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Item No. 3
Halifax Regional Council
February 16, 2010

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ken Reashor".

Ken Reashor, P.Eng., A/Director Transportation & Public Works

DATE: January 29, 2010

SUBJECT: Residential Curbside Give-Away Weekend Event

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

January 19, 2010 Regional Council meeting, request from Councillor McCluskey:

12.1 Councillor McCluskey

Motion passed that Halifax Regional Council request a staff report regarding the feasibility of holding two Give-Away Weekends. At these weekends residents will put unwanted goods at the curb for residents who can use them.

BACKGROUND

Curbside Give-Away Weekend Events have been undertaken in the City of Ottawa and City of Winnipeg. Staff has contacted both municipalities to review the mechanics of the programs to determine how these models may have application in HRM to support diversion.

DISCUSSION

Diverting re-usable items from landfill would be in alignment with HRM's Solid Waste Resource Management Strategy as its focus is on maximizing diversion - goods that can be re-used are re-directed away from landfill.

The role of municipalities in administration of Curbside Give-Away Weekend Events are two fold:

1. Establishing the Rules:

- Setting of dates (Weekend Events coincide with Environment Week (June 5-6) & Waste Reduction Week (Oct 30-31));
- Setting of the event hours of operation (9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.);
- Listing of designated items for placement, **re-usable items** including books, CD's, furniture, small appliances, kitchen gadgets, dishes, construction hardware such as nails & bolts;
- Items must be stickered as "free";
- Uncollected items must be brought in from curbside after the event end time.

2. Communication, Promotion & Publicity:

- Proper etiquette, this includes but is not limited to, respect for other people's property, not walking on lawns and gardens;
- Obey traffic laws, do not block traffic or park in no parking areas;
- Advertisement and promotion of the event in advance using newspaper, website and Councillors' newsletters;
- To include reference to Consumer Product Safety Bureau website that advises of child-related items not to be placed at the curb (i.e. baby walkers, blinds, playpens, etc.);
- Provide advice on what to do with leftover re-usable items, support local charitable organizations and listing of those goodwill organizations.

Measuring and monitoring feedback is also a role of the municipalities. In the case of the City of Ottawa, Solid Waste Resources Department reported receiving no complaints from residents or collection contractors the week following the Give-Away Weekend. Inspectors reported no unusual amounts of material left at the curb. Feedback from residents and the media was positive.

- "One Persons Trash is Another Persons Hidden Treasure" was the message upon its inception in 2007 and is carried forward today and integrated into operations as twice a year event (Environment Weekend and Waste Reduction Weekend).

City of Winnipeg launched its first event this past Fall, September 2009, also after learning of City of Ottawa's success with this program.

There are differences in the municipal solid waste management systems between jurisdictions that were noted that may impact HRM in its undertaking to support such an event. For example, the City of Ottawa provides for the weekly collection of garbage, whereas HRM collection frequency is every two weeks, alternating with green cart collection week.

Where re-usable materials are left curbside following the City of Ottawa's Give-Away Weekend Event, any eligible materials remaining curbside may be collected as part of the garbage collection service beginning the following Monday and through the following week. In HRM, this would not occur as collection is every two weeks. In the case of Environment Weekend, suggested dates for the event, June 5th & 6th, the following Monday June 7th, and the entire week, there is no garbage collection in Halifax, Sackville, Cole Harbour, Eastern Passage and Fall River & area, this is a green cart collection week only.

There is a risk that some residents may not follow the rules of this program and materials remain curbside on green cart week and be in noncompliance with HRM "*Solid Waste Resource Collection and Disposal By-Law No. S-600*", where the provision for collection frequency and times are not adhered, that is to mean that materials are curbside on the wrong week. These materials would be recorded by collection haulers and are subject to compliance measures undertaken through By-Law Police Services. Materials placed curbside uncollected can generate calls of complaint and can be considered unsightly as they contribute to litter. As noted above, this was not an issue in Ottawa, with the weekly collection of garbage.

The success of this program in HRM will depend upon the residents following the rules and HRM's ability to communicate the same. In HRM's role of setting of the rules of this event, all communication pieces would include the dates and times of material placement and the requirement for materials to be brought in from the curb at the end of the weekend event, along with a list of nonprofit organizations to contact to donate leftover re-usable items. It will also be HRM's responsibility to communicate to residents that there are consequences where materials remain curbside the following Monday and into the following week.

Staff is prepared to move ahead with this initiative. Communications can be strengthened to reinforce the message to residents that they are responsible to take in materials placed curbside at the conclusion of the weekend event. A multi-pronged approach to communications may include a special edition of the Naturally Green newsletter, the distribution through Canada Post to every resident's mailbox in HRM, this is a distribution to 166,000 households, a website profile of the event, Councillors' newsletters, daily newspaper and radio advertisements. The timing of these advertisements would take into consideration provision for advance notice and planning for residents participation.

Monitoring and measuring occurrences after the first event weekend in HRM (June 5th & 6th) would include reviewing hauler reports, reports of uncollected materials reported for By-Law follow up, Hansen calls report of complaints or compliments and media coverage of the event.

There is no direct measure of diversion achievement of this undertaking; however, in other jurisdictions it is reported, not measured or quantified, that Give-Away events help residents divert wastes that would otherwise be placed curbside for garbage collection.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

This event would not require additional funding but would be incorporated into the budget for HRM's Environment Week Event, with funding for Environment Week Event/undertakings already provided in the Solid Waste Resources communication/education budget (R333).

In addition to the above advertising, since HRM will undertake this Give-Away Weekend Event in conjunction with Environment Week, there is opportunity to partner with Resource Recovery Fund Board to piggy back with Environment Week Event provincial advertising that will have no cost to HRM and at the same time strengthen our publicity of this event. Other communication vehicles, including website profile and Councillor newsletters, are not known to have budget implications at this time if integrated with already planned distribution frequency.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ATTACHMENTS

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/agenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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Report Approved by:



Gord Helm, Manager, Solid Waste Resources 490-6606