

# **HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY**

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## **SOLID WASTE RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MAY 16, 2002 MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Reg Rankin, Chair  
Councillor Jim Smith  
Councillor Gary Hines  
Councillor Dawn Sloane

**STAFF:** Mr. Brian Smith, Director of Solid Waste Resources  
Mr. Jim Bauld, Diversion Planning Coordinator  
Ms. Laurie Lewis, Collection & Processing Coordinator  
Ms. Mary Lawrence, Administrative Assistant, Solid Waste

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**1. CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m., and Councillor Rankin asked that the agenda, as distributed, be approved. Councillor Hines suggested item number 4 on the In Camera Session be discussed during the general meeting and carry forward to the In Camera Session the legal aspects of the discussion. **Councillor Hines moved to pass the amended agenda and second by Councillor Smith. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - March 28, 2002**

**MOVED by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Hines that the minutes of March 28, 2002 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**Mr. Hugh Pullen, 6262 Oakland Rd., President of the Peninsula South Community Association.**

Mr. Pullen asked who he could contact to get the ½ size green bins. He expressed concern with the problem of living in the older part of Halifax (all wooden houses built very close together) with respect to the organic green carts, where to locate them (no access to the back of the property except through the residents home), how to stop other people from putting unwanted items in their carts and how to prevent fire vandalism in the carts. He requested that Solid Waste revisit the concept of waste management in the South End.

Mr. Pullen gave a list of 6 points that were presented to him by a resident, Mrs. Parker: 1) the odour associated with the green bins (collection every 2 weeks), 2) insects, 3) storage (if you live in a row house), 4) aesthetics, 5) target, 6) some way they can be locked.

Councillor Smith asked how many fires were there in the green bins in Councillor Sloane's area? Mr. Pullen stated that he understood there were approximately 47 fires started in the green carts last winter.

Councillor Smith suggested that it might be interesting to see how Toronto resolves this issue since they have rows and rows of town houses in their area. Mr. Pullen pointed out that they have brick houses and Halifax has wooden houses.

Councillor Sloane stated that with respect to the fires, they were mostly garbage bags. With respect to locking of the organic green bins, Councillor Sloane asked Mr. Pullen how many residents would participate in the program if that were to happen? Mr. Pullen stated that could be a problem but made reference to Tower Road where there is only 18 inches

to 2 feet separation distances between the buildings and residents are jamming black garbage bags between them, creating a fire hazard.

The Chair asked if staff were prepared to give a report, or if they had any comments at this time. Mr. Smith indicated that staff are doing a report on the same issues for Peninsula Community Council. Councillor Rankin asked if the report could make reference to the green carts as being a part of the Solid Waste Strategy and also part of the problem in the South End. Mr. Smith stated that he does have that information.

### **Stephen Taylor, Enviro Waste**

Mr. Taylor made reference to Mr. Pullen's request for the locking the green bins which fall under the By-Law S600 and stated that Enviro Waste would want to be involved in any changes to this By-Law. Enviro Waste have a lot of waste containers in the South End and have taken steps to lock them and dump them more often to reduce the potential for fires in the containers.

Mr. Taylor then informed the committee that Compost Services is another company they have and is one of the largest distributors of compost bags in Nova Scotia. He pointed out that he has never spoken or been asked to speak about their biodegradable bags. He would like to go on record that if this issue goes to Regional Council, he would like to be there, and would do a report presenting their biodegradable bags for household use.

Mr. Taylor stated that Inter-Regional Movement of Solid Waste may be a legal matter, but if not, it is a serious matter. Decisions made in regards to this matter will affect his company greatly, and he will be making an application today through Freedom of Information Act for any minutes or decisions made during In Camera. Enviro Waste has fought flow control before, and he feels that the Inter-Regional Movement of Solid Waste does not fit Council's terms of reference for In Camera discussions.

## **4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES**

There was no business arising out of the minutes.

## **5. NEW BUSINESS**

### **5.1 Household Hazardous Waste Program Enhancement**

- An information report dated May 13, 2002 submitted by Brian T. Smith, Director, Solid Waste Resources

Mr. Bauld spoke to the May 13, 2002 report.

Councillor Sloane asked what can be done for depots that have been forced to stockpile paint cans, and may be over their limit due to residents dropping off paint cans before June 1, 2002. Dave's Bottle Exchange was used as one example.

Mr. Bauld responded that the arrangement between Enviro Depot operators and RRFB is that RRFB is engaging the Enviro Depots to take these materials and store them in a large container that will be picked up and replaced with an empty one. The program will start in approximately 14 days.

Councillor Rankin asked if there was any requirement for the depots to accept these materials before June 1, 2002. He went on to ask if there is anything that can be done, to inform the RRFB that we do have a safety concern about stockpiling from this point forward to the effective date? Mr. Bauld will contact the RRFB to see what can be done.

Councillor Rankin also wondered what was being done in regards to advertising for this paint program. Mr. Smith gave a brief run down on what advertising will be done.

Councillor Smith asked what happens to the paint cans once the paint has been removed? Mr. Bauld stated that the paint cans with the paint still in them are shipped to a recycling plant in Springhill, and then the cans are recycled as scrap metal.

## **5.2 Organic Carts & Biodegradable Bags - Supplementary Report**

- A staff report dated May 7, 2002 submitted by Brian T. Smith, Director, Solid Waste Resources was before the Committee for consideration.

Mr. Smith spoke to the May 7, 2002 report and mentioned that this report was also distributed to members of council. The report summarizes the presentations that were presented at the last SWRAC meeting. It was intended that these presentations would go to Council, but due to scheduling, a decision was made that the matter be brought back to SWRAC and with a view to having this committee make a recommendation to Council.

Mr. Smith stated that Councillor Diana Whalen had read the report and requested that this issue be monitored in case there are future improvements in bag technology. He also stated that the Island Waste management corporation will be doing some testing this summer and Solid Waste will be monitoring this for the final results. Solid Waste Resources Staff recommendation is that the biodegradable bags not be introduced into the residential waste stream at this time. The collection contract is being tendered again for the next five years and will include an optional price for weekly organic collection days during the summer months.

Councillor Sloane moved that this recommendation be split. Second by Councillor Hines.  
**MOTION TO SPLIT THE RECOMMENDATION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Councillor Rankin stated that the motivation for suggesting the presentations go to Council was mainly in the interest of public education and what is happening at the compost facilities. Councillor Rankin stated that to help shorten the time to Council they requested that this committee review the issues and bring back a recommendation to Council. If need be, presentations can be done to Council at a later date under public education.

Councillor Rankin asked Mr. Smith, what is the real cost associated with implementing the biodegradable bags into the system, e.g., rejects that would have to be sent to Site A, etc., besides the bag breakers and additional sorting staff.

Councillor Hines cautioned that SWRAC must be careful not to suggest that the biodegradable bags will never be used in the HRM's residential organics system, because if it can be proven that they do work elsewhere, despite the cost, we will have to revisit implementing the biodegradable bags.

Councillor Smith commented that, due to the technology we have in place now at the compost facilities, the biodegradable bags would not work in the residential organics stream.

Councilor Sloane asked if the modifications to the facility to implement the bio bag program would be a one time expenditure, with regular maintenance or upkeep. Mr. Smith stated that there would be one time expenses and some ongoing expenses, e.g., sorting staff.

Councillor Sloane asked how many days do the bags sit at the compost facilities before going through the sorting process. Mr. Smith answered that a good portion of the material goes through the sorting process the same day it is received.

After the discussion, it was decided that the wording be changed to reflect the following:  
**“That biodegradable bags not be used in HRM’s residential organics systems subject to staff continuing to monitor the development and testing of the product.”**

**Moved by Councillor Hines second by Councillor Smith, MOTION PUT AND PASSED, with Councillor Sloane opposed.**

It was suggested that the report going to Council identify costs associated with the compost facilities at this time compared to all reasonable cost, operating and capital, to implement and maintain the biodegradable bag in the residential waste stream.

Councillor Hines stated that fruit flies, insects and smell have always been associated with garbage waste. He asked staff, if our aggressiveness with the solid waste program could

be considered regressive in that these issues are now brought to light, making them a problem for elective representatives and the taxpayers? Mr. Smith stated Solid Waste was given a mandate to implement a new waste system and that from our surveys, people feel we have a very convenient system. However, fruit flies and insects were inside the black bags before 1999, and staff are doing aggressive advertising to educate the residents on how to minimize the nuisance problems.

Councillor Smith stated that he supported the recommendation for the areas that would need weekly organic pickup, but does not support weekly pickup for the areas where the need does not exist. Mr. Smith stated that we tender by collection area and if need be, will break the areas down according to the need for weekly collection. **Moved by Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Hines that the 2003-08 Waste Collection Tender include an optional price for weekly green cart collection during July and August. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

### **5.3 Construction & Demolition Waste Strategy Update & Timing**

Mr. Bauld gave an update on the extensive consultation process to date. There were public meetings in each of the three areas where the applications have been received. Mr. Bauld reviewed the comments and issues that were raised at the public meetings.

The three Watershed Advisory Boards each had a presentation by the applicants in their areas, RDM for Halifax County, Halifax C&D for Halifax and Halifax County combined, and Metro Construction Debris for Dartmouth. All applicants were requested to respond to questions and all issues are to be assessed by staff. The Department of Environment and Labour (DEL) have advised that they need more detailed information before they can make comments. This is a two step process, HRM would have to approve the first step before Department of Environment and Labour would begin their formal approval process for a C&D Disposal Facility.

Councillor Colwell had expressed an interest in a meeting in Porters Lake to discuss the proposal from Halifax C&D at the Antrim site.

Mr. Bauld explained that the risk associated with continuation of public consultation is that the planning changes may not get to Regional Council by summer break, therefore, losing a construction season. Staff recommend concluding the public process and reporting to Regional Council by June 11. In early June we should have a special meeting of SWRAC just to deal with the C&D Waste Management Strategy, all three applications and the proposed amendment to By-Law L100. Subject to that, we would go to public hearing at Council in late June.

In the interest of saving time, Councillor Rankin suggested we bypass SWRAC in early June and go directly to Committee-Of-the-Whole with a report to council that evening to

get the required 14 days notice to public hearing. Mr. Bauld stated the date for June 11, has not been confirmed with the clerks office.

Councillor Hines agreed, but emphasized the importance of remediation being completed on the other Antrim site used by the Halifax C&D.

Barry Zwicker, representing RDM Recycling, was permitted to speak. He suggested that the proposals which were ready to proceed be allowed to go forward as planned, and the rest go on a case by case basis. Mr. Bauld stated that it was not possible to meet the planned schedule due to some delays to the public process, and that all three applications should be presented to Council at the same time, if possible.

**MOVED by Councillor Hines, seconded by Councillor Smith that the formal public consultation process be brought to a close. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

#### **5.4 Presentation: OMG Atlantic Litter Containers**

Mr. Smith introduced the two representatives from OMG Atlantic, Mr. Jeff Clements, General Manager and Rob Assels, Project Director. Mr. Clements and Mr. Assels have been talking to a number of HRM staff about a litter container proposal. The Regional Chairs Group, after hearing their presentation, referred them to the municipalities. Staff suggested receiving the presentation and then referring it to staff for a report.

Mr. Assels gave a brief presentation on the OMG Atlantic Boxes. The boxes, which are three tiered, locked, weather proof, durable, and paid for by advertising are given to the cities free of charge. OMG would work hard at putting the proper advertising on the boxes to reflect the recycling program. The containers are placed in high traffic areas; OMG would be responsible for cleaning the outside of the container and any maintenance required, and the municipalities are responsible for emptying the contents. OMG operates in the City of Toronto, now into the third year of their ten-year contract, and boxes are placed in eighteen communities, either in the test phase or in full implementation.

Councillor Rankin asked what the minimum number of units would be required for a test pilot to take place. Mr. Clements stated that they would want thirty to fifty units for a three month period in order to get a representation of whether they are working or not, for a three month period. Success criteria would be based on: front line acceptance, financial viability, volume of redirected waste (Toronto on average, ½ tonne of waste per box per year) and public acceptance.

**MOVED by Councillor Sloane, second by Councillor Smith that staff prepare a report outlining the cost to implement a pilot project for 30-50 units for a 3 month period, as well as, addressing the volume of redirected waste and the potential cost of having pickup contracted out. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**



Councillor Smith asked if the intent was to replace the existing municipal garbage containers in the test area. Mr. Clements stated that it would be critical that they replace the existing containers.

## **6. ADDED ITEMS**

### **6.1 Collection of Organics**

Councillor Rankin brought forth Councillor Uteck's request that when the collection schedule for organics came out, that Holiday collection of organics be carried out on the Saturday before the Holiday instead of after, to prevent the organics setting in the green bins for an extra week. Councillor Rankin asked why this change did not occur?

Mr. Smith explained the issue was put before the SWRAC committee in September and it was explained that there were as many problems with moving that date ahead of the holiday as there were with the traditional following Saturday. Collection calendars for 2002-03 have recently been issued, and the holidays are highlighted in red. He stated that any changes now would only confuse the public, but it could be brought back for discussion in September for the following year, 2003-04. Everyone was in agreement to bring this back next September.

Councillor Sloane requested that a good media blitz be done prior to the Holidays to help make the public aware of the collection days. Mr. Smith stated that this will be done.

### **6.2 Waste Resources System Futures Study**

Mr. Smith gave a quick run down on where this process stands at this time. The collection contracts are up for renewal next year, the plant contracts are up the following year giving six months lead time on the contract renewal decisions. A fair amount of work remains to be done on the collection tenders, and staff will be asking SWRAC for feedback and comments on the different issues that arise.

Councillor Sloane questioned the need for the contractors to have extra trucks to accommodate the population growth for downtown Halifax. Mr. Smith stated that the Solid Waste staff will be assembling information so the bidders will know what the growth patterns are.

### **6.3 Inter-regional Movement of Solid Waste**

- During the setting of the agenda it was agreed that this matter, which will be dealt with in part during the In Camera Session, be addressed at the public session.

Councillor Hines asked why the Inter-Regional Movement of Solid Waste was an In Camera item? At the request of the Chair, Mr. Anstey responded that some issues like enforcement are better discussed in camera.

Councillor Hines stated that whether the discussion occurs in camera or otherwise, he would like to see a staff report on who is participating in this activity, and if there are any of our business partners involved.

**7. Next Meeting:**

Thursday, June 20, 2002 @ 2:00 p.m., Eric Spicer Building

**8. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Mary Lawrence  
Administrative Assistant, Solid Waste