

STAFF REPORT: ENGINEERING AND PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

REPORT TO: **Committee of The Whole**
MEETING DATE: **January 13, 2014**
REPORT NO.: **EPW.14.002**
SUBJECT: **Yard Waste Collection**
PREPARED BY: **Jeffery Fletcher, Manager of Solid
Waste and Environmental Initiatives**

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report EPW.14.002, "Yard Waste Collection";

AND THAT Council not endorse an enhanced level of service for yard waste collection at this time, but reconsider curbside yard waste collection service with the implementation of the curbside organics collection program.

B. Background**Purpose**

This Report is to address a letter received this year by the Swiss Meadows Ratepayers Association requesting yard waste collection (Attachment 1). This Report outlines the Town's current level of service and proposed response to the letter.

Background

In a letter addressed to Mayor Ellen Anderson, the Swiss Meadows Ratepayers Association requested consideration of "leaf and needle" pick up in the fall. The letter expressed a concern regarding the potential for tree foliage litter to cause turf grass health issues if the fallen foliage is left in place. The letter author suggests that the Town should help resolve this potential issue by providing a onetime leaf only collection to the residents of Swiss Meadows and perhaps other areas as well.

As the author of the letter points out, the Town currently offers a depot based yard waste collection and composting service at the Landfill Site. Under Ontario Regulation 101/94, municipalities with populations between 5,000 and 50,000 are required to provide a backyard composter based yard waste system, which the Town currently does. A depot based service is the level of service required by Ontario Regulation 101/94 for populations over 50,000. Since the Town provides this service, the Town is currently exceeding the regulatory minimums. Some large urban and regional municipalities also provide curbside collection of yard waste but curbside collection is not required by the regulation for any sized municipality.

During planning of the proposed organics program, Town Staff obtained a cost estimate from the Town's existing waste collection Contractor to combine limited yard waste collection with future organics collection. The pricing was only determined for Monday and Thursday collection zones as these are the areas with denser urban lots. Swiss Meadows is in the Wednesday rural collection zone. Yard waste collection was recognized by Town Staff as a service to potentially add to a kitchen waste organics collection program. The split truck used for organics collection and the seasonal fluctuation of waste in the Town could allow for the collection of limited yard waste in the spring and fall. However, this service would have additional costs associated with it (\$16,000+ if combined with a kitchen organics collection program) and which would be above the existing Town waste collection budget. Current 2014 Budget considerations anticipate the initiation of organics collection in 2015. The proposed organics start in 2015 does not include financial provision for yard waste collection.

The letter from Swiss Meadows Ratepayers suggests that a onetime service should be provided to Swiss Meadows and selected other areas in the Town. Town Staff can not endorse a service based on the needs expressed in the Ratepayer's letter. Although the turf health concerns for properties with pine needles may be valid, the Town does not currently have the resources to conduct a yard waste collection.

Staff therefore recommend that no enhancements be made to the current yard waste management program.

Alternatives and Future Considerations

As an alternative to ratepayers delivering yard waste to the Town depot using their own vehicles, many local yard maintenance companies provide this service and are given commercial user access to the Town Disposal Site during hours of operation. Also, employing good home composting techniques can effectively deal with a large amount of organic matter at the source. It is however good practice to exclude diseased plants from home composting. Use of the Town depot is beneficial for diseased plants as the Town composting system reaches temperatures and treatment durations required to kill pathogens and seeds.

Through the 2014 Town Budget preparation process Town Staff has identified the alignment of the end of the existing waste collection contract with the potential start of curbside organics collection in 2015. During retendering of waste services much consideration will be given to the type and level of service to be delivered under a new contract. A limited seasonal yard waste collection service combined with organics collection will be an item Town Staff will revisit with Council during the development of future collection services.

C. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan

This report assists with informing Council and working towards Strategic goal number 6 "providing a strong, well-managed municipal government."

D. Environnemental Impacts

None

E. Financial Impact

None

F. In Consultation With

NA

G. Attached

1. Swiss Meadows Rate Payers Association Letter - March 3, 2013

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffery Fletcher
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SWISS MEADOWS

Ratepayers Association

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March 3rd 2013

MAR 13 2013

Mayor Ellen Anderson; ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS
TOWN OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

The Swiss Meadows Ratepayers Association are asking for some consideration of a Leaf and needle pick up this fall.

The Towns of Collingwood and Wasaga Beach have a one day service in the fall to handle the problem. Although we realize that many of the Residents of the Town live in Rural areas and may not be interested where many acres of land are involved.

However here in our area we have 110 half acre lots with a lot of trees and grass. We know that the Dump is available to take this type of leavings but we also know that we don't own trucks and being able to take the bags there is very difficult.

The big problem is the fact that pine needles in particular do not break down and kill anything underneath it like grass. To make it matters worse if the needles are not removed , the result will be the growth of a few types of fungus ,moss and a mushroom like plant .It all takes place underneath and therefore the needles have to be removed. Cedar tree leaves will do the same thing.

We do not feel that its a big undertaking to have a one day pick up and I would suggest it be limited to the large paper bags. Tree limbs etc. are a different matter.

Most people here are proud of their lawns and the trees that grow on their properties. As a result the needle ,leaf problem we feel has to be addressed.

If you feel we should appear at a meeting of the Council to explain our positon we would be glad to do so.

We know that its a cost and this could be discussed as well. I'm sure there are a lot of Home owners near the village that will face the same problem we have as their properties grow and the trees etc become bigger.

We hope you will give this due consideration and look forward to hearing from you.

Bob Carter
Swiss Meadows Ratepayers Ass'n