

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

REPORT 6-2007

The Municipal Council of the Regional Municipality of Niagara met in Committee of the Whole in the Council Chamber, Regional Municipal Building, Thorold, Ontario, on Thursday, August 16, 2007, commencing at 5:03 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Council: Regional Chair Partington; Councillors Badawey, Baty; Bylsma; Casselman; Collins; Cordiner; D'Angela; Forster; Gabriel; Goulbourne; Greenwood; Heit; Henderson; Hodgson; Katzman; Lepp, Marshall; McMullan; Puttick; Rigby; Salci; Saracino; Smeaton; Timms, Trombetta; Zimmerman.

Staff: Messrs. Trojan, Chief Administrative Officer; Lockyer, Acting Commissioner, Corporate Services; Hutchings, Commissioner, Community Services; Robson, Director, Community Integration; Cousins, Acting Commissioner, Public Works; Dr. Williams, Medical Officer of Health; Ms. Elliott, Acting Commissioner, Human Resources; Ms. Gilroy, Regional Clerk; Ms. Pilon, Deputy Clerk.

Staff

(Part-Time): Messrs. Roberts, Executive Assistant to the Regional Chair; Kyne, Director, Legal Services; Friesen, Director, Waste Management Services; Ms. Habermebl, Associate Director, Waste Collection and Diversion Operations; Ms. Torbicki, Manager, Waste Policy and Planning; Ms. Crawley, Waste Management Services Coordinator; Mr. Whitelaw, Program Manager, Waste Management Services.

Other: Ms. Andrew, Watson and Associates Economists Ltd.

CALL TO ORDER

25. Regional Chair Partington called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

RESOLVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

26. Moved by Councillor Goulbourne
Seconded by Councillor Cordiner

That this Council do now resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Carried.

PRESENTATION

27. Waste Management Level of Service and Rate Study
PWA 105-2007/CSD 100-2007 (Revised)

Mr. Friesen, Director, Waste Management Services provided Committee of the Whole with a presentation on the Waste Management Services Level of Service and Rate Study that is being received for information and will be circulated to the Area Public Works Official and Treasurers, the Waste Management Advisory Committee and the Landfill Public Liaison/Citizen's Liaison Committees, with a report with final recommendations for approval being presented at Waste Management Planning Steering Committee in late October 2007.

The key objectives of the study were to identify improvements to Waste Management Programs to achieve 65% diversion by 2012; establish Region-wide rates for all services; review alternatives and recommend appropriate funding method and identify future capital requirements and timing.

Mr. Friesen provided the Committee with background information; the current situation which reports that Niagara Region's 2005 diversion rate (based on Waste Diversion Ontario) is 46%, with an average 1.7 waste containers placed at the curb weekly noting that those who place more than one container at the curb typically do not fully utilize the organics and recycling services at the curb; trends for 2005 in residential diversion; incentives are needed to increase participation in recycling, organics collection and other 3R's initiatives (social marketing incentives to change behaviour) and tangible incentives are needed to improve diversion efforts.

The recommended level of service options are for the Base Level of Service Options: **Organics Program** - expand the green bin program municipality-wide in West Lincoln and Wainfleet – continue collection Region-wide on weekly basis; relaunch the green bin program; ban the use of plastic in organics collection (approved by Regional Council) and include kitty litter and pet waste; **Permanent Facilities** – three reuse centers; two additional Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) depots; three container stations system as landfills close; **Recycling Programs in Public Spaces; Outreach, Landfill Collection and Disposal Bans; Waste Collection Change (Spring 2009)** – reduce frequency of waste collection to every other week; reduce residential container limit to one container per week or two containers every other week; **Communication and Education Program**.

Additional staff recommendations on services include: special set out service for residents, as a base level across the Region; the Bridge Street Landfill container station should continue to operate after closure of the landfill site (in addition to the three container stations – one private and two public).

The Committee was also presented with options that require further investigation/research: recycling and organics collection to multi-residential will be reported on separately; recycling and organics collection to IC&I sector; expansion of materials collected in Blue Box program; bulk items/white goods collection: once a month call-in.

Waste collection every other week is considered one of the most effective drivers in reducing waste and increasing diversion rates and there is no direct correlation between long-term illegal dumping and every other week collection of waste.

Waste collection every other week occurs in Toronto, Markham, Town of Richmond Hill, Ajax, Oshawa, Pickering and Whitby. Durham Region has achieved a 60% diversion rate in their municipalities where waste is collected every other week and 43% where the waste is collected weekly. Markham noted that the results of their 2005 pilot area was overwhelmingly positive toward the every other week waste collection, it made sense to the residents, since the organics collection program took out all of the odourous materials from the waste stream with almost nothing left over for the waste that was collected every other week.

The advantages of every other week collection are that it would help achieve Niagara's waste diversion target of 65% by 2012; Niagara would receive increased funding from Waste Diversion Ontario/Stewardship Ontario for the increased level of recyclables; net greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions would be reduced based on the potential of reducing the fleet; some waste collection cost reductions are expected; preserves landfill capacity; environmentally responsible and sustainable behaviour and more jobs created from diversion than disposal.

The financial aspects of the study evaluated status quo, full user pay (by weight or by container); partial user pay (mix of methodologies) and full recovery through taxation (assessment or per household) and it was recommended that Niagara Region continue with the status quo, which is partial user pay with the Niagara Region maintaining the current user fee of \$1 per container and reduce the container limit to one container per week (or two containers every two weeks) with an increase for inflation of 2% per year, applied every three years; that the remainder of net collection and diversion costs continue to be recovered through municipal requisitions (in the form of user fee per household); that the current uniform disposal rate (UDR) of \$92.25 per tonne should be maintained and an annual index for inflation be applied (establishes a reserve balance which could be used to finance future capital costs of the long-term alternative disposal technology with approximately \$2.5 million a year being incorporated for the build up in reserves beginning in 2019 to help finance the costs of the long-term disposal technology, which would be approximately \$22 million by 2026).

It is also recommended that Niagara Region continue the use of Rate Stabilization Reserves in conjunction with multi-year financial projections to minimize future impacts on rates.

There were two main alternative billing processes considered in the study: implement a new utility billing system and continue to use the existing tax billing systems presently in use by the local area municipalities. It was recommended that Niagara Region continue to use the existing tax billing systems used to recover waste management costs being as the area municipalities are responsible for selecting the tax billing process.

The Committee was shown the graphs with the projected Waste Management costs by service category (rate per container and per tonne and rate per household) for the status quo and the implementation of the recommended services options.

The level of service costs are estimated and based on projections using various assumptions; the landfill space is running out – Niagara needs new space and are negotiating with the private sector for the best deal; fixed costs associated with closure of existing landfills; new capital associated with enhancing diversion program; new composting facility which will cost more money, negotiating for the best deal; and Council's affordability targets will be considered as programs are implemented and costs are finalized (Council approval will occur based on tenders issued, capital project approval, etc.)

The next steps in the process will be to schedule a special joint meeting of the area's Public Works Officials and Treasurers in September and prepare a report for approval at Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (October 30), Committee of the Whole (November 8) and Regional Council (November 8). There is a public outreach program that includes posting the approved report on the Regional website; making reports available at the public libraries; articles in the WasteWatcher, etc. in November and December 2007. Communication and education programs will continue as required.

Committee of the Whole recessed at 6:00 p.m. to reconvene following the Council presentations.

Committee of the Whole reconvened at 9:05 p.m.

Moved by Councilor Goulbourne
Seconded by Councillor Bylsma

That the presentation respecting Waste Management Level of Service and Rate Study, be received;

That Report CSD 100-2007/PWA 105-2007 Revised, August 8, 2007, respecting the Draft Level of Service and Rate Study, be received.

That the Study be circulated to Area Municipal Councils, Area Municipal Public Works Official and Treasurers and the Waste Management Advisory Committee for review and comment; and

That following the receipt of comments, that staff report back with the final Level of Service and Rate Study for implementation beginning in 2008.

Carried.

(Refer to Staff Directions)

RISE FROM COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

28. Moved by Councillor Rigby
Seconded by Councillor Marshall

That this Council do now rise from Committee of the Whole Committee.

Carried.

STAFF DIRECTIONS

Staff were instructed to:

- to include the availability of Waste Management Services staff to come to their municipal council meetings to make a presentation in the letters being forwarded.
- review all container alternatives as well as collection alternatives, such as one side of the street, shared containers, etc.

ADJOURNMENT

Committee of the Whole adjourned at 9:20 p.m. to meet again at the call of the Chair.

Peter Partington
Regional Chair

Pam Gilroy
Regional Clerk

Janet Pilon
Deputy Clerk