

# HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

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## **SOLID WASTE RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES MAY 14, 2010**

PRESENT: Councillors: Peter Lund, Chair  
Lorelei Nicoll  
Reg Rankin  
Debbie Hum  
Tim Outhit  
Bill Karsten

REGRETS: Mayor Peter Kelly, ex-officio  
Councillors: Sue Uteck, Vice Chair  
Darren Fisher

STAFF: Mr. Gord Helm, Manager, Solid Waste Resources  
Mr. Robert Orr, Collection & Processing Coordinator,  
Solid Waste Resources  
Ms. Laurie Lewis, Diversion Planning Coordinator, Solid  
Waste Resources  
Ms. Krista Tidgwell, Legislative Assistant

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CALL TO ORDER. ....	3
2.	APPROVAL OF MINUTES - February 25, 2010 and April 9, 2010. ....	3
3.	APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS.	3
4.	BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES	
4.1	Correspondence dated December 9, 2009 from Environment Minister Sterling Belliveau to Councillor Karsten, Chair of the Solid Waste Resource Advisory Committee, re: 1998 Organics Landfill Ban and 2006 Compost Facility Guidelines. ....	4
5.	CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - NONE. ....	4
6.	PRESENTATIONS	
6.1	Briefing Presentation - Diversion Data from the Province (Don MacQueen, Nova Scotia Environmental). ....	4
7.	REPORTS	
7.1	STAFF REPORTS	
7.1.1	Weekly Green Cart Collection ( <i>verbal update</i> ). ....	8
7.1.2	Overs Shipped to Queens and Chester from Miller Composting & New Era Technologies Ltd. during Fiscal 2009/10 ( <i>verbal update</i> ). . . .	8
7.1.3	Solid Waste Resources - Operations ( <i>verbal update</i> ) . . . . .	9
7.2	MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE	
7.2.1	Councillor Nicoll - Solid Waste Collection ( <i>verbal update</i> ). . . . .	10
8.	CORRESPONDENCE - NONE. ....	12
9.	ADDED ITEMS	
9.1	Councillor Hum - 2010-2011 Budget and Future Years Budget Savings re: Landfill Diversion and New Landfill. ....	12
9.2	Councillor Karsten - February 25, 2010 Big Belly Presentation. . . . .	13
10.	NEXT MEETING DATE - June 24, 2010	
10.1	September 23 <sup>rd</sup> Meeting to be Rescheduled due to Schedule Conflict. .	13
11.	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION. ....	13
12.	ADJOURNMENT. ....	14

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 p.m. in the Halifax Hall, City Hall.

## 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - February 25, 2010 and April 9, 2010

### February 25, 2010

Councillor Karsten requested clarification with respect to Mr. Pellerine's comment on page 5 regarding the number of times waste cans are emptied within the capital district. He commented that two to three times per day seems unachievable for 500 waste cans. He requested the Clerk follow up with Mr. Pellerine to confirm his statement.

Councillor Kasten further noted that he had also been nominated as Chair and Councillor Hum received a nomination as Vice-Chair; however, both declined their nominations. He requested a reference be inserted into the minutes under the election of chair and vice-chair to reflect their nominations.

Councillor Outhit advised that he was not in attendance at the February 25<sup>th</sup> meeting and requested his name be placed under regrets.

**MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Hum, that the minutes of February 25, 2010 be approved, as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

### April 9, 2010

Councillor Lund noted that on page 4 of the minutes the first bullet should read *\$100,000 per month*. He further noted that on page 4, his statement should read as follows:

Councillor Lund requested staff prepare a report identifying the time line *and provide any recommendations* for tipping fee increases over the next five years.

**MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Nicoll, that the minutes of April 9, 2010 be approved, as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

## 3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

### Additions:

- 9.1 Councillor Hum - 2010-2011 Budget and Future Years Budget Savings re: Landfill Diversion and New Landfill
- 9.2 Councillor Karsten - February 25, 2010 Big Belly Presentation

**MOVED by Councillor Outhit, seconded by Councillor Karsten, that the Order of Business be approved, as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

#### **4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

##### **4.1 Correspondence dated December 9, 2009 from Environment Minister Sterling Belliveau to Councillor Karsten, Chair of the Solid Waste Resource Advisory Committee, re: 1998 Organics Landfill Ban and 2006 Compost Facility Guidelines**

- A letter dated December 9, 2009 from Environment Minister Sterling Belliveau regarding the 1998 Organics Landfill and 2006 Compost Facility Guidelines was before Council.

This item was deferred to the next Committee meeting, to allow Councillor Uteck to provide input.

#### **5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - NONE**

#### **6. PRESENTATIONS**

##### **6.1 Briefing Presentation - Diversion Data from the Province (Don MacQueen, Nova Scotia Environment)**

The following documents were circulated to the Committee:

- A copy of the presentation dated May 2010 entitled: Datacall 2008-09, Curbside & Disposal Results.
- Graphs indicating HRM and Provincial refuse per capita disposal for the years 2004-2009 and residential and ICI fiscal years refuse generation.

Mr. Don MacQueen, Research Technical Analyst with Solid Waste Resources and Nova Scotia Environment (NSE), delivered a briefing presentation regarding the 2008-2009 Datacall submissions from municipalities to the Committee. The following statistics and points were noted:

- Datacall is a database program that NSE manages online; municipalities provide NSE with tonnages and costs for solid waste activities within the Province of Nova Scotia; data ranges from collecting recyclables, organics and other materials to disposal, transportation and operations
- during 2008-2009 total disposal from the Province was approximately 391,000 tonnes of recyclable, construction & demolition (C&D) and imperial commercial industries (ICI) sector materials, which is a disposal decrease of 9,000 tonnes from 2007-2008

- the ICI sector has declined approximately 11,000 tonnes
- the C&D sector has declined approximately 1,000 to 1,5000 tonnes
- the average kilograms of materials collected at curbside per service unit:
  - garbage: provincial average 386 kg; HRM 486 kg
  - recyclables: provincial average 135 kg; HRM 136 kg
  - organics: provincial average 216 kg; HRM 264 kg
  - total combined (garbage, recyclables and organics): provincial average 736 kg; HRM 386 kg
- the approximate cost per service unit:
  - garbage: provincial average \$33; HRM \$30
  - recyclables: provincial average \$23; HRM \$25
  - organics: provincial average \$31; HRM \$39
  - total combined (garbage, recyclables and organics): provincial average \$87; HRM \$94
- Canso's curbside garbage material collection cost per service unit is disproportionately higher because they have a single contractor providing collection, line hauling costs and disposal for some of their materials
- residential data can not be expressed as per capita number due to:
  - "self hauled" residential tonnages in some municipalities
  - some residents are serviced by ICI sector (ie. apartments)
- C&D disposal per capita:
  - provincial average 85 kgs per person; HRM 48 kgs
- ICI disposal per capita:
  - provincial average 184 kgs per persons; HRM 219 kgs
- total disposal per capita:
  - provincial average 417 kgs per person; HRM 413 kgs (range from 840 kgs to 250 kgs)
- Regional C&D disposal rates per capita:
  - provincial average 85 kgs per person; HRM 48 kgs
- Regional ICI disposal rates per capita:
  - provincial averages 184 kgs; HRM 219 kgs
- Regional total disposal per capita:
  - provincial average 417 kg per person; HRM 413 kgs (range 513 kgs to 329 kgs); the provincial target for the year 2015 is a reduction to 300 kgs per person

Ms. Laurie Lewis, Diversion Planning Coordinator, Solid Waste Resources, circulated a spreadsheet with two graphs indicating HRM and Provincial refuse per capita disposal for the years 2004-2009 and residential and ICI fiscal years refuse generation. The graphs indicate that HRM has been reducing waste over the past two years towards lowering its per capita disposal rate to meet the provincial target rate of 300 kgs. She further advised that Resource Recovery Fund Board (RRFB) has introduced a financial incentive program for municipalities. As HRM moves towards the target rate, the RRFB will financially reward HRM for its efforts. Details regarding the incentive program's

formula and mechanics have yet to be finalized by the RRFB; however, RRFB has identified that there will be financial gains for municipalities who reach the target rate of 300 kgs.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Nicholl, Mr. MacQueen indicated that the NSE does recognize that there will be waste deferral percentage variations across the Province with respect to how facilities operate and what services can be provided. With regard to the composting industry, the way the plans are configured throughout various municipalities, materials such as Tim Horton's coffee cups would be considered as a contaminant. He noted that most municipalities will develop a deferral plan based on what best suits their needs/goals.

Councillor Rankin indicated that information regarding how the Ministers of Environment arrived at the target rate of 300 kgs per person may have been provided to the Committee; however, he has never received this information. He expressed concern with respect to the extent of consultation done with municipalities and noted that he has not seen evidence of consultations taking place, nor how the target rate of 300 kgs was determined. He commented that the Committee was seeking this information when the Chair wrote to Environment Minister Sterling Belliveau on September 30, 2009. He further expressed concern with respect to the Provincial target rate and whether there are sufficient variations. HRM has special infrastructure that generates additional waste. There is another level of garbage that is not reflected in the Provincial target (Macro) approach of Nova Scotia. He further indicated that over half of HRM's geographic area is rural. He asked how the tolerance of backyard composting match up with the Province's standards and whether there would be any relaxation to the standards. HRM has always done very well with diversion based on the mass of waste that has to be dealt with. He further expressed concern as to whether HRM would be fairly treated with respect to the character of its waste. He commented that these are important matters about which the Committee would like to engage with the RRFB.

Mr. MacQueen advised that NSE recognizes that HRM is in a slightly different position from other municipalities in the Province, partly due to the way they dispose of their waste. He commented that he could not discuss at this point in time whether HRM would be allowed to have a higher or lower disposal rate in comparison to other municipalities.

Mr. Helm noted that Waste Resources has expressed these concerns to the RRFB. HRM has also provided a number of different models based on a scaled, staged or staggered approach to meet the 300 kgs target. He commented that at present, the target would unfairly impact municipalities which have differing populations and significant industry.

Councillor Lund asked whether Waste Resources is able to project what the costs implications would be by going through the reduction, in particular with the ICI, or whether the Committee could review cost comparisons.

Mr. Helm indicated that there is an opportunity for Waste Resources to identify the cost implications based on the existing projected models, weights and challenges. He advised that once staff have more information regarding the cost implications, a report could be provided to the Committee.

Councillor Lund commented that his understanding is that 300 kgs is just a random number, due to a lack of evidence that would identify it as a reasonable number.

Mr. MacQueen indicated that he was not present when the determination of 300 kgs per capita was made. He noted that 300 kgs is an approximate number equal to a 60% diversion rate. He noted that when the 300 kgs rate was determined the diversion rate for the Province was approximately 43% with a target rate of 50%.

During the ensuing discussion, Ms. Lewis confirmed that she has provided input to the RRFB on HRM's behalf, indicated that municipalities should be rewarded for their milestones of achievement, rather than being based on the target figure of 300 kg/capita. HRM's per capita disposal rate has decreased every year from 420 to 413 kgs and noted that HRM wants to be rewarded for moving towards the 300 kgs target rate.

Councillor Rankin commented that the diversion, along with the character of mass garbage, varies from each region. He indicated that HRM should appeal the target rate decision to the RRFB.

Councillor Karsten commented that the Renewed Solid Waste Resource Management Strategy is an added program and all other diversion credits are still in place. The 300 kgs was set by the Province without debate or input from the RRFB and municipalities; however, the added incentives were put forward with good intentions.

Councillor Rankin indicated that the formula has not been fully developed with respect to how the fundamental variations will be defined.

**MOVED by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Outhit, that the Solid Waste Resource Advisory Committee recommend to Halifax Regional Council that the Mayor write a letter to the Resource Recovery Fund Board (RRFB) requesting that RRFB:**

- 1. Put a hold on introducing any new program expenditures to promote reduction of solid waste to provincially set targets of reaching 300 kg per**

**capita, until agreement with the municipalities has been reached on the targets; and**

- 2. Not change the existing criteria of diversion credits which is based on the amount of achieved diversion accounting for the individual region's gross mass balance of solid waste.**

Councillor Hum suggested the Committee could ask the RRFB to provide a report or make a presentation to the Committee.

### **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Councillor Rankin commented that the intent of the motion is to allow for further discussion and does not require the RRFB to make a presentation to the Committee.

## **7. REPORTS**

### **7.1 STAFF REPORTS**

#### **7.1.1 Weekly Green Cart Collection (*verbal update*)**

Mr. Helm provided an update to the Committee respecting weekly green cart collection, noting that the weekly green cart expanded service has been included into the budget debate process under budget/service review and will be presented to Council on May 18, 2010.

#### **7.1.2 Overs Shipped to Queens and Chester from Miller Composting & New Era Technologies Ltd. during Fiscal 2009/10 (*verbal update*)**

Mr. Helm provided an update to the Committee, the following points were noted:

- overs shipped are plastics and contaminants that are screened out of the two composting facilities during the separation of organics
- HRM shipped the following:
  - 530 tons of screened materials from New Era - \$42,412 per year
  - 23 tons of screened materials from Miller Composting - \$1,820 per year
- - 630 tons of large wooden materials from Miller Composting which funds a second disposal site as opposed to the Chester landfill - \$32 per ton; Rate for Chester landfill is \$80 per ton
- majority of large material from Miller Composting Program goes towards Fundy Composting into their Open Window Composting Program - \$32 per ton (\$20,000)
- overs shipped to Chester - approximately \$80 per ton

In response to concerns raised by the Committee regarding why the report was not before the Committee for review, Mr. Helm advised that the report was requested by Regional Council would go back to Regional Council. There was no request by Regional Council to forward the report to the Solid Waste Resource Advisory Committee. The Clerk confirmed that staff are able to provide a written submission or verbal update to the Committee provided an overview of the report, which is what is presently being provided.

Following a brief discussion, the Committee suggested the Chair contact the Acting Municipal Clerk or the Chief Administrative Officer to request permission for the Committee to review the report prior to it going before Council, to allow for the Committee to provide comments.

### **7.1.3 Solid Waste Resources - Operations (*verbal update*)**

Mr. Helm provided an update to the Committee, the following points were noted:

- staff has finalized the wording of the contract renewal agreement of New Era; staff anticipate the agreement will be signed within the next couple of weeks
- staff received approval from the Province to commence the closing of the Waste Stabilization facility
- staff are finalizing the cost review of the five year renewal contract with Mirror
- the Committee received an invitation by way of email to the Solid Waste Resources roundtable event on June 7, 2010 to discuss the waste management program - compost, collection, recycling and diversion of new technology
- the 2006 Compost Facility Guidelines are based on the state of maturity of the compost (temperature, moisture, etc.), at the end of the compost process
- HRM's compost maturity is not meeting the standards set by the new guidelines approved by the Province and put forth by the Canadian Composting Standards Committee
- staff has been tasked to conduct an assessment, which takes 18 months and involves four different tests over that time; a Request for Proposal has been placed and staff are awaiting the results

Councillor Rankin expressed concern with regard to the lack of engaged discussion with the Province regarding the 2006 Compost Facility Guidelines and what other municipalities within the Province are achieving. He commented that other municipalities are allowing backyard composting. He asked whether any consideration has been given to delay the implementation of the Guidelines until HRM has a new facility. He noted that the Committee received a response letter from Minister Belliveau,

dated December 9, 2009, indicating that “we all have to work together to meet the disposal goals...” and commented that there should be some discussion between the Province and HRM.

Mr. Helm advised that staff has been in discussions with the Province. Upon review of the Province’s report, which is based on preliminary test results, HRM needs to do further review. The guidelines are Canadian composting standards. Depending on when the guidelines were implemented, there are varying degrees of composting options within the Province. Some municipalities already meet the standards, and the areas that do not, have been tasked to conduct formal assessments and develop a plan that outlines the implications, and to work towards a remediation plan to meet the standards. Staff estimate it will take until 2014 before HRM must have measures in place that meet the guideline standards, to which the Province has agreed.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Lund regarding additional costs to ship materials to Enfield, Mr. Robert Orr, Collection & Processing Coordinator, Solid Waste Resources, advised that the costs are included within HRM’s contracts with the two facility operators.

Councillor Rankin indicated that new regulations should not be implemented without consultation with the municipalities.

Mr. Helm advised that the Mayor has sent a letter to Minister Belliveau, outlining HRM’s concerns regarding the guidelines and requested that there be a consultation process and that HRM be engaged by the Province independently to address these concerns.

## **7.2 MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE**

### **7.2.1 Councillor Nicoll - Solid Waste Collection (*verbal update*)**

Councillor Nicoll advised that she has been contacted by residents expressing concern with the lack of consistency regarding how their solid waste is collected (ie. waste, compost and recyclables). She commented that she would like to provide the correct information to her constituents as to how best to dispose of their various waste materials.

In response to Councillor Nicoll, Mr. Helm noted the following points:

- staff has been addressing the issue of waste disposal consistency with HRM’s collection departments
- staff has received positive feedback from the collection partners and feel that progress is being made

- staff has conducted oversight monitoring of the collection program across HRM to confirm consistency
- HRM will not ship its garbage, or any other materials, outside of HRM unless there is knowledge of the market/designation and the materials use can be confirmed
- Councillors can continue to advise their constituents to reduce, reuse and recycle
- HRM is continuously trying to reduce its waste and recycle all materials where there is a valid/quality market
- staff are introducing new technology into its waste management program for all materials where markets are not available and can not be recycled; introducing a recycling use for materials such as bio chemicals, and bio fuel, to avoid having these materials disposed of into the landfill
- the Province is not presently accepting certain technologies being used by HRM for waste reduction; HRM is working with the Province to resolve some of these issues
- recycling materials are collected in blue bags
- HRM cannot ban large chain stores from selling various types of plastic bags and large bins designed for recycling; these items are often acceptable for use in other municipalities

Councillor Hum expressed concern regarding mixed messages between what is permitted within HRM and what is being sold in the stores. She noted the importance of having proper public awareness. She commented that many residents in her District are not being as diligent in separating their waste materials and compost. She further expressed concern regarding theft of bagged recyclables at curbside and suggested having more By-law enforcement monitoring the streets. She commented that HRM is losing revenue and asked what the financial implications are to HRM's recycling program.

Mr. Helm indicated that he does not see a decline in HRM's recycling, noting that HRM's source separator annex continues to grow and is beyond capacity. He commented that the By-law enforcement compliance and education program is working for green carts; however, certain materials are still going into black bags that should not be. Staff is preparing a summary of the contents analysis in black bags, which will be provided to the Committee shortly. The report will contain recommendations on how to address some of these materials in line with both the initiatives that are taking place across the Province to reduce black bags and deal with materials that should not be in black bags. He commented that the removal/theft of recyclables from the curb is a recognized problem. Policing would have to be provided on a continual basis to monitor this problem. He indicated that he would contact the Halifax Regional Police (HRP) to determine whether HRP could work with Waste Resources to develop a possible deterrent. A police officer must catch the individual in the act of removing the bag from the property in order to enforce the issue.

Following a brief discussion, Councillor Karsten commented that staff estimate that approximately \$200,000 worth of recyclables is being stolen from the curbside. He requested that this issue be added to Committee's agenda for further discussion at the next meeting. The Committee agreed to invite staff from Legal Services and Halifax Regional By-law Enforcement to the next meeting.

**8. CORRESPONDENCE - NONE**

**9. ADDED ITEMS**

**9.1 Councillor Hum - 2010-2011 Budget and Future Years Budget Savings re: Landfill Diversion and New Landfill**

Councillor Hum indicated that she had asked the Chief Administrative Officer whether consideration could be given to defer investing in the new cell by diverting waste to the West Hants facility. She noted that due to time constraints respecting budget debate, a formal report could not be prepared. She further noted that she had requested a legal opinion regarding her question. She asked whether Mr. Helm could explain whether her suggestion is possible and noted that it would be on a temporary basis but could have potential cost savings for HRM on a short term basis.

In response to Councillor Hum, Mr. Helm noted the following points:

- HRM's waste management program is not as expensive to operate in comparison to other municipalities within the Province
- as noted earlier in the meeting, HRM has a policy that it will not ship its waste outside of HRM, nor introduce materials that are unfavorable to the landfill that would cause environmental issues
- HRM's By-law S-600 Solid Waste Collection & Disposal, is designed to counter efforts to circumvent this program
- to stop/stall the building of a cell would fundamentally hamper the cost/funding of HRM's program
- HRM requires all of its waste and the revenue generated from that waste to support and provide a level service to the community both from a residential and commercial perspective at a manageable/practical cost
- the program was also designed that the cells are paid forward on a yearly basis and not when they come due
- lower tipping fees at other landfills usually does not include the operational costs to ship the waste to another location
- there are legal and operational factors; HRM would also lose control and have to reinvest in new infrastructure to accommodate shipping waste offsite

## **9.2 Councillor Karsten - February 25, 2010 Big Belly Presentation**

Councillor Karsten advised that a motion was passed during the February 25, 2010 meeting requesting that staff prepare a cost benefit analysis. He expressed concern that staff has purchased two Big Belly units on a test basis without providing a business case.

Mr. Helm indicated that he has contacted staff at Municipal Operations to address these concerns and advised that the Committee is awaiting a business case report .

In response to a question raised by Councillor Nicoll regarding location of the two units, Mr. Helm advise that the units have been ordered but could not confirm whether they have been deployed. Staff has indicated that the two units will be deployed on Spring Garden Road but he could not confirm the exact location.

Councillor Lund suggested that the analysis indicate whether there is merit in deploying Big Belly units within HRM's recreation facilities.

Mr. Helm noted that Solid Waste Resources has concerns with the units as well, noting that a Big Belly unit is one large garbage can that does not have the ability to separate materials but rather, compacts them all together.

Councillor Karsten commented that during the February 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, Mr. Pellerine indicated that he would report back to the Committee regarding a potential new proposed pole mounted garbage can program.

## **10. NEXT MEETING DATE - June 24, 2010**

### **10.1 September 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting to be Rescheduled due to Schedule Conflict**

- A copy of the Approved 2010 Meeting Schedule, accompanied by a list of potential dates was before the Committee for their consideration.

The Chair indicated that it was too early to determine an alternate date for the September meeting. The Committee agreed to defer Item 10.1.1 to the next meeting.

## **11. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**Jeff Travers of Miller Waste**, advised that Miller Waste upgraded its recycling facility in 2009. He thanked Councillors and Regional Council for awarding them HRM's recycling contract to operate the material recovery facility. Since being awarded the contract, Miller Waste has invested approximately \$1 million worth of equipment in the blue bag program. Miller Waste installed a glass screener and created six new

positions. The residual rate has gone from an average rate of 14-15% to 6.73%. Miller Waste is diverting more materials from the facilities. He invited members of the Committee to attend the facility, noting that some members have already do so. Miller Waste would like to host a grand opening to promote the benefits and upgrades that have been done.

Mr. Helm indicated that he has been asked whether the Committee would be organizing operational tours of HRM's facilities for Councillors and interested parties. Councillor Lund suggested that staff from Solid Waste Resources make the necessary arrangements and report back to the Committee.

## **12. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 3:08 p.m.

Krista Tidgwell  
Legislative Assistant

## **INFORMATION ITEMS** **May 14, 2010**

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None.