

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

**MINUTES OF MEETING
FEBRUARY 24, 2000 @ 2:00 P.M.
Council Chambers, 2750 Dutch Village Road**

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

Others: 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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1. CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Moment of Silence

A Moment of Silence was observed in memory of Mr. David Melvin, a long time employee of the former Metropolitan Authority and Solid Waste Resources, who passed away on February 21st. Mr. Bauld said David was a very dedicated employee, and a very kind person who will be missed by family, friends and co-workers.

2. PRESENTATIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

2.1 Medic Delivery Services

Messrs. Peter Caldarozzi and David Haley, Medic Delivery Services Limited, made a presentation to the Committee on the services they provide. By the use of overheads, Mr. Haley gave a brief overview of the company and some of the initiatives they have been undertaking over the last few years in the management of bio-medical waste.

Mr. Haley stated that the company was established in 1990 and recently opened an office/transfer station in Burnside Industrial Park. The primary reason for this was to service the Provincial Government to collect, manage and transport bio-medical wastes from all health care facilities in Nova Scotia to a Cape Breton incinerator in Sydney.

Mr. Haley reported that about 3.5 million lbs. of bio-medical waste are processed annually through the Burnside facility. The range of services that the company provides is in support of the bio-waste management, including collection, disposal inventory, tracking of hazardous waste, collection and disposal of expired drugs, health and safety training programs for those who handle infectious waste, and advisory services on developing bio-medical waste collection programs.

Mr. Haley said the company recognizes that municipal workers are regularly exposed to potential health risks associated with infectious waste. Policies, regulations and procedures are all required to reduce risk of exposure, and health and safety training is specifically designed by Medic Delivery Services to reduce potential exposure to infectious wastes.

Mr. Haley described the facility located in Burnside Industrial Park, noting that it is a NSDOE approved hazardous waste transfer station. All waste is tracked from generator to disposal and the process is a *hands off* procedure to ensure worker safety. The facility also provides a convenient drop off service for commercial generators.

Mr. Haley reported on a new company incorporated by Mr. Caldarozzi in 1999. Bio-Safety Management Inc. will look at alternatives to incineration, and to transferring material from HRM to Cape Breton. They have studied various technologies, and methods to disinfect this material, and have chosen a chemical process that first involves the shredding up of all the materials generated through the bio-waste process. The material is then put into a batch type system that is pressurized. The chemical is forced into the cell wells and disinfects the material. Mr. Haley stated that this particular technology is endorsed through the Environmental Protection Agency in the US.

Mr. Haley stated that this system can be operated on a mobile or permanent basis. Medic Delivery completed an environmental assessment review in 1999 under the NSDOE Act and has the Minister's approval to site such a facility in HRM. Mr. Haley described the benefits of this technology, and gave copies of the environmental assessment for possible review by the Committee. The company is now looking at the volume and potential, and it is hoped to bring this new technology to Nova Scotia in the near future.

In response to a question for comments from staff, Mr. Bauld said they had no comments at this point in time, but, they wanted the Committee to have the opportunity to hear about a new service with respect to the new depot in Dartmouth.

The Chairman thanked Messrs. Caldarozzi and Haley for the presentation.

2.2 ECO Schools Program

Ms. Shelly Wilcox, Executive Director, Earth Cycle updated the Committee on the ECO Program. Referring to her presentation last Spring at which time a pilot program was going on in 27 schools, she reported that at last count, there were 149 schools in the program. In 1998, Earth Cycle Opportunities was asked to design a program to train 63,000 people to do source separation.

Ms. Wilcox described the programs that are being developed and presented in HRM schools. An ECO team in a school consists of approximately ten students, two teachers and the Custodian who decide how the program will be presented in their schools. Videos, a kit and a complete manual on 'how to' have been developed. Ms. Wilcox said the total budget for the program was \$313,000, and \$265,000 of ECO time and volunteer contributions. The breakdown of the three streams on a school-wide basis is about 21% organics, 45% recyclables, and 34% waste.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Wilcox for her presentation and expressed appreciation to the ECO Schools groups for the tremendous work they are doing. The Chairman stated that the children are the most vibrant participants because they can educate their parents.

2.3 Technicoat

Mr. John Kline gave a presentation to the Committee on degradable compost bags manufactured and distributed by Technicoat Ltd. Packages of material related to this product were distributed to the Committee. Mr. Kline said the 'tech-no-bag' is made of plastic, with an additive added by the manufacturer making it 100% degradable. Mr. Kline stated that because the bag is completely degradable, it does not require debagging at the compost site, reducing costs for municipalities.

Mr. Kline said the designed shelf life of the bag is 9 to 12 months. The large transparent bag can be used for leaf and yard waste. The bags degrade by reaction to heat, ultraviolet light and chemical action. There is no harmful residue, and the bag completely degrades to carbon dioxide and water.

Referring to the cost of the bags, Mr. Kline stated that the large bags (38 x 38) are approximately 35 cents each, the smaller bags (20 x 22) are approximately 11/12 cents each. Custom bags and liners can also be made on special order. In response to a question from Councillor Walker, Mr. Kline stated that they could be coloured red. Councillor Walker asked if Mr. Kline would be willing to provide approximately 10,000, size 20 x 22 bags to his District for a pilot project. Mr Kline responded that he would be interested in doing this pilot project.

In response to a question from Councillor Mitchell, Mr. Kline stated the bags do not start to degrade at an accelerated pace until after they are in the composting operation. Mr. Kline stated that the bags can probably be left on the street for three weeks before they start to break apart. Sun exposure and expiry date of the bag are the determining factors on how long the bag can sit on the street.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Kline for his presentation.

2.4 Waste Collection - Information Item #1 - Information on Campaign for Off Campus University Students

A letter, dated December 23, 1999 from Mr. Hugh Pullen, President, Peninsula South Community Association, had been distributed to the Committee. Mr. Pullen spoke to the Committee on the problems with a high transient population of students and other young adults in the South End. Most of these groups live in apartments or rooming houses and many of them either get the garbage or compost day wrong, the timing wrong or the concept of the four resource streams wrong.

When they get it wrong, the waste is left on the curb, where it sits for the next week or more attracting animals and birds. Bags are torn apart and the wastes are dumped on the street causing serious problems for their neighbours. Mr. Pullen stated that the officials at

Dalhousie University have stated that they take no responsibility for off campus housing.

Mr. Pullen asked if it would be possible to get the fast food industry to take some responsibility for disposal of their packaging, for example, Tim Horton's and McDonald's? Mr. Bauld responded that he had spoken with Mr. Pullen on this issue, advising that there are on-going discussions with the fast food sector and DOE.

Councillor Mitchell agreed with Mr. Pullen and stated that he would like to see the fast food industry take responsibility to stop the litter that is created by their wrappers, cups, etc. The Councillor suggested that the fast food industry could look at giving a refund on their packaging to their customers.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Pullen for attending today's meeting and the suggestions that have been made to deal with the litter problem. The Chairman suggested that, as time permits, staff could monitor these areas.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 18TH MEETING

MOVED by Councillors Mitchell and Fougere that the Minutes of November 18, 2000 meeting be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. RESIDENTIAL SHARPS - MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL NSDOE

By the use of overheads, Mr. Barry Friesen, Manager, Solid Wastes, NS Department of Environment, gave a presentation on a new management strategy for residential sharps.

Mr. Frieson said his presentation is not dealing with sharps generated in health care facilities, it is dealing with sharps that are generated in the home - syringes, needles and lancets. There is a concern re risks to the public from punctures which include exposure to Hepatitis B and Aids, but he pointed out that viruses that live on sharps die within a very short period.

Mr. Frieson stated that, in the past, sharps generated in the homes have been going into the waste stream, and were not usually a problem because the garbage was being handled a lot less. But, the collection problem has always existed because the sharps could fall out of the bag and puncture the person picking up the bag. These sharps are now entering the waste sorting facilities, composting facilities, material recovery facilities, recycling facilities and the front end processor where every bag of garbage is broken open.

Mr. Frieson referred to a previous campaign put on by the Department of Health asking users to put the sharps in a javex or pop bottle and place them in their garbage. But these plastic containers have now been banned from the landfill. Mr. Friesen stated that 90/95% of sharps are used by diabetics in the home. Currently, there are some pharmacies that will accept

sharps containers for disposal at the incinerator or landfill. Because of concerns expressed by the front end processor facilities throughout the province, DOE has had discussions with the pharmacies, Canadian Diabetic Association and the Department of Health. Major discussions have also been held with the manufacturer who supplies more than 90% of the sharps entering Nova Scotia.

Mr. Friesen reviewed a proposal that is now under consideration:

- Standard containers would be provided by pharmacies.
- Filled containers would be returned to pharmacies.
- One or more carriers would collect the containers from pharmacies for disposal at the landfill for burial.
- Landfill operators will accept sharps for disposal under a predetermined protocol.

Mr. Friesen stressed that these sharps are not considered hazardous wastes, and they can go to the landfill. These materials are already in the waste stream, but the proposal is to divert them away from the front end processor. Mr. Friesen stated that this had been discussed in other regions in the Province, and they have given general agreement that this is a workable program and would benefit them by getting it out of their recycling facilities. Mr. Friesen stated that it is understood that NSDOE requires approval of the proposal from the Community Monitoring Committee before HRM Council can give its approval of the proposal. Mr. Friesen stated that once approval has been received, the next stage would be to sell it to the manufacturers and pharmacies, and go to the next stage of development.

Councillor Cunningham referred to the comment that these sharps are not considered hazardous wastes, pointing out that there is a real perception with the public that they are, in fact, hazardous wastes. The Councillor said if they are not considered hazardous wastes for the reasons stated by Mr. Friesen, why would the sharps from blood services not be considered non-hazardous wastes. Mr. Friesen said the legislation does not state that all sharps generated in the hospital are infectious either. But, to solve the perception problem, it is the generator of the material that makes the designation. The Councillor suggested that advertising the names of pharmacies that would take back sharps would be an incentive for the public to return them.

Discussion ensued on using the services offered by Medic Delivery, and the suggestion that DOE build a small incinerator at the landfill to take care of household sharps.

Mr. Friesen stated that the key is that the manufacturer would have to pay for this program, noting that this is not being done anywhere else in North America.

MOVED by Councillors Cunningham and Mitchell that the Committee approve in principal the proposal presented by NSDOE, subject to approval by the Community

Monitoring Committee. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**5. ILLEGAL DUMPING ENFORCEMENT REGULATION**

Mr. Bauld referred to staff's presentation at the November Committee meeting re the Illegal Dumping Action Plan outlined in a November 9, 1999 staff report. The Committee asked staff to bring back further information to determine whether there was a need to develop and adopt a municipal by-law to address illegal dumping.

A staff report, dated February 14, 2000, had been distributed to the Committee and included a recommendation that the enforcement of illegal dumping laws be carried out by HRM By-Law Enforcement Officers through existing Provincial regulations.

By the use of overheads, Mr. Wendt, Supervisor, Collection and Processing, reviewed the reasons why staff is making this recommendation. These included:

- Adequate illegal dumping regulations are already in place under the Provincial Environment Act and the Solid Waste Resource Management Regulations.
- These Provincial Regulations provide for imposing clean up requirements and costs of environmental damage on the perpetrator, in addition to any fines levied.
- A municipal by-law does not offer any advantages in terms of evidential or investigate requirements or effective enforcement.
- Provincial regulations are considered "primary" legislation in contrast to "secondary" municipal legislation and therefore immune to attack on jurisdictional grounds.
- HRM can effectively enforce illegal dumping regulations which would be supplemented by Department of Environment officials where necessary.
- Prosecution of Provincial statutes are at the expense of the Crown.
- The Province will assist in enforcement of Provincial regulations but not likely municipal by-laws.

Mr. Peter James, Regional Co-ordinator, By-Law Enforcement, referred to the last Committee meeting at which time there was a discussion on expanding the auspices of By-Law Enforcement to take on the responsibility of the illegal dumping issue. DOE and Police Services are currently responsible for enforcing the regulation. A proposal has been submitted for a budget modification in the next fiscal year to hire three additional persons to take on the enforcement of illegal dumping regulations.

Councillor Mitchell expressed his concern that HRM is taking the responsibility for doing the clean-up of illegal dumping, and that the Province is not assisting. The Councillor stated that he is going to ask each of the communities in his District to try to police illegal dumping. The Chairman pointed out that Council would want assurance that there is going to be a clean-up and tighter enforcement in all of HRM.

There was some concern on whether \$50,000 was enough to clean up all the illegal dumping sites in HRM, but Mr. Bauld stated that the \$50,000 identified in the report is for the clean-up of existing identified sites. It is not for the long term approach. An additional \$25,000 is also included for co-ordinating efforts among stakeholders. Mr. James stated that HRM does not have Enforcement Officers available to enforce the legislation. It is intended to have the three Enforcement Officers dedicated totally to this issue, at an estimated cost of \$156,000/year.

Discussion ensued on whether anyone had been charged with illegal dumping. Mr. Bauld stated that as this is under provincial legislation, staff cannot answer about enforcement, but illegal dumping had been cleaned up by HRM staff. The Committee agreed to the inclusion of \$156,000/year in the 2000/2001 operating budget for enforcement.

MOVED by Councillors Fougere and Mitchell that

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

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. BIODEGRADABLE PLASTIC BAGS

A February 24, 2000 staff report had been distributed to the Committee outlining a detailed investigation of the possible use of biodegradable bags in the residential cart based organics collection and processing program, and addressed concerns of the processors.

Issues addressed in the staff's analysis included the following:

- program acceptance
- green cart design
- nuisance
- biodegradability of bags
- processors
- other municipal programs
- collection contractors

Based on this analysis, staff are recommending against considering the use of biodegradable bags at this point in time. This response is based upon major operational complications and

contractual commitments. Mr. Bernard stated that the processors had indicated very strongly that they were against the use of these bags. The processors had a concern on how this would affect the quality of their material.

Councillor Walker stated that he is anxious to try biodegradable bags in his District and was disappointed with the staff report. The Councillor stated that 82% of his residents have made it very clear that they would not use the green carts in the summer.

It was agreed that this item would be **deferred until the March meeting**. Councillor Walker asked to have the question answered at that time as to why people living in apartment buildings are allowed to use the bags but those living in private homes are not.

Councillor Cooper asked why one of the processors is prepared to accept bags from the commercial sector. Mr. Bernard responded that the processors are prepared to accept bags from the commercial sector for an additional cost. The processor has to cut, open and remove them from the process. The processors are prepared to accept small quantities from a commercial source, but they will not do this for a potential 20,000 tonnes/year residential. It was agreed that staff would bring back some further information and possible alternatives to the nuisance problem for the March meeting.

7. PROTOCOL FOR CARTS MISSED DURING ORGANICS COLLECTION

Councillor Fougere suggested that information from the February 16, 2000 staff report be included in Councillors' Newsletters to advise them on the protocol for carts.

8. SCAVENGING

Mr. James gave a brief review of enforcement re scavenging as detailed in Section 16 of By-Law S-600 which prohibits people picking over or removing solid waste from properties. Mr. James reported that when it comes to enforcing the scavenging section of By-Law S-600, it had been broken down into two types of scavenging. The first one applies to persons using vehicles to scavenge recyclables, and the second category applies to individuals using grocery carts. Mr. James said since the by-law had come into effect on January 30th, 1999, staff received 32 complaints about persons using vehicles to scavenge recyclables. Staff followed up on these complaints issuing 4 verbal warnings to operators and 14 warning letters, as well as issuing tickets to 3 operators that were caught scavenging, but there were no actual witnesses to proceed further on 11 complaints.

Mr. James stated that when it came to the second category of scavaging by individuals, staff had spoken to 60 individuals about the violation of the municipal by-law. He said he hesitated to issue them tickets because they had no fixed address, and if the ticket is not paid, there is a \$50.00 fine. Staff are hesitant about going this route, and Mr. James suggested that this is

more of a social or community problem.

Councillor Walker suggested the By-Law should be changed if no charges are going to be laid against individuals. The Councillor stated that rules should be followed and there should not be a distinction made between persons using vehicles to scavage and persons using grocery carts to scavage.

Mr. James agreed with Councillor Walker, but stated that if a \$50.00 ticket was issued to an individual, it is unlikely payment would be received. If HRM pursued it to court, he did not believe this would solve the problem. Mr. James reiterated his earlier comments that he believes this is a social issue that cannot be solved by issuing tickets.

Deputy Mayor Cunningham stated that he believes the By-Law Enforcement Officers are doing what can be done. Using a truck to pick up recyclables, he believes, is a serious violation of the by-law. But, he agreed with Mr. James' comments that it is a social issue where individuals are concerned. Councillor Fougere agreed with Councillor Cunningham and felt it was a waste of time and energy for staff to pursue this with individuals. The Committee agreed not to proceed any further with this issue.

9. ADDED ITEMS

9.1 Councillor Mitchell - Complaints from Residents in Goodwood

Councillor Mitchell asked for a staff report for the next meeting on a complaints from residents in Goodwood re bundles of aluminum being dumped on a property between the Halifax C & D Recycling and New Era properties.

9.2 Letter from Community Monitoring Committee

Copies of a December 6, 1999 letter, from the Community Monitoring Committee to HRM, and a response from Ken Meech, CAO, had been distributed to the Committee. The letter from the CMC was requesting widening the CMC's scope to include monitoring of HRM's two active composting facilities. For clarification, the Chairman pointed out that CMC is asking for liaison only, and that it would not be monitoring the activities of the two composting facilities. This would be the business of the respective communities.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next SWRAC meeting would be held on March 23, 2000.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 pm.

Jim Bauld
Operations Coordinator