



**Waste Diversion Committee  
December 17, 2021  
Zoom Meeting  
10:30 AM**

<b>Members</b> Regional Councillor Jack Heath, Chair Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton Regional Councillor Joe Li Councillor Khalid Usman Councillor Reid McAlpine Valerie Burke  <b>Guests</b> Councillor Keith Irish Councillor Amanda Collucci Councillor Karen Rea  <b>Regrets</b> Karl Lyew	<b>Staff</b> Claudia Marsales, Senior Manager, Waste and Environmental Management Eddy Wu, Director, Environmental Services Morgan Jones, Commissioner of Community Services Juliana Aparicio, Diversion Programs Technician Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator
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**1. Call to Order**

The Waste Diversion Committee convened at 10:33 AM with Regional Councillor Jack Heath in the Chair.

**2. Pecuniary Interest**

There were no conflicts of pecuniary interest.

**3. Approval of the Minutes**

Moved by Valerie Burke

Seconded by Councillor Reid McAlpine

That the Minutes of the June 16, 2021 Waste Diversion Committee be approved as presented.

Carried

**4. Update on Blue Box Regulation, Collection Contract, and Recycling Markets**

### **A. Update on Blue Box Regulation**

Claudia Marsales, Senior Manager, Waste and Environmental Management, provided an Update on Blue Box Regulations. Three companies have been approved as PROs (Producer Responsibility Organizations)

1. Circular Materials – consultants representing some producers
2. Resource Recovery Alliance – Green for Life
3. Ryse Solution – Emterra

It was noted that Miller Waste did not register to be a PRO under the new regulation.

The three PROs are responsible for creating the rules for the new collection system, for example – service frequency, type of containers (cart, bin, bag) etc. It was noted that Municipalities remain confused and concerned regarding the process that will be followed to transition into the new collection system.

### Discussion

Committee supported the creation of a Municipal Transition Committee comprised of representatives from Local Area Municipalities and the Region. Committee also requested that Markham prepare letters to each of the PROs outlining Markham's priorities such as weekly recycling collection and use of blue bags. It was suggested that this be included in a draft resolution to be prepared for a special Waste Diversion Committee meeting to be scheduled in January 2022.

### **B. Update on Collection Contract**

Staff updated members on the status of the new collection contract. Miller staff have indicated the new trucks are on track to be available for the March 1, 2022 contract commencement date. Staff noted that Markham was one of a handful of municipalities that are well positioned for the transition process with an excellent eight-year contract and fleet of new trucks. The City is in a position to transition into the new system at any time during the eight-year contract.

In preparation for transition, York Region is preparing to lease out management of its Material Recovery Facility in East Gwillimbury (facility processes Markham's recyclables) and has issued and closed a Request for Expressions of Interest. Several companies submitted proposals indicating interest in managing the facility. The Region is now preparing to issue an RFP to finalize the process for facility management until its long-term viability is determined.

Staff indicated this could be an opportunity to recommend that York Region include/require the installation of a bag breaker into the recycling facility as part of the RFP process/bid document.

### Discussion

Committee supported requesting York Region include a bag breaker as part of their RFP process and requested that a resolution be prepared and approved by Council. It was noted by several Committee members that a bag breaker would be very beneficial for collection, the use of blue bags and the reduction of litter.

### **C. Update on Recycling Markets**

Ms. Marsales advised that the recycling markets have rebounded and are the strongest they have been in 20 years. All recyclables are being sold into the market and providing the Region with strong revenues. Staff questioned the continued emphasis on ‘contamination’ as markets are purchasing all the material being collected. Staff noted that a bag breaker will provide more recyclables for the Region to sell versus paying for the costs related to disposal of bagged material. All collected recyclables that are not processed by the Region represent an additional cost to the system and a lost revenue opportunity. While Markham continues to collect material in blue bags, residents are directed to not bag their recyclables and to use blue boxes.

Committee members requested that if blue bags are allowed in the system that residents be educated on which blue bags would be allowed (i.e. fully transparent, tinted, opaque, etc.). Committee members also noted that blue boxes are provided to residents at a cost, while blue bags provide an opportunity to avoid costs related to the procurement, storage and resale of blue boxes as well as the replacement fee. Additionally, blue bags reduce litter and are more convenient for residents as they are scalable and allow for a one-way trip to the curb.

### **5. Update on Green Fleet Pilot**

Ms. Marsales advised the hybrid system provider selected by Miller Waste (Effenco Development Inc.) for Green Fleet Pilot is experiencing major staffing changes. Miller Waste planning to meet with Effenco this month to determine if the company is still viable and if they will be available to support their product moving forward. Staff were exploring possible FCM application for use of hybrid system on up to six trucks, application now currently on hold. Miller Waste is also exploring a fully electric option, booked electric truck for demo in Q1/Q2 2022. Miller Waste is required to deploy one vehicle with green fleet technology as part of new contract.

### **6. Sustainable Neighbourhood Small Grants (SNSG)**

Ms. Marsales advised that the City’s 2021 Sustainable Neighbourhood Small Grants Program supported five successful garden projects:

- Greensborough Butterfly Pollinator Patch (Nos. 44, and 46)
- Butterfly and Bird Garden Sanctuary
- Pollinator Garden for your Home
- Herb Share

All projects were successful in development despite a lack of pollinator plants throughout the summer. Neighbours were inspired and invested their own money to update more of their property. SNSG funding has also been approved as part of the 2022 capital budget process and application deadline will be March 31, 2022. Due to COVID-19, there were no approved Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund (MESF) applications.

## **7. Status Update for “The Best of Best #2”**

Ms. Marsales provided a status update on the City’s “The Best of The Best #2” program. She noted that several initiatives has been postponed due to COVID-19, but the Single Use Plastic strategy to ban Styrofoam packaging was recognized with two key awards in 2021 for environmental innovation.

The Committee provided the following feedback on the “The Best of The Best #2”:

- Suggested hard copies of the waste collection schedule continue be available at the Community Centres/depots for residents that do not go on line;
- Requested that the “blue recycling bag samples” be added to the next agenda;
- Requested that a clause be added to the recommendation to be discussed at a future meeting, which requests that York Region work with Markham on the backyard compost program the Region manages. Backyard composts can attract vermin and coyotes if not used properly. Staff to explore opportunities to support proper backyard composting with effective composters and tools (i.e. by-laws to eliminate abandoned backyard composters across the City). Suggested that residents be educated on types of composters and how to properly use their backyard composts to avoid attracting vermin and coyotes. A Staff-led survey provided in 2019 in Councillor Rea’s ward indicated a strong correlation between the presence of rats and other vermin and the misuse of backyard composters (i.e. abandoned or loaded with non-compostable food waste);
- Suggested that the link to the annual Mission Green newsletter be provided to Councillors for inclusion in their newsletters and that hard copies be made available for residents that are not online;
- Suggested that dog waste management should be considered when planning the City’s Markham Centre Off Leash Dog Parks.

Committee briefly discussed waste management challenges in densely designed, transit-oriented communities, and the need to design for adequate storage space for waste management containers as well as the possibility of advancing the use of AVAC system in these communities.

## **8. Tire EPR Program**

Ms. Marsales recommended that the City stop accepting tires at the recycling depots in Q1 of 2022, as the municipality no longer receives revenues for tires as tire producers are now

responsible to collect and recycle used tires. Dozens of tire retailers in Markham now accept used tires at no cost to residents. Staff will be educating residents to take their tires to commercial collection sites across Markham, such as Canadian Tire, Walmart, Costco, etc. which accept the tires for recycling. The commercial collection sites have longer operating hours than the recycling depots and residents are able to drop-off up to ten tires at a time at no cost. The Committee requested residents be notified of this planned service level change ahead of time and that information be provided to residents at the recycling depots so they are aware of where their tires can be brought for recycling.

### **9. Update on Textiles Recycling Program**

Ms. Marsales advised unlicensed clothing bin operators are putting bins back in Markham. Operators are putting cement in the bins to make them difficult to remove. None of the unlicensed operators have applied for a license to operate in Markham. The City is able to pick up unlicensed bins on private property due to health and safety concerns and recent deaths due to unsafe, unregulated textile bins. Staff indicated that there is no method to stop the unlicensed operators from placing bins except to pick up the containers as they place them and take them to the Miller transfer station for immediate disposal.

Ms. Marsales advised that the sensor pilot has been a success. The sensors have led to a 40% reduction in the trips to the 10 bins with ultrasonic sensors, which has led to cost savings for the charities and lower GHG emissions. Staff are hoping to scale up the project in 2022.

#### Discussion:

Committee expressed concern regarding the unlicensed bins on private property and the behaviour of the operators. Staff to continue to remove unlicensed bins in Markham.

### **10. New Business**

There was no new business.

### **11. Adjournment**

The Waste Diversion Committee adjourned at 12:41 PM with a request to hold a Committee meeting in January.