were reviewed by Mr. Bernard. The 3 year cost to export the waste would be approximately \$4.0M. To handle the waste in-house for the same 3 years, including the operating costs of the excess waste, plus a 3 year payback of the \$2.0M capital cost would be approximately \$4.3M. Mr. Bernard also did a cost comparison on the two options with no increase in diversion over the same 3 year period. The cost to export outside the region was \$8.1M versus the in-house option of \$6.5M.

Councillor Walker said he supported alternative 2 but suggested that the numbers should be increased. He questioned whether the closing of the Halifax Transfer Station would jeopardize the contract with Otter Lake. Mr. Bernard said the pre-sorting that is done at the Halifax Transfer Station is similar to the sorting that is done on the initial sorting floor but within a

larger area. Before anything goes directly to the RDF, there is no question that all materials meet the operating requirements. Councillor Walker stated that there is no failure of strategy, it is just too small, but it works.

Councillor Cooper questioned why staff feel that HRM will get the forecasted increased diversion considering the lack of response from the ICI and the high degree of reliance HRM has put on the commercial organics being separated. Mr. Bernard said it is because of last year's experience. There has only been one significant focus on the ICI sector than began in May when enforcement bans were put in place at Otter Lake. That increased the quantity received from the ICI sector from 0 to an average of 600/700 tonnes a month, and it has stayed there. The ban is in place, but there has been no focus on numerous other sections in the ICI, and staff believe there is more material that can be diverted.

Councillor Cooper stated that he still had a great deal of concern and hesitation in saying that this will be achieved. Mr. Bauld said as of May 10th many loads that came in with appreciable significant amounts of banned materials, including organics, were rejected and were subject to a waste discrepancy report being sent to DOE. This triggered a big response from the large producers of organics, such as, grocery stores and supermarkets. Councillor Cooper said this is similar to the previous discussions on illegal dumping and obviously points out the lack of enforceability, and the perception of some business people who feel it doesn't mean anything if HRM says something, it only counts when the Province becomes involved.

In response to a question from Councillor Fougere, Mr. Bernard stated that in preparing the long term projections for a mature system, staff were provided with some statistical projections on population growth and economic growth. In response to another question from Councillor Fougere, Mr. Bauld responded that meetings are being set up to enlist the assistance of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, and any other stakeholders, to work with the new Waste Resources On-site Special Project Co-ordinators. He introduced these staff members to the Committee.

Councillor Mitchell asked if there was a major breakdown or shut down for general maintenance is there a place at the landfill to stock pile the waste. Mr. Bernard responded that under normal maintenance conditions, MIRROR had everything covered. With spare parts on the site, he said it was his understanding that the worst case scenario would be 2 days.

MOVED BY Councillors Mitchell and Cunningham THAT the SWRAC approve, in principle, the expansion of Site A, subject to approval by the Community Monitoring Committee and HRM Regional Council. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. ADDED ITEMS

5.1 Biodegradable Bags

Councillor Walker asked if the SWRAC would add Biodegradable Bags for placement in green carts be on the Committee's next Agenda, including a staff report. He said he would like to offer District #15 to be considered for a trial period next summer.

5.2 Missed Green Cart Pick Ups

Councillor Walker asked what process is in place to inform the residents to put the carts out the next day when the pick-up of their green carts has been missed. He asked if staff could prepare a staff report to address this issue.

5.3 Recyclable Items Taken from Curbside

Councillor Walker asked staff to address the problem of people taking recyclables out of bags at the curb, and leaving a mess behind for the residents to clean up.

It was agreed that staff would prepare reports to response to Councillor Walker's requests.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Councillor Reg Rankin
Chairman