



**Waste Diversion Committee**

**August 22, 2019**

**Council Chambers**

**9:00 AM**

<b>Members</b> Regional Councillor Jack Heath, Chair Regional Councillor Joe Li  <b>Guests</b> Valerie Burke  <b>Regrets</b> Councillor Khalid Usman Councillor Reid McAlpine Karl Lyew, MEAC Representative Michael DiPasquale, Supervisor, Waste Operations	<b>Staff</b>  Brenda Librecz, Commissioner of Community & Fire Services Claudia Marsales, Senior Manager, Waste and Environmental Management Sara Tam, Manager, Business Planning & Innovation Juliana Aparicio, Diversion Programs Technician Angela Perry, Waste Operations Assistant Holena Newton, Water Conservation Specialist Irene Weiss, Assistant to the Director of Environmental Services Kimberley Dunsmoor, Community Outreach Assistant Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator
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**1. Call to Order**

The Waste Diversion Committee convened at 9:00 AM with Regional Councillor Jack Heath in the Chair without quorum.

**2. Approval of the Minutes**

The approval of the Minutes from August 1, and August 7, 2019, Waste Diversion Committee was deferred to the next meeting.

**3. York Region Waste Management Update**

Update on Waste Management

Lindsay Milne, Program Manager, Solid Waste, York Region gave the following update on waste management:

- Provided an overview of the provincial announcement regarding the transition of the blue box program to the Producers/Stewards, and the respective timelines;
- Advised that York Region will provide input to the Province on its suggestions to improve recycling operations and diversion rates in Ontario during its consultation process;
- Advised that York Region will not be making any major investments into its material recovery facility (including the purchasing of a bag breaker) due to the recent provincial announcement that the blue box program will be taken over by the producers/stewards.

Committee briefly discussed what the new blue box program may look like for residents once the producers/stewards take over. There was some concern expressed that less items will be included in Markham's blue box program when it is transitioned.

#### Blue Box Contamination

Ron Worthy, Manager of Waste Operations, York Region provided an overview of York Region's blue box program, and some of the challenges the program is facing, in particular the contamination of the recycling stream. The types of contamination include:

- The amount of organics in the blue box due to residents not cleaning their recycling;
- Residents putting their recycling in blue recycling bags or other types of plastic bags;
- Residents putting waste, organics or textiles into recycling bins.

Mr. Worthy asked for the City of Markham's help in reducing the amount of contamination in the blue box, suggesting that the City could help by focusing on education and enforcement. He also advised that York Region has no plans to remove items from its list of recyclable items at this time. York Region's stance on black plastic is undecided at this time.

The Committee discussed some of the challenges with respect to eliminating plastic bags from recycling, like residents wanting to put their recycling in bags so it does not create litter and the thousands of weekly newspapers being delivered in plastic bags by Metroland Media that end in the blue box. The Committee suggested that larger recycling bins may resolve some of the challenges, and that York Region consider approaching Metroland Media to stop the delivery of newspapers in plastic bags.

The Committee asked if York Region would contribute to the purchase of larger recycling bins for Markham residents. Ms. Milne supported this idea in principle, but advised she would need to bring back the inquiry to York Region for its consideration.

Markham staff noted that the organic contamination, as shown in York Region's presentation, may be the result of operator error and not resident confusion as recycling and organics are co-collected. Markham staff indicated they would meet with the collection contractor to resolve this issue.

The Committee requested that a copy of York Region's presentation be circulated to the Committee.

#### **4. Miller Waste Representative**

Representatives from Miller advised recycling in bags is easier to manage from a collection perspective, but create challenges from an operational perspective. The representatives also explained that investment would be required to reconfigure York Region's material recovery facility to add a bag breaker.

Markham staff suggested that some of the blue box contamination may be due to collection error. Miller was asked to remind its staff to refrain from picking up waste (garbage, recycling, or organics) that is not sorted properly and that an "Oops" sticker indicating why it was not collected be put on it (one of Markham's three stickers). Miller was also requested to provide the City with the percentage of waste being left behind due to improper set-outs. Miller agreed to both of these requests.

Markham staff requested clarification as to the amount of contamination in the blue bags. York Region staff indicated that information is not available.

York Region staff indicated that they attempt to open blue bags for sorting at the material recovery facility.

In response to a question from the Committee on items no longer accepted by York Region, York Region staff indicated no materials have been removed from the blue box.

The Committee discussed next steps and suggested that Markham staff report back with a recommendation on how the City can address blue box contamination.

## **5. Single-Use Plastics**

Committee reviewed a draft declaration prepared by Markham staff entitled “A Call to Action to Eliminate Plastic Pollution by Reducing Single Use Items”. The following feedback was provided:

- Suggested obtaining Markham Environmental Advisory Committee’s feedback on the declaration if time permits;
- Need to define “six rings”, “fibre based alternatives”, and include a reference to single use coffee cups (under the priority actions section);
- Possibly provide alternatives to the use of balloons when prohibiting them;
- Need to be reduce the length of the resolution to one page and include space for all councillor signatures;
- Add a “whereas clause” about single-use plastic being a form of litter that is harmful to wildlife.

Markham staff suggested that a working group be formed to finalize the declaration.

## **6. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting of the Waste Diversion Committee will be held on a date to be determined in September.

## **7. Adjournment**

The Waste Diversion Committee adjourned at 12:02 PM.