

Added Item 5.2(d)

From: Grant Ranalli <[REDACTED]>
Sent: November 15, 2019 9:30 AM
To: clerk@hamilton.ca
Subject: Bi Weekly Waste Collection

To the City Clerk,

Could this letter to the Hamilton Spectator be included in the Agenda of the Public Works Committee meeting scheduled for Monday November 18th.

I was asked by Councillor J.P. Danko to do so.

That you,

Grant Ranalli

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A 'Wasted Opportunity'? Let's hope not.

On Monday November 18, **(NOTE to Ed: or 'today' if this runs Monday)** the Hamilton Public Works Committee will debate and decide on a very important, seven year contract. It's about a proposed change to the collection of garbage - (landfill waste) from weekly to bi-weekly collection.

Councillors have debated this in the past but it is time to give serious consideration to this proposal, put forth by Councillor John-Paul Danko. New to City Council, Danko is bravely taking on a divisive issue.

First, some basic facts.

Your green cart compost, yard waste, your recyclables (paper and containers) will still be collected every single week, so concerns about green bin stink are unwarranted. They will be collected weekly and the City has offered several strategies to reduce unpleasant odours.

like hosing out the bin weekly when possible. A simple, yet effective practice and rinsing cans and bottles would eliminate odours from the container blue box too.

The only change, is that our garbage bag or pail, would be collected every second week - with no reduction in volume (two bags every two weeks vs. one bag every week) so essentially, we are talking about a change in schedule, *not* a reduction in service as some have erroneously claimed.

(there would still be allowance for pet waste, diapers and large families).

Why the controversy?

It all comes down to money - with big savings for the City (residential taxpayers).

Due to fewer runs by garbage trucks, the City will save \$3M a year.

so \$3M x 7 year contract = \$21 million.

and there would be reduced pollution from trucks with half the trips.

**Correspondence from Grant Ranalli respecting Item 11.1 - Modification of the
Waste Collection Services Request for Proposal to Include Options for Bi-Weekly
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We know that bi-weekly collection leads to increased diversion (i.e. more recycling) so the total volume of garbage collected will decrease. It means the landfill will last longer. A 5% increase in diversion increases the life of our landfill by four years.

Note that landfill sites are hard to find, require costly environmental approvals, and expensive to acquire, prepare and maintain.

Additionally, the value of the space saved by this 5% diversion over four years is estimated to be \$63million.

With our infrastructure deficit northwards of \$3Billion and the City mulling over a tax increase of an eyebrow-raising 5.5%, every little (million) bit helps.

Danko says "we have a duty to taxpayers to identify savings in our budgets - even if difficult choices must be made". So really, IS it that difficult a decision?

A few councillors claim that some of their constituents oppose any change. Nothing new here. Many people often oppose change, even if it may be good for them or the City. -

Another said that he did not want to 'cut corners'. A change in schedule (no reduction in volume) is not cutting anything, except unnecessary costs to the City.

Could it create an increase in illegal dumping? Illegal dumpers have done so in the past and may continue to do so - regardless of any schedules.

Illegal dumping, a blight on the city landscape, that requires increased monitoring and possibly a change in penalties.

Other comparable municipalities have bi-weekly pickup (Ottawa, Halton, Toronto and Waterloo).

Listening to constituents is always a good idea, but some may not have all the information councillors possess, or be misinformed, but most of the information I have gathered for this piece had come straight from this very newspaper.

When councillors say they have had 'opposition from constituents' I have to ask, 'How much opposition?'

A few irate phone calls or was survey taken? If so, how were questions worded? I'll bet if you asked people if you would like a 'reduction in service', most would likely say 'No'.

But would it to be the responsible thing, as councillors to first make sure constituents *know* the and *understand the* facts so that they understand *what* they are actually for or against and can make *informed* choices.

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I believe that this is called 'leadership'.

So, if the question was phrased as, 'Are you in favour of the City saving millions of dollars and possibly reducing our planned tax increase, extending the life of our landfill, and saving on diesel pollution, if it would require a minor change in your garbage pickup schedule?'

Maybe different results.

Changing our collection schedule is not that big a deal.

Other cities have done it so can't the 'Ambitious City' do it as well?

All it takes is the political will.

Let's not let this chance to improve diversion, help the environment and save the City huge costs be a wasted opportunity, nor to demonstrate strong leadership on a controversial issue.

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Grant Ranalli was a member of the city's Waste Reduction Task Force
and was co-chair of the environmental committee for the Hamilton Catholic School
Board.

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