

TO: CITY MANAGER

DATE: 1998 07 03

FROM: DIRECTOR ENGINEERING

FILE: 65-04-01/
42-01-06

SUBJECT: CORRESPONDENCE FROM MRS. MUNDAY

PURPOSE: To respond to the issues raised by Mrs. V. Munday in her letter of 1998 June 15 to Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Council receive this report for information.
2. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to Mrs. V. Munday, 4661 Southlawn Drive, Burnaby, B.C. V5C 3S5

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

At the regular Council Meeting of 1998 June 22, Council received a letter from Mrs. V. Munday expressing concerns on secondary suite, minimum user fee at the City Yard Waste Drop Off Depot and water pricing through metering. This report is to provide information and updates on these issues for the information of Council and Mrs. Munday.

DISCUSSION

1. Regulations on Secondary Suites

The Director Planning & Building has provided the following information:

“In January 1998, the Community Planning and Housing Committee reviewed the latest actions that have been taken in the region with regards to secondary suites in single family dwellings. Arising from the discussion, the Committee requested that Planning and Building Department staff proceed with reviewing the issues associated with secondary suites once work priorities such as the Official Community Plan are addressed. The review process is due to commence in the fall of this year.”

2. Yard Waste Drop Off and Think Three Programs

Under the City's comprehensive yard waste management initiative, three service programs are currently available to Burnaby residents:

- ▶ Yard waste curbside collection program from April to November.
- ▶ Yard Waste Drop Off Depot.
- ▶ Backyard composter program.

The curbside yard waste collection program is into its second year of operation and is well received by Burnaby residents. In 1997, the curbside program collected approximately 4,500 tonnes of yard waste. It is expected that the 1998 collection will surpass the 1997 volume bringing the total waste diversion volume one step closer towards the 50% waste reduction goal.

The Yard Waste Drop Off Depot was opened in the summer of 1996 to replace the former Stride Landfill Site and is used primarily by residents with large loads of yard waste. The establishment of the replacement Yard Waste Drop Off Depot on Still Creek Avenue requires additional operating cost to the City in connection with the transferring and processing of the materials for composting. Drop off charges were established to partially offset the operation cost of the expanded service.

When the drop off depot was first opened and the user fee schedule was introduced, the minimum charge of \$10.00 was waived for residents with small loads (3 bags or less) of yard waste in order to provide a gradual transition from the "no-charge" yard waste disposal at Stride Landfill to the new facility on Still Creek Avenue where the yard waste is transferred for processing and turned into soil enhancing materials. In 1997, the average daily number of visits to the drop off depot with small loads was approximately 12.

With the curbside yard waste collection program progressing into its second year, we are confident that the curbside service will obviate the need for delivery to the drop off depot of materials that could be collected at the curbside. Therefore, the minimum fee at the depot should apply to all yard waste deliveries for all times of the year while the curbside collection is in place. In the staff report of 1998 February 18 to the Environment and Waste Management Committee and Council, it was recommended that the charge relaxation be applied for small loads delivered by Burnaby residents only between December and April which is the period outside of the curbside collection program. Staff recognize that convenience and least cost are two important factors in the design of the City's waste reduction program and the current services available have reflected these criteria. Notwithstanding the commitment and support of Burnaby's residents on recycling and other City's waste reduction initiatives, the City has incurred additional costs for the expanded

service at the Yard Waste Drop Off Depot and the revenue received at the gate provides the means of offsetting the extra operating costs. It should be noted that Burnaby residents are allowed to take yard waste to the depot free of charge during the period when curbside pickup is unavailable. Staff are working towards developing a more detailed communication plan for visitors at the depot who may have questions on the yard waste program and associated charges.

When the City's Think Three program initiated a few years ago, a trial "tag for extra garbage" program was implemented for a limited duration. As the principle of the City's waste reduction program is built on public participation and consumer stewardship, it was felt that changing consumer behaviour through education and communication would be more effective than the tag system which does not promote the concept of waste reduction. Therefore, the City has decided not to proceed with the tag system but to embark on a comprehensive community education and communication strategy to promote changing attitudes towards waste reduction. Over the last few years, staff are pleased to see the effort of Burnaby residents in reducing the waste stream volume and increasing the use of recycling and yard waste services which bring the City closer towards the 50% reduction goal. For a few households who consistently put out extra garbage, staff have taken the measure of leaving a friendly reminder on site about the City's waste reduction program.

3. Water Pricing Through Metering

The Director Finance has provided the following information:

"Burnaby's utilities are self-sustaining, that is the annual rates charged to consumers cover the system operating and capital costs. For residential properties, flat water rates are charged. For commercial and industrial consumers, the water rates are based on the amount of water consumed. It should be noted that within the residential flat rate structure, different rates are charged for different types of home to provide fairness and equity. For example, flat water rates for apartments are less than flat rates for single family detached dwellings.

Flat rates equitably distribute the cost of providing service among users, considering most system costs are fixed rather than variable. With flat rates, extra costs commonly associated with other billing methods such as metering are not incurred by the City. The capital and operating costs of residential metering would substantially increase the City's expenditure in the short term. Studies suggest, however, that over the long term people conserve more with metering because they have to pay directly for what they use. Fixed costs (i.e., costs for building and maintaining the infrastructure that remain constant regardless of the volume of water handled through the system) represent between 60% and 90% of the overall cost of Burnaby's water utility. It is appropriate that these costs are recovered by way of a flat rate from homes which benefit equally from having access to the infrastructure."

Correspondence from Mrs. Munday
1998 July 03 - Page 4

The issue of water metering has been discussed at the regional level for many years. One of the main reasons that the metering concept has not been pursued further is the long payback period required for the investment in metering. The most recent study prepared by the GVWD in 1997 indicated that the cost benefit analysis for universal metering is inconclusive and the GVWD Long Range Plan needs to be revisited to identify more accurately the potential impacts of metering on future capital improvement programs. The GVWD is continuing to refine the water management program and we will provide additional information as further details on water metering and other management options become available.


DIRECTOR ENGINEERING

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cc: Director Planning & Building
Director Finance