

BRIEFING NOTE

SUBMITTED TO: Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee

MANAGER'S APPROVAL:



Gord Helm, Manager, Solid Waste Resources

DATE OF MEETING: October 6, 2011

SUBJECT: Proposed Bylaw S607, An Amendment to Bylaw S600

ORIGIN

On March 8, 2011, a public hearing was held on the proposed changes to Bylaw S600 to include:

1. Reducing the garbage bag limit from 6 to 4 bags/containers for residential collection;
2. The use of clear bags for garbage for the residential and ICI sectors;
3. Provision of kitchen counter top mini-bins for occupants of multi-unit properties.

A motion was moved that no further consideration of Bylaw S607 be given and that the process of adopting Bylaw S607 be abandoned and in its place, during 2011-2012, staff be encouraged to undertake additional education efforts, together with a consultative public engagement, on shaping the ongoing evolution of HRM's Solid Waste Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION/ DECISION REQUIRED

NONE REQUIRED IN THIS CASE, INFORMATION ONLY

BACKGROUND

In November 2010, Solid Waste Resource Advisory Committee approved the advancement of three initiatives to revise Bylaw S600 to increase diversion through more effective source separation. These initiatives included reducing residential garbage bag limits to four from six, introducing a clear bag policy for refuse collection, and requiring landlords to supply tenants with kitchen counter top mini-bins for organics. Regional Council approved advancing the proposed revisions to First Reading on December 7, 2010. Regional Council passed First

Reading of bylaw S607 on February 8, 2011, and scheduled the public hearing for February 22, 2011. The public hearing was subsequently rescheduled for March 8, 2011. Prior to commencing the public hearing, Regional Council debated concern over the state of communication and education of the public related to the proposed initiatives. It was moved and passed to stop the process and initiative a greater level of public communication and education to evolve the solid waste management program in order to come back to council at a time when the public better understood the issues and implications of a plan to increase diversion through more effective source separation. Solid Waste Resources staff was tasked to develop a public engagement plan to enhance communication and education of the public.

Since the motion passed on March 8, 2011, Solid Waste Resources staff have started developing a communication and education plan to enhance engagement in the program and help the public understand the issues around increasing diversion through more effective source separation.

SWR currently has 4 Waste Resource Education officers (WRE) whose focus is to promote municipal waste/resource diversion programs. This includes working with a variety of sectors including schools, institutions, food service, apartments, residents and other commercial enterprises.

Staff were approached and supported a proposal to implement a series of pilot programs with the Investment Property Owners Association of Nova Scotia (IPOANS) members, designed to build on lessons learned during the past initiatives to enhance diversion in apartments. Fourteen apartment buildings within HRM representing different building sizes, geographical areas, and socio-economic and age demographics have agreed to participate in the pilot project. The pilot program buildings have agreed to participate in one of the following trials: clear bags only; organics mini-bins only; clear bags and organics mini-bins; or, garbage chute decommissioning.

The data collected during the pilot programs will serve as an invaluable tool for IPOANS and HRM to understand how to best tackle the challenges that face waste management in the apartment sector and how SWR can continue to work to enhance diversion, ensuring Bylaw compliance and program cost savings.

Since April 1, 2011, SWR staff have logged a total of 2175 hours in performing education activities throughout HRM. This includes customized education sessions at various businesses within the ICI sector, presentations at schools, tours of HRM waste facilities and other events and sessions to promote the waste reduction, re-use, recycling and composting programs in HRM.

SWR staff have also worked on a new communication program "What goes where?" focusing on the newly passed motion to recycle all plastics (#1 - #7, except Styrofoam). This includes advertising on radio, TV, metro buses and various local papers and websites. Promoting the SWR program through a variety of outlets ensures that the message will reach a larger population.

ALTERNATIVES AND ASSOCIATED RISKS

N/A

IMPACT/BENEFITS

Solid Waste Resources will work with the public to enhance communication and education on the current strategy to better increase effective source separation. Enhancing diversion away from the landfill supports the citizens' developed solid waste resource management strategy. This public engagement program will increase program awareness, understanding and support in order to evolve the program as directed by Council.

COMMUNICATION ISSUES/OPPORTUNITIES

SWR will report back to committee once the engagement plan has been developed and consultation with CMC has been undertaken. SWR will also report back an update on preliminary results of the ongoing pilot projects once results have been developed.

ATTACHMENTS

N/A

KEY STAFF CONTACT:

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