

Solutions to Unwanted Home Delivery of Flyer Packages

For the past couple years I have received numerous complaints from residents about flyer deliveries to their homes. It is a wide spread problem with complaints from residents throughout our municipality. There are many issues with the flyer delivery. First, they are unsightly. Our communities are littered with little blue packages of papers strewn about. The drivers often do not deliver them to the doorstep but instead throw them. They land in flower beds, shrubs, trees, on lawns and on driveways. If a resident is away it is a clear indication for a potential bugler that this property is not occupied. If the packs are not picked up they often end up in storm drains, outflows and lakes. In addition, during winter conditions residents do not know the flyer packs are on the driveway and they end up getting stuck in snow blowers. This can be a costly fix and can also be a safety issue. Residents can also slip and fall due to these strewn flyer packages.

Due to the magnitude of this problem, Council requested a staff report looking into this matter to determine what measures could be used to halt the unwanted delivery of flyers and free newspapers. The report concluded that the responsibility for this matter lies with the provincial government and falls under the litter provisions of the Environment Act of Nova Scotia. The Minister responsible for this legislation is the Minister of the Environment.

The report described options for Council such as requesting the legislative authority to regulate this provincial responsibility. This was not recommended as HRM does not have the staff or administrative resources to do this. We have a limited amount of tax dollars that are primarily obtained from property taxes. Already the province takes a large percentage of your tax bill to fund their own programs. The province has many sources of revenues that they can use for provincial responsibilities, including their existing litter legislation. The report also described what other municipalities such as Ottawa do with “no junk mail signage” but unfortunately they have had no prosecutions to date.

So what are residents options to stop this? If you witness this, please get a description of the vehicle that is throwing the flyers and the license plate and call the Police Non-Emergency line: 490-5020. This will assist the province in successful prosecutions. I witnessed a van with the passenger throwing the flyers and was able to have the Police investigate this. You could contact the Minister of the Environment, Honourable David Morse, 424-3736 or the Department of Environment, 424-3600 and ask them to enforce the litter provisions in the Environment Act of Nova Scotia. Alternatively you could contact your MLA and ask he/she to assist in enforcement of this continued littering. Our district has two MLA's and their names and contact information is included in this copy of *The Chebucto News*.

Currently it is my understanding that there is only one company that distributes these flyers and is in contravention of the litter legislation. You can call this company directly and ask them to add your address to their “do not deliver list”. If they continue to deliver,

you can call them again and they have to have the driver come and pick the package up. I was speaking to a resident this week who had registered his property as a no flyer property, they threw it on his property, he called them again and as we were speaking the van came back and the lady got out and picked it up and took it away. The Distribution Manager of The Weekly News is Janet Lucas. Her email is: jlucas@hfxnews.ca Her office is 421-5858 and her cell is 877-5519.

Another option is to write or call the advertisers in the flyer packs and ask them to be responsible and contact the distribution company and ask them not to litter. If it doesn't improve the advertiser should suggest that they will cease advertising with them. No one wants to spend their money on advertising if no one sees it and if the advertisers were aware that this is a major issue and potentially illegal, they may think twice about advertising again. Collectively, if we no longer tolerate this littering, we can make a difference.