

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

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
OCTOBER 4, 2000 @ 9:00 AM  
Council Chambers, 2750 Dutch Village Road**

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

**Others: Councillor Russell Walker  
Mark Bernard, Manager, Waste Resources  
Jim Bauld, Operations Coordinator  
Brian Smith, Director, Business Operations  
Barbara I. Moar, Assistant Municipal Clerk  
Bill MacGillivray, By-Law Enforcement Officer**

**Regrets: Councillor Sheila Fougere  
Councillor Gordon R. Snow**

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

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

The following items were added to the Agenda:

- Information Item #1 was brought forward to the regular agenda.
- Information Item #6 was brought forward to the regular agenda.
- Downtown Dartmouth Solid Waste Enforcement

**2. PRESENTATIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Ms. Diane Coish was to make a presentation to the Committee today re C & D waste disposal, but due to a misunderstanding Ms. Moar did not inform her of the meeting. An apology will be sent to Ms. Coish and staff will ensure that she is invited to the next Committee meeting.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF APRIL 19, 2000**

**MOVED by Deputy Mayor Cunningham and Councillor Mitchell that the minutes of April 19, 2000 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**4. COMPOSTABLE GARBAGE BAGS**

Deputy Mayor Cunningham reported on numerous calls that he had received from residents who had bought plastic compostable garbage bags that are being sold for lining green compost bins, and kitchen waste containers. But, the waste haulers will not pick up the compostables from bins where they are being used. The Deputy Mayor noted that staff had previously reported on this issue, but asked that they report again and that better communication be made to the public on the use of these bags.

Mr. Bernard confirmed that staff had done an analysis on using compostable garbage bags, including the acceptance of the composting program as it exists, the design of the green cart, the nuisance issue, and also the length of time required for these and other compostable bags to biodegrade. Staff also looked at similar municipal programs and discussed the use of these bags with the contractors. In summary, staff determined that it is not practical or feasible for use in the HRM system, and recommended that these bags not be used at this point in time. When new contracts are drawn up, it may be possible to look at this again, depending on the development of the product.

The Chair asked staff to provide a means to ensure that the public is made aware that this

is not an acceptable practice in the HRM program at this point in time. Mr. Bernard stated that the report will be redistributed to Council and it will be noted in the solid waste newsletters that are distributed.

Deputy Mayor Cunningham stated that he was not disagreeing the position that staff has taken on this, but as he and others had received numerous calls he wanted to bring this to their attention. The Deputy Mayor complimented staff on all their efforts in dealing with the public on any problems that are raised.

#### **5. DOWNTOWN DARTMOUTH SOLID WASTE ENFORCEMENT**

Deputy Mayor Cunningham reported on calls that he had received from business owners about garbage that had been dumped on their premises by others. They called By-law Enforcement, and while it was recognized that the business owners did not create the garbage, it was on their property. The owners were given 24 hours in which to clean up the garbage or be ticketed.

Deputy Mayor Cunningham reported that he had checked the solid waste budget and learned that there is no budget for staff to pick up these kinds of waste. The Deputy Mayor felt it was very unfair to expect a property owner to clean up waste that is not created by them.

Mr. MacGillivray, By-Law Enforcement Officer, stated that where staff can identify the party responsible for the waste, they do go after them, but it is a real problem, especially in downtown Dartmouth and in the core area of District #12 with businesses putting waste out for residential pick up when in fact it is commercial waste. Mr. MacGillivray stated that he would bring the Committee's concerns to the attention of Mr. Peter James. The Deputy Mayor appreciated staff's problem with identifying the originators of this waste, but he felt that it was unfair to make it a problem for these property owners to dispose of the waste. Deputy Mayor Cunningham suggested that some money should be put into the budget to take care of some of these pickups.

**MOVED by Deputy Mayor Cunningham and Councillor Mitchell that funds be placed in the budget to pick up illegally placed waste at curbside that cannot be identified.**

Councillor Walker stated this is a wide-spread problem in HRM and has to be addressed.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**6. INFORMATION ITEM #1 - REDUCTION IN RESIDENTIAL REFUSE CONTAINER (BAG) LIMIT**

Mr. Bauld reviewed the September 29<sup>th</sup> Information Item Report that was prepared to assist the SWRAC with a discussion of the existing residential refuse container (bag) limit.

As stated in the report, in 1998, Council approved a residential collection system, consisting of bi-weekly organics and refuse collection, with recyclables collection in the urban area and bi-weekly in the rural areas. Mr. Bauld reviewed the success of the solid waste management system over the past 19 months, specifically the achievement of the communities' objectives to divert from the Otter Lake mixed waste processing and disposal facility as much material possible by reducing, reusing, recycling, composting and proper HHW disposal.

Mr. Bauld stated that prior to amalgamation there were no common bag limits throughout the municipalities, with the County having no bag limit. In 1998, a limit of ten bags was chosen as it was assessed to be reasonable, as residents learned how to compost, and to recycle more, and fair for the residents in the former County of Halifax.

Mr. Bauld referred to page 3 of the report stating that over the recent summer months, staff completed a survey of the number of refuse bags, and cans, placed curbside for collection at 504 homes in central and mainland west Halifax, Sackville and Cole Harbour. The study determined that the average number of refuse bags was 2.7 per household per collection week. Mr. Bauld stated that staff have contacted other municipalities in the Province that have a similar waste management collection system, and their bag limits are identified in the staff report.

Based on the HRM survey and data received from other municipalities, staff have determined that a reduction to 6 bags can be very easily accommodated. Staff are seeking guidance from the Committee before developing recommendations for Council.

Councillor Walker expressed his concern with reducing the bag limit, suggesting that this would encourage more illegal dumping. The Councillor felt that communicating to the public how well the system is working would be a better approach to encourage reduction. Mr. Bauld responded that he understood the Councillor's concerns, but pointed out that staff has the responsibility to do what it feels is the best approach to continue to motivate the residents. He pointed out that this would be supported through the communication and education program.

Deputy Mayor Cunningham stated that the Committee cannot be critical of the solid waste staff for coming in over budget, and then prevent them from taking methods to bring their department in on budget. If there are fewer bags of garbage, it will cost HRM less. The

Councillor felt that 10 bags was an extremely high number for regular pickups, but suggested that there may be times when 10 bags are needed, possibly during Spring and Fall cleanups. The Councillor believed that the bag limit should be reduced.

Discussion ensued on recommending 6 bags per household, except during Spring and Fall cleanups, and possibly at Christmas. Referring to the collection of leaves in the Fall, staff are focussing on encouraging residents to keep leaves on their properties, to be used for protecting plants and shrubs during the winter. This will be part of the message in the Fall collection Public Notice. Residents will be encouraged to use backyard composters.

It was agreed that staff would prepare a report for the November Council meeting.

**7. INFORMATION ITEM NO. 6 - OUTDOOR SOURCE SEPARATORS (PRIVATE LITTER/RECYCLING BINS)**

Mr. Bauld referred to the staff report re private litter/recycling bins that had been prepared for the cancelled June 14<sup>th</sup> Committee meeting pointing out that during the Tall Ships, there was an opportunity to look at how best to capture litter from that event. This was conducted by Youth Life. Mr. Bauld stated that staff's conclusion in the June 14<sup>th</sup> report is supported by Youth Life with regard to the small amount of beverage containers in the litter receptacles during the Tall Ships. Youth Life had factored in a loss of about 75%, but in fact it was closer to a 95% loss.

Mr. Bauld referred to other issues of concern in the report respecting the feasibility of placing outdoor source separator bins along public streets, at parks and playgrounds, including vandalism and graffiti, theft from the containers, service and size of the containers, and maintenance of containers.

The Committee agreed that Mr. John Kline could speak to the Committee on this issue.

Mr. Kline referred to issues that were raised by Mr. Bauld and addressed concerns expressed by staff. Following his presentation, the Chair asked Mr. Kline if he would be willing to work with HRM staff in setting up possibly two pilot projects. Mr. Kline agreed to meet with staff to discuss this further.

The meeting adjourned, and reconvened In Camera.

Jim Bauld  
Operations Co-Ordinator