

INFORMATION REPORT

TO: Chair and Members Public Works Committee	WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE
COMMITTEE DATE: October 17, 2011	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: One Day Rain Barrel Sale - (PW11078) - (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)	
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SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

On March 7, 2011, Public Works Committee directed staff to review the Rain Barrel RFQ process, to include, if possible, certified clean, re-purposed rain barrels, and report back to the Public Works Committee.

Information:

Background

The City of Hamilton has hosted one day rain barrel sales events since 2007. These events have proven to be very well received by the public and are an important part of Water & Wastewater's outreach and education strategy.

In March 2011, a delegation was made to General Issues Committee by a local supplier of repurposed rain barrels who was advocating to have previously used barrels made eligible for sale during future events hosted by the City. In addition the delegate also requested that the City discontinue hosting these events in the future. Subsequently Council directed staff to continue hosting these events and to review the issue in an effort to develop a mechanism by which re-purposed barrels could be eligible for future events.

At the time of the March 2011 event staff believed that there was no mechanism by which to allow these barrels for sale as a result of potential liability respecting the previous use of these barrels. In reviewing industry practices in this regard it became evident that there were no other municipalities with similar programs who offered previously used barrels for sale through these types of events. Additionally, research by staff revealed that there is no existing organization through which used barrels can be certified as to their previous use or the extent to which they have been cleaned.

Acting on the direction of Committee, staff continue to work with the City's Legal Services Division to develop a process through which suppliers of previously used barrels will be able to satisfy City staff that the barrels are safe and appropriate for sale. Based on discussions to date, staff are confident that through this process, the 2012 and future City hosted rain barrel events will be capable of offering the choice of both new and certain types of re-purposed barrels to residents.

A survey of attitudes from participants in the 2011 City hosted rain barrel sale revealed that there is a large number of residents who indeed would prefer to purchase re-purposed barrels and as a result staff expect a positive response to this new approach.

Summary

Staff have reviewed the RFQ process relating the to City's Rain Barrel Sale Events and are developing appropriate mechanisms so as to allow certain types of re-purposed rain barrels to be offered for sale through these events. While there is no existing organization that certifies re-purposed rain barrels, staff continue to work with the City's Legal Services Division to ensure that an appropriate mechanism to minimize any potential liability to the City and to the residents will be in place for the City's next event in 2012.