

March 20, 2017

City has completed three-week trial period for garbage and recycling amendments; Final changes to the program presented to Council

NELSON – City Council met today to review amendments to the Waste Management and Wildlife Attractant Bylaw that were first introduced on December 19, 2016. The original amendments were developed as a means of protecting the safety of employees who have experienced injuries during the collection of garbage and recycling. After a three-week trial period, it was determined from resident and staff feedback, that further amendments be made prior to full implementation. Council has moved these new amendments through the first three readings, and is anticipated to adopt the final changes on April 3, 2017.

“The primary issue that we heard, were related to concerns of animals being attracted to garbage bags, and potentially tearing them open.” said Colin Innes, Director of Public Works & Utilities. “The actual number of incidences of animals opening garbage bags during the trial period was extremely low, but, we recognize the potential for more wildlife interactions as temperatures warm up.”

In anticipation of the adoption of these final changes, going forward, the City will permit the use of containers. However, it remains the preference of the City for garbage bags to be placed for collection outside of a garbage can.

The City will permit containers to be used in the following manner:

- Garbage bags will be lifted out of a garbage can by a City employee and placed into the truck;
- Garbage cans will not be lifted by City employees;
- Garbage bags that stick in cans will be left in the can;
- Garbage bags must be the correct size or will be left in the can;
- Garbage bags must be the correct weight or will be left in the can; and
- Garbage bags must have a tag on every bag. Untagged bags will be left in the can.

“It became very apparent during the trial period that there was a lot of confusion around what can or cannot be recycled in Nelson’s curbside program.” said Innes. “For example, plastic shopping bags cannot be put in blue bags because they are flimsy and break down during the sorting process. This unfortunately turns them in to garbage preventing them from being recycled, which is why they need to be handled separately.”

The City recognized that additional information and education was required to help residents comply with the recycling program. The City produced a reference guide which can be found here: http://bit.ly/Garbage_Recycling_Guide or they can visit <http://recyclinginbc.ca/program/can-recycled/> for a complete list.

The last piece of major feedback the City received was related to the maximum size of the garbage bag being 66cm x 97cm (26" x 38"). Innes said "It seemed to surprise a lot of residents that there was a maximum bag size permitted and that this regulation had been around since 2003." He added "The tag-a-bag program, which included a maximum bag size, was implemented in 2003 as a means of encouraging the diversion of recyclables from the landfill. Many residents may not realize that the City receives revenue for recyclables, but has to pay for the disposal of garbage. It is in our best interests as a community, from both an environmental and financial perspective, to limit our waste and promote recycling."

The City would like to thank residents for their cooperation and helpful feedback. The City would like to continue to encourage residents to recycle and compost their organic materials to reduce the amount of landfill waste.

###

Media Contact:

Colin Innes, Director of Public Works & Utilities – (250) 352-8107