

MINUTES

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON

CHAMPLAIN ROOM

9 APRIL 1996

3:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Chair: G. Hunter

Members: D. Beamish, A. Cullen, B. Hill, P. Hume, J. Legendre, A. Munter, W. Stewart
and R. van den Ham

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Councillor Munter asked that page 15, paragraph 2 of the Minutes be amended to clarify he was concerned a low rate (as proposed by Councillor Hill) would cost more to administer than would be collected in revenue. And further, that staff clarified this would not be the case as a net revenue of \$40,000 would be generated at a rate of \$0.515 per 1000 litres.

That the Planning and Environment Committee confirm the Minutes of the meeting of 26 March 1996, as amended.

CARRIED

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES ITEM

1. LEAF AND YARD WASTE
- Verbal presentation

Pat McNally, Director, Solid Waste Division, provided the members with an information report summarizing the 1996 Leaf and Yard Waste Program (on file with the Regional Clerk) and then gave a brief overview of this document.

Mr. McNally noted the waste composition study done by the Region a number of years ago, indicated leaf and yard waste represents annually 14.7% of the waste stream, with a seasonal peak through the spring, summer and fall. The leaf and yard waste program continues to stress waste diversion, with the first choice being to compost on site. Over

100,000 composters have been sold in Ottawa-Carleton since the program began, including more than 7,500 sold in March of this year.

Mr. McNally reminded the Committee the level of service for leaf and yard waste collection approved by Council, is biweekly. As the various contracts expire, this will be the level of service Region-wide. However, staff are moving to that level of service or something closer to that level of service, sooner as opposed to later. Mr. McNally referred the Committee to the information report which outlines the start dates for the different municipalities. He noted that for Gloucester, Ottawa, Rockcliffe Park, Nepean, Vanier and Goulbourn there is no change from the earlier contracts. For Cumberland, Rideau, Kanata and West Carleton, an expanded service has been negotiated.

Mr. McNally stated the costs of the increased service levels will be offset to a degree by the reduction in the volumes of waste that will be landfilled (all the leaf and yard waste will now be composted). Further, any increase in costs will be handled within the requisition amounts identified for the municipalities.

The Solid Waste Division Director stated advertising of the program would begin that week in both daily and community newspapers as well as some general advertising on the radio. The Region has also entered into a partnership with a firm that uses and promotes the compostable bags. The Region, in conjunction with this firm, has developed a poster promoting the use of reusable containers, cardboard boxes and compostable paper bags and this has been made available to 150 retailers across Ottawa-Carleton.

Mr. McNally advised that no plastic bags will be allowed in the collection as they create a number of problems. At the curb, they have to be debagged which requires an extra person on the pick-up crew. If plastic bags do end up at the compost facility, they do not compost and they contaminate the quality of the compost that is produced. Mr. McNally drew the Committee's attention to Annex A of the information report which outlines a series of questions and answers which staff anticipate will be useful in dealing with citizens' concerns.

Councillor Munter felt the message was a negative one (i.e. don't put leaf and yard waste in plastic bags) when in fact the message is a positive one, expanded service for many areas of the Region. He felt people would be more receptive to a message such as "The good news is there is an expansion of service and because the pick-up will be so frequent, you won't have to put your leaf and yard waste in plastic bags for storage purposes". He felt this good news should be stressed to callers. Mr. McNally noted part of the problem is that in some cases this represents no change at all (i.e. Ottawa and Gloucester already have biweekly collection), while for other municipalities, this is an expanded program. He asked for the Councillors' assistance in promoting this program.

Councillor Cullen noted that when the City of Ottawa switched to paper bags from plastic bags, Councillor Hume purchased compostable paper bags with his name on them and distributed them to help people with the transition. In his ward, Councillor Cullen along with volunteers, assisted in the transition, by transferring leaf and yard waste from plastic bags to compostable bags and leaving a note saying it was done courtesy of Councillor Cullen. He felt this cut down on the number of phone calls from irate constituents.

The Councillor suggested there could be a forgiveness period where leaf and yard waste in plastic bags is collected once but a note is left at the residence explaining that it must, in the future, be put out in compostable bags or reusable containers. Mr. McNally advised that plastic bags would not be picked up but a note would be left on the bags explaining why. He felt that if plastic bags were picked up, this would cause confusion for neighbours who had heard of the program and were using paper bags; it would send the wrong message to the citizens.

In response to questions from Councillor Legendre, Anne Marie Fowler, Manager, Collection Operations Branch, advised that Rockcliffe Park will also have leaf and yard waste collection every two weeks. There will however, continue to be enhanced service in that if leaf and yard waste is put out, it will be collected but the emphasis will be on every second Thursday. Leaves will continue to be vacuumed but branches will have to be bundled and tied. Ms. Fowler confirmed that the flyers would be amended to reflect the variants applicable to Rockcliffe Park.

Committee Chair Hunter asked if an exception to the no plastic bag rule could be made for the orange pumpkin plastic bags used at Halloween. Ms. Fowler felt this would not be advisable, as it would send a mixed message.

Responding to further questions from Chair Hunter concerning the no plastic bag rule, Mr. McNally advised that Council approved this as part of the level of service report. Some of the savings identified under the new contract are as a result of the efficiencies of using compostable bags or reusable containers for leaf and yard waste. He advised when the City of Ottawa prohibited the use of plastic bags, they estimated a savings of \$300,000.

Mr. McNally confirmed at Councillor Legendre's request that any type of Kraft paper bag (i.e. paper grocery bags) can be used for leaf and yard waste. Councillor Legendre felt this message should be enhanced in the flyers and advertisements.

Councillor Beamish commented that advertising collection of leaf and yard waste every second week on Blue Box day, will cause confusion in two months when Blue Box collection converts to weekly pick-up; people may assume they can do the same with leaf and yard waste. Ms. Fowler stated another information package will be sent to each household outlining all of the changes at that time.

PLANNING ITEM

2. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PROVINCIAL TRANSFER OF
PLAN REVIEW FUNCTIONS

- Acting Planning and Property Commissioner and Environment and
Transportation Commissioner's joint report dated 21 Mar 96

Barry Edgington, Director, Plans Administration Division provided a brief overview of the staff report.

Responding to questions from Councillor Legendre, Mr. Edgington advised that the transfer of functions will be undertaken at no cost to the Region. Should the Region have to contract out some of the additional work (i.e. to consultants), these costs will be recovered from the developer. He acknowledged that the developers will likely pass these costs on to purchasers of new homes. Mr. Edgington noted however that he did not believe these cost will be significant. In order to stay competitive, developers will have to absorb much of the additional costs. Mr. Edgington confirmed that no funding package would be coming from the Province other than through the transfer of their data base and the cost of training Regional staff.

Committee Chair Hunter applauded this initiative, noting it started a number of years ago and will result in a more "made in Ottawa-Carleton" plan review and decision making function. He felt the additional work could be largely handled in-house. Mr. Edgington added that many provincial policies are already incorporated in the Regional Official Plan. When an application is reviewed, the Region ensures its conformity to the Regional Official Plan which, in essence, also ensures its conformity to Provincial policies. Further, the Regional Official Plan review will bring the provincial policies up to date which will make the transfer of functions that much easier to implement.

Chair Hunter expressed concern that decisions made by staff on a technical basis, could be overturned by politicians at the Committee and Council level. He asked if this concern had been addressed in discussions with the province. Mr. Edgington agreed that this process opens the provincial policy interpretation more to a political review process. He noted this also occurred with the transfer to the Regions of delegation of authority in the 70's and 80's; this has not been a negative experience from the standpoint of the Regions. The applications are processed in a much more efficient way than when it was centralized in Toronto.

Mr. Edgington went on to say, the various Provincial Ministries have indicated they will continue to monitor decisions made by the Region for at least the first two or three years. If they see a decision they feel has ignored a technical concern of theirs, they have the

option of appealing the decision to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). As well, if the Region chooses to contract out to the Conservation Authorities to be the technical review agency for hydrogeological studies, they would have the right to request referral to the OMB of any decision made by the Region which they disagreed with.

He noted that in the protocol agreements of some other regions, the Province included a “tattle-tale clause”, which requires staff to advise the Ministry when a Regional Council decision goes against Provincial Policy. Regional staff are proposing that this clause be deleted from the RMOC’s protocol agreement or memorandum of understanding.

Mr. Edgington confirmed at Councillor Munter’s request that approval of the site-specific development applications will be delegated to staff; only disputed applications will come before the Committee and Council

Councillor Munter noted that Planning Department staff are currently very busy; he asked how this additional work will be undertaken without either taking on more staff or eliminating some other mandated function. Mr. Edgington advised that adjustments will be made between the two Planning divisions (Plans Administration Division and Policy Division). He noted as an example, one planner (previously with the Policy Division) has just returned from a year-long secondment at the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). As housing review work in the Policy Division has been cut back, this planner will serve as the resource person working on development applications from an MNR perspective.

Councillor Munter commented that the staff report does not provide an indication of the scale of work that will be involved in the transfer of functions. Mr. Edgington advised a further report will be presented to the Committee and Council which will show the various Ministries and their functions; whether these functions will become the responsibility of the Region and if so, where the expertise is available to carry out these functions. Of the seven Ministries noted on page 2 of the staff report, the Region will be assuming functions from only four or five (the Ministry of Transportation, for example, does not wish to transfer any functions to the Region). Mr. Edgington stated that although the amount of work transferred will be significant, he is convinced that the resources can be found within the Region.

Councillor Munter noted the Community Services Committee is repeatedly told that if the province chooses not to fund a program, the Region is not to assume responsibility for it and start paying for it. He hoped this would be the case in this instance as well.

Responding to questions from Councillor Cullen concerning the procedure for projects where the Region is the applicant (i.e. Clyde/Merivale), Mr. Edgington felt there shouldn’t be any conflict in such a situation. For example with noise issues, Official Plan policies are in conformity with Provincial policies. Nick Tunnacliffe, Planning and Property

Commissioner, added the project budget would ensure a noise study was done by a properly qualified person who would certify that the noise levels would meet the standards of the Province and the Region. Further, a Regional Official Plan Amendment would still require Planning and Environment Committee and Council approval, as well as final approval by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. Councillor Cullen felt there should be an independent body reviewing all aspects of such a project. Mr. Edgington acknowledged the Councillor's point and agreed to look into it. He noted that each case will have to be looked at on an individual basis and in a case where the Region has an interest, the various Ministries would probably be asked to make an exception and revert to their formal role of approval.

Referring to Recommendation 2, Mr. Edgington confirmed for Councillor Cullen that the Ministry of Environment and Energy will retain approval authority for major Regional facilities (i.e. Greens Creek).

In response to questions from Councillor Hill, Mr. Edgington advised that six planning staff attended a training session at the end of March in Toronto. All future training sessions will be conducted at Regional Headquarters, including the one-day training session with Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) staff on 17 April 1996 to deal with Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) calculations. The same staff members will be attending all of the training sessions.

Councillor Hill felt that in order to stimulate economic development through job creation, Planning and Property Department staff should be streamlined so that development applications can be processed quickly. She explained that planners currently working on the Regional Official Plan Review would be better utilized in the Plans Administration Division processing development applications.

Councillor Stewart had questions about the areas directly outside the Region who we are in competition with for development (i.e. Carleton Place) and how the Province intends to deal with these areas. She stated there is much concern about a level playing field. Mr. Edgington noted in the past, the Region always felt it received more microscopic treatment from the Provincial Ministries, now the reverse will happen. Municipalities like Carleton Place will have to subject themselves to the provincial review individually whereas the Region will be doing its own policy review on site specific applications. A one-window approach is being set up, so that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) will be acting as the spokesman for all the Ministries involved. For example, Carleton Place would submit a subdivision application to the MMAH in Toronto, who in turn would circulate the application to the various ministries for comments and conditions, on behalf of the municipality. Eventually, all municipalities will be assigned authority for such things as zoning by-laws, site-plan applications, etc. He

assured the Councillor that generally, the same level of regulation will exist inside and out of the Region.

Councillor Cullen referring to the issue of the OMB hearing on the Palladium, asked if such a referral by OMAFRA could be repeated under the new circumstances. Mr. Edgington advised it would be less likely to occur under the new scenario. However, even though it was a site-specific Official Plan Amendment, it would be still be considered a major policy decision and be circulated to the Province; the opportunity would still be there for Ministries to comment.

The Committee then approved the staff recommendations.

That the Planning and Environment Committee recommend Council approve the following:

- 1. Authorize staff to continue negotiations with various Provincial agencies to assume certain plan review functions;**
- 2. Authorize the Chief Administrative Office to write to the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Environment and Energy requesting clarification re the Region's role in the issuance of Certificates of Approval for certain water and sewer works.**

CARRIED

INFORMATION PREVIOUSLY DISTRIBUTED

1996 Ottawa-Carleton Housing Directory and Social Housing Map

- Acting Planning and Property Commissioner's Memorandum dated 21 Mar 96

INQUIRIES

Committee Chair Hunter asked that a report on the Environmental Assessment of the Munster Hamlet Sewage Lagoon be brought before the Committee. Jim Miller agreed this could be done.

Councillor Cullen asked when the report on Development Opportunities at Transitway Stations would be presented to Planning and Environment Committee. Commissioner Tunnacliffe responded that it would be presented soon, possibly at the next meeting.

Councillor Cullen noted that the National Capital Commission has received the Region's comments on the Environmental Evaluation of the Greenbelt Master Plan and will be forwarding to the Region, their revised report. He asked that he be provided with a copy when it is received. Mr. Tunnacliffe advised that all Councillors would receive a copy.

Councillor Cullen asked when the Committee would receive the discussion paper on Greenspace. Mr. Tunnacliffe advised that this paper has been proving somewhat troublesome but he would look into it.

Councillor van den Ham asked when the Wetlands issue would be considered by the Committee. The Commissioner replied that it would likely be presented at the next meeting.

Councillor Hill asked that staff provide her with a copy of the aggregate study as soon as possible. Mr. Tunnacliffe advised that this study will be considered as part of the Regional Official Plan review and there will be a report presented to the Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR

COMMITTEE CHAIR