Agenda – Executive Policy Committee – May 18, 2021

REPORTS

Item No. 9 Proposed Property Tax Rebate – Home-Based Composting

COUNCIL DECISION:

On April 29, 2021, Council ruled automatic referral of the following motion to the Executive Policy Committee:

Moved by Councillor Klein,
Seconded by Councillor Schreyer,

WHEREAS landfills are wastelands hazardous to both the environment and human health;

AND WHEREAS even after a landfill is closed, it must be monitored indefinitely into the future for contamination of surface water, groundwater, leachate, and landfill gases;

AND WHEREAS operation and continuous expanse of landfills, as well as the post-decommission monitoring, costs the residents of Winnipeg tens of millions of dollars each year with net lifetime costs in the hundreds of millions of dollars;

AND WHEREAS City land is limited, and dedication of land to a landfill will cause large swaths of land and the surrounding areas to be useless to the residents of Winnipeg for other purposes and future city revenues;

AND WHEREAS garbage collection and disposal removes valuable citizen tax dollars which could be used on higher rate of return investments to improve the quality of life for residents;

AND WHEREAS Water and Waste Department data indicates that each year the residents of Winnipeg trash between 170,000 and 210,000 metric tonnes of garbage;

AND WHEREAS Water and Waste Department data shows that organics represent 44% (approximately 90,000 Metric Tonnes) of the weight composition of the residential garbage stream;

AND WHEREAS composting is recognized as an environmentally friendly practice considerate of current citizens and future generations;

AND WHEREAS on-site (home-based) composting is recognized as a simple and effective solution to divert unnecessary organic waste from landfills;

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

AND WHEREAS on-site (home-based) composting is a low-cost option available to over 190,000 residential properties in Winnipeg, with Water and Waste Department surveys indicating that 54% of residents currently or previously have used a backyard composter;

AND WHEREAS if every residential household in Winnipeg were to compost on site, it would cut total city garbage in half and reduce the city garbage collection and disposal budget by an estimated $20 million per year;

AND WHEREAS those who take efforts to compost on site (home-based) are diverting organic waste from the garbage collection system and city landfills, and in doing so are completing a societally beneficial action which directly reduces the current and future waste-management costs to the city and its tax-payers;

AND WHEREAS contributing to the City's cost-effectiveness and improving efficiency of City operations at the individual household level should not go unnoticed;

AND WHEREAS a portion of the reduction in expenses to the City, as a result of the actions of an individual household, should be returned to that household;

AND WHEREAS $20 million in potential savings to the City over 190,000 residential properties is approximately $100 per household;

AND WHEREAS current economic hardships have significantly affected individual households, necessitating households finding creative ways to minimize costs for future years;

AND WHEREAS financial incentives encourage larger uptake of on-site (home-based) composting, and further reduce garbage collection and disposal costs to the city;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Executive Policy Committee be requested to direct the Winnipeg Public Service to report back within 120 days on the impact of a $100 property tax rebate to each household which self-declares that they have actively engaged in on-site (home-based) composting during the previous calendar year, and include the following:

1. The associated costs of developing an inspection program to accurately verify that households are composting in accordance with their self-declaration (based on a random sampling).

2. The ability to utilize funds from the Green Infrastructure Fund to offset the costs associated with the rebate program.

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

3. A fine to any household which makes a false declaration, set at a rate which sufficiently covers the costs of running the inspection program, and recovers the falsely declared reimbursements of property tax.