

STAFF REPORT: ENGINEERING AND PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

REPORT TO: Infrastructure and Recreation
 Committee
MEETING DATE: April 10, 2012
REPORT NO.: EPW.12.029
SUBJECT: Options for Landscaping &
 Outdoor Watering
PREPARED BY: John Caswell, Manager of Water &
 Wastewater Services

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report EPW.12.029, entitled "Options for Landscaping & Outdoor Watering", and

THAT Council direct Staff to prepare a policy to allow the installation of a subtraction water meter for landscaping and outdoor water use only, including a backflow prevention device and an agreement to be executed with the owner to maintain the device as per the policy and the sewer charges based on water flow recorded by the subtraction meter not be applied.

B. Background

Mr. John Leckie, a Lora Bay resident, attended the January 17, 2012 Infrastructure and Recreation Committee (I&R) meeting to discuss sewage rate charges for landscaping.

Mr. Leckie hired The Landmark Group to plant 33 trees at his newly constructed home in Lora Bay in the summer of 2011. As the weather during July and August was very hot, Mr. Leckie purchased watering permits from the Town that allowed him exemption from watering restrictions so he could provide the frequent watering his new trees required. Upon receiving his water bill, Mr. Leckie was very surprised that his utility bill included an increased sewer charge.

Mr. Leckie attended the I&R Committee meeting to request relief from the additional sewer charges of approximately \$300.00.

The current method of applying water and sewer rates is based on water meter readings.

The I&R Committee requested that Staff prepare a report and provide options and report back to the I&R Committee. Several options were considered by Staff and are outlined below.

1. Apply the sewer rate charges based on the water meter reading as is currently Town practice.
2. Inform property owners that bulk water haulers are available in the area to truck water for landscaping or outdoor watering purposes.

3. Allow the installation of a subtraction water meter, for landscaping and outdoor water use, that requires a plumbing permit, a backflow prevention device and an agreement with the owner to maintain the device as per Town direction and that does not apply the sewer charges based on the water flow recorded by the subtraction meter.
4. Remove the portion of the sewer rate charge that is greater than the average of the previous two billing period sewer usage. This would only apply if water consumption for landscaping or outdoor water use is in excess of \$500 per billing period.

The Town does not currently have the ability to separate the flows utilized for landscaping or outdoor watering purposes from those used for other purposes. To separately identify flows, for this purpose, the installation of a dedicated water meter would be required. Due to the nature of water taking for landscaping or outdoor use, the installation of a backflow prevention device may also be required. The initial purchase of the backflow prevention device, as well as the costs associated with yearly required inspections of the device, would be at the owner's expense.

Staff therefore, recommend that Council endorse Option #3 in that Staff prepare a policy to permit the use of a subtraction meter. Upon approval of the recommendation contained in this report, the fees and charges by-law for water would require amending.

C. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan

This report relates to the Strategic Plan's goal #2 'Addressing the Town's Municipal infrastructure needs.'

D. Environmental Impacts

The planting of trees and landscaping is a benefit to the environment.

E. Financial Impact

None

F. In Consultation With

Ruth Prince, Manager of Revenue

G. Attached

None

Respectfully submitted,

John Caswell

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