

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

**MINUTES OF MEETING
MARCH 25, 1998 @ 2:00 P.M.
Council Chambers, 2750 Dutch Village Road**

**Present: Mayor Walter Fitzgerald (part)
Deputy Mayor Reg Rankin, Chairman
Councillor Ron Cooper
Councillor Jack Mitchell
Councillor Gordon R. Snow
Councillor John Cunningham**

**Others: Mark Bernard, Manager, Waste Resources
Jim Bauld, Operations Coordinator
Brian Smith, Director, Business Operations
Lori Patterson, Supervisor, Marketing & Public Relations
Kim West, McArthur, Thompson & Law
Barbara I. Moar, Assistant Municipal Clerk**

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1. CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chairman called the meeting to order. He advised the members that Mr. Peter Ryan would like to make a presentation re banning of plastic bags from waste stream. The members agreed to the presentation. The Chairman advised the members and audience that there is an In Camera item on the Agenda related to a report dealing with a C & D recycling facility in North Preston, and it may be necessary to bring this forward on the Agenda.

2. PRESENTATION BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

2.1 Peter Ryan re Banning of Plastic Bags from the Waste Stream

Mr. Ryan spoke on the merits of compostable paper bags as a complement to the HRM's cart program. Mr. Ryan reported that since a previous presentation, additional information has been gathered on the success and benefits of compostable paper bags. In making these presentations to other communities, there has been a common desire to eliminate plastic bags, preferably at source, from landfills. Mr. Ryan referred to the Spring and Fall pick ups of leaf and yard waste suggesting that by using 2 ply compostable paper bags there could be cost savings of at least \$50,000/year, and contaminated bags would not have to be sent to the landfill.

Mr. Ryan said the paper bags are easy to handle and are well accepted by the general public. He stated that in a number of Canadian cities the use of compostable paper bags for leaf and yard waste pickup is mandatory. He therefore asked the Committee to recommend to Council the banning of plastic bags from HRM's organic waste stream.

Mr. Ryan described the work that Prescott Paper has been conducting with national fast food operators in municipalities such as HRM. He said they have devised leak resistant compostable paper bags that allow operators to handle kitchen waste in close quarters eliminating the need to clean carts or containers. He said Prescott Paper feels these initiatives would be beneficial for the elderly and physically challenged residents who may not be able to manoeuvre the carts, residents who do not have outside running water, and also residents who live in attached housing. He said if HRM is interested in this process, he would be available to discuss it further.

Mr. Bauld said there was a staff report on this issue at the last meeting, stating that the philosophy of paper bags is consistent with the overall strategy. Mr. Bauld said he believes this is more of a timing issue, but pointed out that staff are looking at paper bags as an acceptable container for leaf and yard waste. This is the next step in the process, and would be included in the communication and education program, as well as in the

proposed new Solid Waste By-law which is scheduled to be brought before the SWRAC and Regional Council for approval later this spring/summer..

Councillor Cunningham said he believes the idea is an excellent one because he feels that there will be a problem in some of the older areas of HRM when carts are introduced. He pointed out that some residents may have as many as 20/25 bags of leaves at curb side. It would not be possible to use the carts for any more than probably two bags, and the paper bags would address that problem and be more environmentally friendly.

Councillor Snow said he would like to see HRM put on a campaign to promote the use of paper bags, and strongly suggested the elimination of plastic bags from the environment. The Chairman said there is a strong will of the Committee to promote paper bags and asked for a response from staff. Mr. Bauld responded that the current company that handles leaf and yard waste for HRM does not feel comfortable accepting this waste in paper bags. The company's concern is that other wastes would be included in the paper bags.

Mr. Bauld said this really speaks to an aggressive communication and education program to inform citizens that leaf and yard wastes are to be placed in the paper bags. This would be one of the many components that HRM really has to highlight to get citizens to understand and participate in, including collection schedules, 3 stream bi-weekly cart use, delivery of carts, etc. Mr. Bauld suggested that it may be possible to introduce paper bags by this Fall, when the majority of the organic carts are rolled out..

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 21, 1998

MOVED BY Councillor Mitchell, seconded by Councillor Cunningham THAT the Minutes of January 21, 1998 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION PLAN FOR HRM WASTE RESOURCE STRATEGY

A staff report dated March 18, 1998 dealing with this issue was distributed to members of the Committee and public. It has been prepared as a component of the HRM's integrated Waste Resource Management Strategy. A copy of this report is in the meeting file.

Ms. Lori Patterson, Supervisor, Marketing and Public Relations, HRM, introduced Kim West from McArthur, Thompson & Law. They went through the report as written pointing out the three thrusts of the Communications Approach which are:

- To focus education and communication resources on the overall objectives of the Waste/Resource Management strategy.
- To manage the details of implementing both the program and the education and public awareness activities.
- To remain flexible to refining and improving the program during the municipal roll out while emphasizing there is a well thought-out strategy.

Other issues that were addressed in the report included:

- Educational and public awareness objectives
- Audiences
- Key messages
- Educational Tools

Timeliness for each of the components are included in the staff report. Ms. Patterson also pointed out a list of questions/answers that would be used by staff to respond to questions from consumers. A draft budget for each of the elements was attached to the report.

The Chairman stated that the Committee had expected receipt of the communication and education plan sometime last year and he had some concerns, for example, with the school program being launched without input from the Committee. Ms. Patterson responded that they are just getting underway with the video production for the school program, but nothing has been completed at this point. They are certainly open for suggestions. Ms. Patterson said the Communication and Education Plan had to wait until the contracts and schedules were completed.

The Chairman said he appreciated the report but he does not see the plan as being a very friendly contact. He pointed out comments that he receives from the public that they do not read everything that is written in the newspapers. He had expected the approach of contact within neighbourhoods, neighbourhood teams, etc., but he does not see this in the plan. Ms. Patterson said she certainly would take the Chairman's comments under advisement, but she said this, to some extent, is the approach they are taking. She said they are not relying on advertisements, they are relying on getting pieces to the householder in a number of ways. They recognize how crucial it is to get this out to the householder.

Mr. Bernard said that during the roll out of the carts, staff will be meeting with homeowners and provide them with a package of various pieces of information. He said there would be a very brief one-on-one communication with everyone that is available.

Councillor Cunningham said this is an extremely important program and all of HRM Council will be focusing on it. Referring to the positive comments from people that have been using the carts, he said Councillors have received a lot of negative comments from people that have not been using the carts. He stressed the need to educate the public and meet the challenge of previous bad press. Ms. Patterson responded that a lot of the issues have been taken in isolation and staff are trying to instill the overall reason for this and to get the information out to people.

Councillor Mitchell said he liked the package that had been presented today. He agreed with earlier comments by the Chair on the importance of a one-on-one approach with the public. Councillor Snow said he had read a lot of material on recycling and composting material but he had not seen any specific information on what to do with a dead animal? Ms. Patterson responded that they are preparing a list of any questions that they can anticipate for the call centre. She said there is no specific plan to include something on dead animals but staff can look at it.

In response to a question from the Chairman, Ms. West said the magnet calendars would be for one year. The Chairman said HRM is paying \$45,000 for calendars for one year. This comes back to putting something in the householder's hands rather than putting it in the newspapers. It was pointed out that this is the cost for 103,000 households.

The Chairman referred to the answer to question 2 which states that if residents do not want to use the carts, they don't have to. He said he understood that everyone had to use the carts. Ms. Patterson said that is the short term answer during the initial stage, but, ultimately HRM will want everyone to use the carts. Mr. Bauld said it is staff's hope that through communication and education the residents would be encouraged to use the carts.

The Chairman said that he did not place much value in advertising in the paper or on the radio. He feels it is better to put money into resources and deal with individuals on the streets. Mr. Smith responded to the Chairman's concerns stating that the money would not be spent on broad media advertising, but rather on the cart stuffer, the magnet for the frig, video to be passed around the neighbourhood and the workshops involved. He said the Chairman's comments are exactly what staff is saying. Mr. Smith suggested that staff would bring in some handout materials for the Committee to actually see what is being discussed.

5. COLLECTION AND TRANSPORTATION OF SOURCE SEPARATED WASTE

There is a link between this Item and Item 6. This is an Information Report that had been distributed in response to a request from the HRM Council meeting of March 10, 1998, for

discussion and debate by the Committee. Both items were discussed as one Agenda item.

6. PROVISION FOR SERVICES FOR COLLECTION AND TRANSPORTATION OF SOURCE SEPARATED SOLID WASTE

This is a memo from Councillor Walker identifying his areas of specific concern in the HRM Request for Proposals for the Provision for Services for Collection and Transportation of Separated Solid Waste

By the use of an overhead, Mr. Bernard identified the schedule for the cart roll out for the 9 areas. He stressed that it is important not only to have the contracts in place to begin collection when the cart roll outs start, but the contract must be awarded as soon as possible to give the contractor lead time to develop their equipment and gear up for the collection. He said he could not emphasize enough that meeting the schedule not only in terms of the contract, but also the cart roll outs is very important. He pointed out that this schedule ties in with the Otter Lake and composting facilities coming on line.

In response to a question from Councillor Cunningham, Mr. Bauld confirmed that the Dartmouth facility is coming on line a little sooner than the other facilities. But, Mr. Bauld emphasized the importance of having almost all the carts roll out prior to the closure of the export contract to Cumberland. When the new facilities do come on line, HRM has to ensure that residents are using the containers and know how the new system works before the facilities actually get turned on.

Councillor Hendsbee had a concern with a November cart roll out for Area 7. He felt October would be more preferable. Mr. Bauld said they could certainly look at this.

Mayor Fitzgerald left the meeting.

Mr. Bauld gave a brief overview of the history starting with the HRM Waste Management Strategy leading up to the current Request for Proposals. He stressed the critical need for customer service in the new system and how this was included in the proposal call. Mr. Bauld closed his presentation describing the 2 step process which was also part of the proposal call.

The Chairman asked if it was intended to receive organics in the carts shortly after they are rolled out? Mr. Bauld responded that is the intention, even though all the facilities are not working. In response to questions from Councillor Cooper, Mr. Bauld described the process that would be used in distribution of the carts, and the use of models that have been used by haulers to determine their fleet requirements.

Councillor Cooper referred to a previous discussion where staff had indicated that the collectors could not use the bridge, they had to go around. He said it is his impression that some of the vehicles are using the bridge. Mr. Bauld said it really relates to axle weights with regards to limitations on the MacKay Bridge. Councillor Cooper asked that staff confirm that local pickups cannot use the bridge. Mr. Tim DeWolfe, from the audience, reported to the members that he had looked into this, and that the Truckers' Association has made an agreement with the Bridge Commission whereby they are allowed the same weight as on the roads.

Councillor Cooper said if the staff report was based on the vehicles going around Bedford Basin, rather than using the bridge, then this is a different scenario. Mr. Bernard said he did not believe it would make much difference because while it is a longer distance one way; the other way, the trucker is dealing with a higher traffic problem. Mr. Bernard said there is nothing in the tender document that forces the truckers to go around. In response to concerns by Councillor Cooper, Mr. Bernard said staff would run these costs again, including going to Site A.

MOVED By Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Mitchell, THAT staff report back to the Committee with a re-evaluation of the costs for trucks using the bridge vs going around Bedford to Site A. MOTION PUT AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

It was agreed that in the interim, staff would send out an addendum to clarify this point. It was agreed that staff would continue with the contract process. The Chairman asked if staff could consider that rather than the contract being for 5 years, that there be an option for 3 years, with a 2 year extension. He felt there is a lot of uncertainties as to what the figures will be. Mr. Bernard responded that staff now has good figures with what has happened in the quite lengthy pilot project, and these figures have been issued with other addendums. He believes there is a fairly good sense of what is out there. Referring to the suggestion of 3 year contracts, Mr. Bernard said a 5 year contract allows companies to finance their equipment better than a 3 year contract. Mr. DeWolfe advised that if he had to finance his equipment over 3 years he would have to substantially increase his price. The Chairman said staff had talked to some of the contractors about financing over 3 years, and 5 years was the number received from meetings with them.

Councillor Walker joined the meeting.

Councillor Walker said he had given the members and staff a copy of his questions. Mr. Bernard stated that a lot of the questions that Councillor Walker had brought up were raised by bidders and the vast majority of them have been addressed either by explaining to the bidder or by an addendum.

Referring to question #1 the contract may not go to the lowest bidder in terms of price. There is a connection between the quality of service and the price, and staff are trying to get the best service level for the best price. He said for it not to go to the lowest bidder, there would have to be a very close price and a very large difference to the service level that was expected.

Referring to question #2, Mr. Bernard said staff would only pursue this remedy if it cost HRM money, for example, HRM had to go and collect because the contractor was not doing it.

Referring to question #3, staff have given the best guess in terms of scheduling and advised that the scheduling would not be brought up, which gives the contractors some security.

Referring to question #4, staff had already spoke to this question. A clause has been included re the user pay system clause which allows if there is a significant change in the waste resources, HRM can do further negotiations. Depending on circumstances, this could be in favour of HRM or the contractor. Mr. Bernard stated that user pay is part of staff's overall strategy. He said benefits have been identified, but they have to be examined closely.

Referring to question #5, there should not be any areas in the contract which allow the Manager to require unspecified, unpaid for, extra work. Mr. Bernard said staff have clarified this.

Referring to question #6, this speaks to the importance of meeting the cart roll outs schedule which begins July 1st. He said it is critical that HRM has these contracts in place.

Councillor Walker thanked staff for responding to his questions and those of the haulers. He said he now believes that the contract can be based on facts and not on something that someone 'thinks' is going to happen.

Deputy Mayor Rankin referred to the letter that Mr. McLellan had written to Cumberland that an extension was not needed for next year, but HRM may need a contingency for 5,000 tonnes. He said Cumberland has responded that they are not interested in a limited extension beyond December 31, 1998. Deputy Mayor Rankin asked if staff had a

contingency plan to deal with this possibility? He asked staff to report on this a future meeting.

Jim Bauld
Operations Coordinator