

Talking Trash: Community Gathering on Waste Management

April 13, 2019



1. **Summary**
2. **Notes**
3. **Appendix A: Draft Garbage and Recycling Program Review Summary and Recommendations Feb 13, 2017**
4. **Appendix B: Powerpoint presentation to Fredericton Council-in-Committee: Recycling for Multi-unit Buildings**
5. **Appendix C: UNB Engineering Report to City of Fredericton: Glass Recycling, April 7, 2013, first 7 pages out of 73 pages**
6. **Appendix D: Powerpoint of Fredericton Glass Recycling Proposal, UNB Engineering**

Top Ideas and Suggestions:

1. Need a Provincial Waste Strategy
2. Apply Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) to paper and plastic
3. Focus on reducing consumption
4. Institute Apartment Recycling
5. Require Sorting of Waste
6. Charge for excessive garbage



1. Summary

Political Representatives:

David Coon, MLA Fredericton South

Stephen Chase, City Councillor Ward 9

Greg Ericson, City Councillor Ward 8

Kate Rogers, City Councillor Ward 11

John MacDermid, City Councillor for Ward 10

Panel Guests:

Don Fitzgerald, Executive Director of Regional Service Commission
Brett McCrea, General Manager of Fredericton Solid Waste Division
Lois Corbett, Executive Director of the Conservation Council of New Brunswick

The problem of waste management has been an issue brought up at every one of David's Community Gatherings since 2014. People in the community have made it clear that they are concerned about the lack of apartment recycling, the absence of curbside composting and glass recycling, and the low rates of recycling and the high rates of landfill waste. In fact, waste management has been the single most frequent issue brought up in all the Community Gatherings. Clearly, we had to have a Community Gathering devoted to this topic.

The main challenges raised at this meeting by the public included the lack of apartment recycling; the low rates of waste diversion; the absence of glass recycling; the absence of curbside composting; the need to require sorting of waste; and the need to reduce consumption and packaging.

City councillors explained that there was no apartment recycling because there was a lack of political will in City Council. They themselves were in support of apartment recycling, but many of their colleagues were not. They encouraged residents to lobby their city councillors to support apartment recycling. They also explained that the low rates of waste diversion were due to lack of disincentive to dump and lack of incentive to recycle. One way to offer incentives or disincentives was by weighing waste and attaching a cost, but an effort to bring in weight measuring garbage trucks was defeated recently by City Council. In regards to glass recycling, Brett McCrea explained that there was no glass recycling in New Brunswick because they believed the cost to the environment was relatively low for dumping and high for recycling. He also further explained that they did not offer curbside composting, but that they did capture the methane gas produced by the organic waste in the landfill which was then used to generate energy.

It was proposed several times that the system should be changed to require all residents to sort waste which would result in a 100% participation rate as opposed to the 20% participation rate in recycling currently. There seemed to be a need for more understanding of how such a system would work, and whether the city had the authority to enforce such a system. It was generally agreed that there needs to be a provincial strategy on waste which could mandate or enforce such a system. Regarding reduction of packaging, Lois Corbett brought up Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) where manufacturers are responsible for the recycling of the materials used to package their products. This is a promising and growing development that could encourage reducing waste at the source. David further contended that a province-wide ban on plastic bags was likely to happen soon.

Many of the community participants signed up to form a committee to follow up with actions and initiatives coming out of the meeting. Some of the possible initiatives coming from this meeting could include: creating a campaign to lobby the city to institute apartment recycling; creating a campaign to lobby the province to create a provincial waste strategy; researching best practices in waste management elsewhere, including more information about forced waste sorting; pushing for better public awareness and education about recycling; making it easier for institutions, businesses and individuals to recycle and compost; creating a community effort to get local businesses to reduce the waste customers take home (“did you bring your bag?”). David will continue to advocate for a provincial waste strategy.

2. Summary of Notes

The Meeting started with each panel guest, Don Fitzgerald, Brett McCrea and Lois Corbett, discussing the role of the Regional Service Commission and Solid Waste Division plays in Waste Management with the City of Fredericton and area. Lois Corbett talked about the problem of too much waste, particularly plastic in the environment, and what actions municipalities, businesses, provinces and other places are taking to address this, including bans on plastic bags and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs that place the onus on manufacturers or producers to take responsibility for the recycling of the waste created by their products. Each City Councillor explained the role of the city in waste management. Officially the city is only responsible for pickup and delivery of waste and recyclables from houses. However, there are things the city can do to promote and incentivize better recycling. David Coon explained that the province has signed on to a federal agreement to divert more waste from landfills. He pointed out that some cities require landlords to offer recycling services to tenants.

The floor was then opened up to Questions and Comments from the floor. These are elaborated more fully in the Notes below. Briefly, the topics brought up were:

- UNB students have proposed projects for value added glass recycling.
- Need to reduce wasteful packaging at the source (manufacturing and consumer behaviour patterns). Extended Producer Responsibility is a good model to start with.
- What is the city doing to partner with community organizations (such as the Ville) to promote composting? Why aren't we doing curbside composting?
 - A: Instead of composting Fredericton has a system that captures methane gas from rotting organic waste in the landfill which is used to generate electricity.
- What are the obstacles to getting recycling for apartment buildings? What can residents do help this become available?
 - A: Political will is lacking to require it. Landlords require disincentive to dump or incentive to recycle.

- Have seen smaller recycling depots in other countries placed conveniently close to apartment and residence clusters. Would like to see more and smaller recycling depots in more convenient locations (close to multi units).
 - A: Apartment and condo owners would need to make space for recycling containers unless the recycling depots mentioned above are located on public property - sidewalks)
- Two points: 1. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle + Refuse. 2. City Councillors should do more to support apartment recycling.
- What are solutions to over-packaging of consumer items and produce?
 - A: A harmonized provincial ban on plastic bags seems inevitable. Retail Council prefers this to a patchwork ban.
- Why don't we do forced sorting to get diversion rate to 100%?
 - A: Yes, this works elsewhere. Councillor Greg Ericson wonders if the city has authority to enforce this.
- PEI does forced sorting.
- Too little participation in recycling. We need incentive/disincentive: some places issue limited amount of garbage bags, beyond that they must pay.
- Small business owner Q: what is the provincial goal for recycling? A: There is none.
- We should participate in nationwide solution to plastic waste to regulate plastic packaging and consumption.
- Need a provincial diversion strategy, better public policy, better municipal leadership.
- Retailers should ask, "do you have your carry bag?" as a matter of course. Off-campus students not recycling because landlords not providing blue/grey bins.
- Response from Panel:
 - City could restrict garbage by volume/weight, but City Council declined automated garbage trucks that could weigh garbage.
 - Styrofoam is not ideal for recycling because it costs a lot to ship, takes up so much space, and not much demand for it.
 - City has no recycling participation target. No financial incentive to recycle. Information on recycling sent out through water bill (Note: Apartment dwellers do not receive a water bill).
 - Recommendations to the City for solid waste program (see notes below or Appendix A)
 - There has been no provincial strategy on waste since Bernard Lord was Premier.

If you are interested in being part of a community committee to work on and advocate better waste management in our city, please contact taeyon.kim@gnb.ca