

HH looking into options to return curbside waste removal service

By Nate Smelle

The following are series of reports from the meeting of Council for the municipality of Hastings Highlands on Wednesday, Oct. 7.

Mayor Vivian Bloom stated that the operational landfill site hours will remain status quo on the winter waste site hours until the curbside collection issue has been resolved. Councillor Nancy Matheson put forth the motion to try and move the discussion around curbside pick-up forward. It is our belief that providing ratepayers with the biweekly curbside service could save residents and the municipality money. Her motion directed staff to investigate different scenarios and their subsequent costs to once again provide residents of the municipality with the service. She had hoped the report from this inquiry could be presented at the next council meeting, however operations manager Adrian Tomasini said he would most likely need more than two weeks to gather this information and quotes for the equipment necessary to provide the service in-house.

One of the ideas Matheson pitched was to provide service to residents living in more densely populated areas combined with waste and recycling transfer stations. She feels it is councils responsibility to do their due diligence in order to make informed decision if they are going to seriously consider providing a more efficient and affordable service.

?Delivery of waste management services and the municipality have been challenged due to the limited budgets, personnel per waste management incentives, a small population and a large geographic area, a significant cottage population and the shrinking disposal capacity of our Township landfills,? Matheson said.

?Since we've initiated the clear bag policy are recycling has increased by 50% which is resulted in a decrease in garbage.?

Matheson suggested a variety of scenarios including offering receptacles for residents to deposit their blue box recyclables, leaf and garden waste, compost material from green bins, electronic waste (e-waste), scrap metal and used tires.

Councillor Greg Roberts did not support the motion stating that he was not convinced ratepayers in Hastings Highlands wanted the service back.

?Personally I don't think the municipality afford the costs of getting back into the garbage pickup business,? added Deputy Mayor Mike Leveque.

Councillors Matheson and Canon on the other hand said that constituents have been telling them the exact opposite, demanding that the service be brought back.

Tomasini said there are four options for the municipality to consider. These include: maintaining the status quo by not providing the service; hiring a contractor for collection, as was done in the past; purchase equipment to provide the service in-house; provide the service to higher populated areas such as Herschel and Maynooth.

The report from Tomasini will be presented to Council at the meeting on Nov. 18.

County to receive extensive septic system records

In her report Mayor Bloom informed Council that the Hastings County planning Department would soon be receiving extensive records of septic systems throughout the county. Pointing out how important these records will be in protecting the environment and Lake ecosystems in cottage country from failing or improperly installed systems, Bloom sees this as a huge step forward.

?This is very important information for us to have as we move forward with strategic planning and new developments,? she said.