

**Waste Diversion Sub-Committee**

**March 10, 2020**

**Minutes**

**9:00 AM**

<p><b>Members</b> Regional Councillor Jack Heath Councillor Reid McAlpine Regional Councillor Joe Li Valerie Burke</p> <p><b>Guests</b> Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton</p> <p><b>Regrets</b> Karl Lyew, MEAC Representative Councilor Khalid Usman Sara Tam, Manager of Business Planning &amp; Innovation</p>	<p><b>Staff</b> Phoebe Fu, Director of Environmental Services Claudia Marsales, Senior Manager, Waste and Environmental Management Michael Dipasquale, Supervisor of Waste Operations Kimberley Dunsmoor, Community Outreach Assistant Juliana Aparicio, Diversion Programs Technician Angela Perry, Waste Operations Assistant Rebecca Cotter, Manager of Communication Operations and Events Mary Creighton, Director of Recreation Graham Seaman, Director of Sustainability &amp; Asset Management Nicole Huynh, Student Morgan Jones, Director of Operations Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator</p>
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**1. Call to Order**

The Waste Diversion Sub-Committee convened at 9:11 AM with Regional Councillor Jack Heath in the Chair.

**2. Approval of the Minutes**

Moved by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton  
Seconded by Councillor Reid McAlpine

That Minutes from the November 19, 2020 Waste Diversion Sub-Committee be approved as presented.

Carried

### **3. Department Presentations**

Phoebe Fu, Director of Environmental Services advised that the Department Presentations will provide an overview of each departments waste management practices as requested by Committee members. The purpose of the presentations are to clarify and educate the Committee on the City's practices in regards to waste management at City facilities, events and parks and obtain the Committee's feedback concerning potential improvements.

#### **A. Corporate Communications**

Rebecca Cotter, Manager of Communication Operations & Events presented the City's waste management practices at events.

Opportunities to improve waste diversion at City events include:

- Changing the colour of the waste receptacles to blue for recycling and black for garbage;
- Providing green bins outside of business hours, and collection of compost at events;
- Providing grants to off-set the cost of sustainability initiatives;
- Establishing a 'Green Team' comprised of volunteers;
- Providing 'Green Team' signage, tents, and receptacles;
- Making City water re-fill stations available to third-party events;
- Providing additional education to event organizers.

Staff provided the following responses to Committee inquiries:

#### Green Bins

Currently, green bins are not used at events held outside of business hours. Green bins at events would have a financial and resource impact.

#### Green Team

The City currently does not have a "Green Team", but can explore the opportunity of creating a team of green volunteers.

#### Contamination of Waste Streams at Events

It is challenging to manage the contamination of waste streams at events. This could be improved with assistance of volunteers and through education.

### **Recreation Waste Management Practices**

Mary Creighton, Director of Recreation provided an overview of the City's waste practices at Community Centres.

Opportunities to improve waste diversion at Community Centres include:

- Ensuring three stream receptacles are available at each waste station;
- Refreshing signage to be more explicit;

- Continuing to work with our third party rentals to ensure they use recyclable/biodegradable products – paper plates/cups vs. Styrofoam.

Staff provided the following responses to Committee inquiries:

#### Vending Machines with Bottled Water

Community Centres have vending machines with bottled water to provide residents with an opportunity to hydrate. Research suggests that drinking fountains and their surfaces contain many contaminants. The option to purchase a reusable water bottle would need to be made available to eliminate water bottles at vending machines at Community Centres. Waste Staff indicated that refillable bottles are preferred; however, plastic water bottles are recyclable in the blue box program at each facility. Waste Staff can also work with facility Staff to ensure all “waste stations” have proper bins designated to accept recycling, organics and garbage.

#### **Sustainability & Asset Management Waste Management Strategies**

Graham Seaman, Director of Sustainability & Asset Management provided an overview of the City’s waste practices at its Administrative Buildings.

Opportunities to improve waste diversion at the Administrative Buildings include:

- Putting a new bin in the underground parking garage at Civic Centre that will have a larger capacity, which will allow the City to reduce the pick-up rate from once a week to once every 3-4 weeks;
- New security cameras will allow staff to view the loading dock area to determine where the illegal dumping is occurring;
- New waste receptacles have been added to various public spaces, as there was not enough receptacles in these locations.

Staff provided the following responses to the Committee’s inquiries:

#### Separation of Waste

The cleaners are not responsible for the separation of the waste at the City’s administrative facilities. Security cameras could help us better understand the cause of the waste contamination. This data could be used better understand the issue, and address it more effectively.

The Sustainability Office currently does not currently audit the waste receptacles at the City’s administrative facilities.

#### Sourcing of Supplies

In the past, the City tried to eliminate paper towel in its public washrooms at its administrative facilities, but the public started to complain. In order to balance customer satisfaction with environmental stewardship, the City could source white paper towel that is recyclable to avoid brown non-recyclable paper towel from contaminating the recycling.

### Education

There may be an opportunity to better educate staff by providing “What Goes Where” training modules or seminars to ensure proper source separation of waste and recycling.

### **Parks Operation Waste Management Strategies**

Morgan Jones, Director of Operations presented the Parks Operations waste management practices.

Opportunities to improve waste diversion in park operations include:

- Engaging By-Laws to enforce the dumping of household waste in park receptacles, and Moloks;
- Requiring the businesses on Markham’s Main Streets to have more waste receptacles;
- Educating residents on:
  - How to load their recycling bins so that the wind does not blow the recyclables away;
  - Putting pet waste in their personal green bins not in the City’s receptacles, as having pet waste receptacles would be a huge expense to the City;
- Reducing the number of waste receptacles at parks, and require park users to take home their waste;
- Improving the recycling rate at parks.

Staff provided the following responses to the Committee’s inquiries:

#### Overloaded Garbage Receptacles and Illegal Garbage Dumping

Under used waste receptacles can be put in higher traffic areas to try and address overloaded receptacles. The City could also try having no waste receptacles at some parks to see if it helps address the illegal dumping of garbage at parks.

#### Receptacle Bins on Main Streets

Staff would like to introduce blue recycling receptacles on Main Street Unionville to help resolve the contamination issue. Private business should also be asked to put waste receptacles outside of their businesses, as the City needs to work in partnership with businesses to resolve this issue.

#### Cigarette Butts

Staff will look at piloting cigarette recycling receptacles at strategic locations. The cigarette butt recycling receptacles could be added to the Creative Outdoor Advertising waste bins or York Region Transit waste bins.

### **General Discussion**

The Committee provided the following feedback on the presentations:

- Have more explicit signage educating residents where to put their waste;
- Replicate recycling at home in public spaces (have 3 streams);
- Need more enforcement of waste at events;
- Relocate underutilized waste receptacles;
- Having an incentive or penalty, or both for food vendors at events encouraging them to comply with the City's waste requirements.
- Staff could explore piloting semi-buried dog waste containers on condominium/private property to determine effectiveness
- Explore reduction of single-use plastics and City facilities

Staff provided the following responses to Committee Inquiries:

### **Stage 1 – Disposing of Waste**

#### Waste Collection

All City waste ends up at the Miller transfer station where it is transported to the Regional sorting facility. The City could possibly reduce the amount of recycling contamination by using enhanced software programs and online applications to educate residents on how to better separate their waste (i.e. enhanced “What Goes Where?” look-up tool). The Region sorting facility is also able to manage some levels of contamination.

#### Waste Sorting Facilities

Waste sorting facilities use manual sorting to divert recycling that is mixed-in with the garbage stream. They have proven to be ineffective as much of the recycled goods becomes unsellable due their odor.

#### Waste at Events

It is difficult to stop the contamination of waste at City events due to the amount of staff resources it requires to enforce. The City also has to balance securing vendors with its waste enforcement, as festival compete for food vendors. Some options the City could consider to improve waste diversion at events include promoting the use of recyclable dishes and cutlery or providing vendors with environmentally friendly disposable dishes and cutlery that they are required to use at no additional cost.

#### Community Events

The City will need to prioritize its expectations in regards to improving waste diversion at community events. The following could help improve waste diversion at community events: continuing to provide education to event organizers; putting signs up educating the public how to separate their waste; having all three waste streams available; and having eco-waste volunteer to assist with the waste diversion.

### greenMarkham

The City is promoting the “greenMarkham” label educating the public how to build and maintain a more environmentally sustainable community. Staff will work together to reinforce and update messaging based on findings from the City’s data and key observations.

### **Stage 2 – Collection of Waste**

#### Education

Continuous training of collection Contractor staff to ensure proper curbside enforcement and sorting into co-collection vehicles.

### **Stage 3 – Sorting of Waste**

#### York Region Sorting Facility

The sorting facility falls under the Region’s jurisdiction. Given the new recycling legislation, an upgrade to the facility – such as the addition of a bag breaker – is not considered feasible at this time.

### **Single-Use Plastic Update**

Claudia Marsales, Senior Manager, Waste and Environmental Management provided a presentation on Single-Use Plastic. The presentation included an update on the Federal, and Provincial Government’s single-use plastic strategies, and an overview of Markham’s proposed 2020 Single-Use Plastics Strategy. Markham proposed strategy focuses on the following:

- Addressing single-use plastics at City facilities (i.e. audit, update Zero Waste Policy);
- Educating retailers, and the public on reduction of single use plastics (i.e. by providing them by request only, plastic alternatives);
- Banning polystyrene packaging at the curbside (i.e. styrofoam); and,
- Researching and developing a single-use plastics and enforcement plan for Phase 2 (2021).

The Committee provided the following feedback:

- Ensure education material is multilingual or provided in different languages;
- Work with the places of worship;
- Start with educating restaurants.

### **4. Next Meeting Date**

The next Waste Diversion Sub-Committee meeting will be held on April 2, 2020.

Regional Councillor Jack Heath requested a meeting with staff prior to the next meeting.

## **5. Adjournment**

The Waste Diversion-Sub Committee adjourned at 12:03 PM