

STAFF REPORT: ENGINEERING AND PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

REPORT TO: Infrastructure and Recreation
 Committee
MEETING DATE: May 14th 2013
REPORT NO.: EPW.13.048
SUBJECT: Solid Waste Disposal Site Bird
 Control
PREPARED BY: Jeffery Fletcher, Manager of Solid
 Waste and Environmental Initiative

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report EPW.13.048, "Solid Waste Disposal Site Bird Control", for their information.

B. Background

The Solid Waste Division has designed a bird scare and control program in consultation with the Ministry of Natural Resources. Town Staff is proposing to make application to Environment Canada to control migratory birds at the Solid Waste Disposal Site.

Multiple flocks of bird species, typically Ring Billed Gulls, Starlings and Crows, are routinely (daily) exposing covered waste by digging and pulling as waste on the active landfill face. Birds are ingesting plastics, contaminated waste and pathogens that can be potentially transmitted to other animals or organisms. Birds also rip open bags of waste that is placed and awaiting daily compaction and cover at the active face, creating wind-blown litter issues. The frequency of occurrence creates an ongoing nuisance; birds are re-exposing waste that is required to be covered daily. Beyond the operational problems, eliminating the birds' exposure to waste plastic, contamination and pathogens is a goal of this control program. The spreading of litter and disease as well as the health of the local bird population is a serious concern.

The control plan proposes the scaring of birds with a starting pistol combined with a kill for the purpose of supporting the scaring. It is the intention of the program to eliminate kills after 6 months, however a seasonally reintroduction may be necessary. The goal is to keep flocks out of the Site over the long term.

With this type of program and giving consideration to the tools being used, safe procedures by Staff will be paramount. New standard operating procedures have been developed that cover safe handling, storage and transport and timing of control programs. For example no control programs will be conducted while any member of the public is on Site.

The Town has not had a control program in place previously, however bird control is a common best practice at municipal disposal facilities. Other common techniques include robotic birds of prey, falconry and noisemakers. Staff have not ruled out the use of other techniques in the future, however this current proposal is low cost and manageable by Disposal Site staff. Continuing to apply the required cover will assist in deterring birds. However, material is not covered immediately which creates an opportunity for animal scavenging. The program proposes to eliminate the temptation of this opportunity.

Next Steps

Before a program is implemented Town staff will inform adjacent residents and address any expressed concerns. Following review of this report by Council, Town staff will proceed with submission of the control application to Environment Canada and education of associated Town staff on the procedures.

C. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan

This activity is part of "providing a strong, well managed municipal government" which in part involves the "development and implementation of occupational health and safety policies".

D. Environmental Impacts

It is recognized that this program proposes controlled kill of migratory birds. However there is a greater benefit to the species and local environment, which positions this type of program as a positive impact on the ecosystem health.

E. Financial Impact

The new equipment and supplies required will be in the order of \$500 and can be funded by the existing 2013 landfill operational budget.

F. In Consultation With

Keray Wonch, Site Operator

G. Attached

None

Respectfully submitted,

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