

Council sees opportunity in recycling, waste diversion

By Nate Smelle

In response to the infrastructure committee's monthly report, council discussed the town's strategy for waste diversion heading into the new year. Speaking on behalf of the committee, Deputy Mayor Charles Mullett put forth the recommendation that the bag tag distribution program continue without change in 2018. It was approved by council.

Each year, the town distributes a supply of complimentary bag tags to commercial property owners. The report showed that in 2017 approximately 6,600 commercial garbage tags were given to commercial property owners within the municipality. The total cost of distributing the 127 sets of 52 commercial garbage tags in 2017 amounted to \$9,906.

"A number of years ago people were not recycling as they should, but when the program took effect recycling became much better," said Mullett.

Explaining the program to his fellow members of council, Mullett said staff track the distribution to ensure that the annual supply of tags is distributed only once to each property owner. To prevent unauthorized duplication, he said the complimentary tags are numbered. The sale of additional tags for curbside commercial pick up on Mondays and Fridays has proven to be quite lucrative, according to the report. In 2016, Mullett said the town generated a total of \$45,641 in revenue from the sale of commercial bag tags sold for \$1.50 each out of the municipal office. The committee expects these revenues to be slightly less this year.

According to Mullett, the work that the director of public works, Perry Kelly has done with recyclables in the past few years has far exceeded everyone's expectations. Mayor Paul Jenkins agreed, pointing out how Kelly's previous report revealed that the revenues from recycling were double what had originally been projected. Therefore, the more waste the town diverts through recycling, the greater the savings and revenues it will find. Citing upcoming changes to the Waste Diversion Act by the province, Jenkins said that there is going to be an even stronger emphasis on recycling.

"Legislation coming down the pipeline is going to regulate much higher diversion rates," said Jenkins.

"Bancroft will be able to capitalize on this with the equipment we put in recently. Not only will we be increasing green initiatives and reducing our carbon footprint, we will be able to gain monetarily."

Councillor Barry McGibbon suggested that Bancroft could accrue even more revenues by working with other smaller municipalities to assist them with their recycling programs.

"Some of the larger municipalities may want to do their own thing, but with some of the smaller ones it may not even be a thought, because for them their cost for transportation may be too high," he said.

"So, they can come to us to have it compacted and that's where they can find a savings and we could probably create revenue."