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Info Item No. 3
Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee
December 6, 2018

TO: Chair and Members of Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee

-Original Signed-

SUBMITTED BY:

Brad Anguish, Director of Transportation and Public Works

-Original Signed-

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: October 22, 2018

SUBJECT: Air Conditioner Disposal at Household Special Waste Depot

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

On May 3, 2018 the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee passed a motion to “request a staff report on permitting portable air conditioners to be disposed of/collected at Household Hazardous Waste Depots without prior removal of the CFCs (refrigerant gases).”

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Section 60(1)(b) of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter provides that “The Council may make policies ...regulating the use of solid-waste management facilities, providing for times and conditions under which they may be used and setting charges for the use of solid-waste management facilities operated by the Municipality.”

Section 335 of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter provides that “The Council may make by-laws respecting solid waste, including, but not limited to ... (b) regulating the disposal, collection and removal of solid waste; ... (e) prescribing the materials that may or may not be deposited at a solid-waste management facility of the Municipality or in which the Municipality participates; (f) prescribing the terms and conditions under which a deposit may be made at a solid-waste management facility of the Municipality or in which the Municipality participates, including the amount and manner of payment of any fees and charges to be paid for the deposit; (g) requiring the separation of solid waste prior to collection; (h) requiring compliance with a waste resource diversion strategy; ...”

BACKGROUND

Ozone depleting substances (ODS), including chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) and Non-ozone depleting substances such as hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) are contained in domestic refrigerators, freezers, dehumidifiers and air conditioning (A/C) appliances. Provincial regulations state that refrigerants must be removed by a certified technician prior to disposal of the appliance.

Municipal Refrigerant Gas Removal Service

The municipality contracts for the removal and proper disposal of refrigerant gases on a per unit serviced basis. This service is available to residential properties eligible for municipal residential curbside collection (including single unit dwellings and multi-unit properties of up to 6 units). Residents call 311 or fill out an online service request to request the service. Approximately 2,800 requests are completed annually by a refrigeration service provider contracted by the municipality.

Once the ODS have been removed a decal is applied to the appliance indicating it's acceptable for pickup on regular garbage collection day. Appliances are diverted from landfill for scrap metal recycling. Commercial properties, tenants in apartment buildings over six units, and properties with condominium collection do not qualify for this service.

Refrigerators, freezers and air conditioners do not fall under an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program; therefore, the cost of removal and proper containment of refrigerant gas generally falls to the consumer and/or municipality.

Household Special Waste Depot and Mobile Events

The Household Special Waste (HSW) depot operation receives material from residential householders in HRM, including those who live in apartment buildings and condominiums. Batteries, paint, corrosive cleaners, gasoline and oil, aerosol cans, propane cylinders and tanks and compact fluorescent (CFL) bulbs are among the materials accepted for drop-off at the permanent site in Bayers Lake, and the mobile events that take place in local communities. Up to 18 mobile events are held each year. HSW services are provided by a contracted hazardous waste handling company. This contractor manages the receipt of materials from residents, then sorts and packages and properly disposes the waste. The contractor is paid a base operating fee and a handling fee dependent on volumes and material type.

Efficiency Nova Scotia Appliance Retirement Program

Efficiency Nova Scotia operates an Appliance Retirement program¹, which aims to reduce the number of kW hours of electricity consumed by taking older, but operational, refrigerators and freezers out of use. Owners of appliances that qualify receive a rebate of \$30. Efficiency Nova Scotia partner Appliance Recycling Centres of America (ARCA Canada Incorporated)² sets an appointment to remove the unit from the home and then captures the refrigerant gases and arranges for proper recycling of the components.

Smaller fridges, freezers and air conditioning units also qualify for a \$10 retirement rebate. These smaller appliances will only be picked up in conjunction with a removal request for a full-size fridge or freezer. ARCA maintains a warehouse in the Burnside Industrial Park and will permit the drop-off of eligible small appliances, provided customers call ahead (1-888-648-1984). On arrival, customers must fill out a form, declaring the appliance is operational, to qualify for the Efficiency Nova Scotia rebate.

Efficiency Nova Scotia and ARCA also provide a pick-up service for air conditioning units and small fridges and freezers from multi-residential properties, provided there are a minimum of three eligible units to be collected. Efficiency Nova Scotia and ARCA continue to work with property management firms in this

¹ [Efficiency Nova Scotia Appliance Retirement Program](#)

² [ARCA](#)

respect. Paperwork does need to be filled out, with the owner of the unit acknowledging it does work before any rebates can be issued. Staff reached out to ARCA who confirmed their ability to accept non-working units (i.e. those that do not qualify for a rebate) through the same call-ahead process identified above.

HRM offers bi-weekly collection of bulky items. This is the highest level of collection service provided in Nova Scotia. In other areas, Efficiency Nova Scotia is currently conducting pilot projects. Residents in the Municipality of Queens do not have regular curbside collection of bulky items but may drop them off at the municipal waste management site. Once a minimum of three eligible appliances have accumulated, Municipal staff contact ARCA to arrange collection.

DISCUSSION

Efficiency Nova Scotia program offers collection services for A/C units and other items from multi-residential properties. Solid Waste staff can educate property management companies about the program to enhance tenants' opportunity to access this program within their building. Collection would require coordination within the building but would benefit the tenants both in avoiding the cost of having the gases removed, and possibly through eligibility for a small rebate.

Mobile HSW events held in the community are typically busy with a high volume of cars. To avoid impeding traffic, cars must move through the queue and be unloaded as efficiently as possible. Adding a new, separate program could cause confusion, especially where this is additional paperwork to be filled out for the Efficiency Nova Scotia rebate program. There is already collection and drop off program options available for management of portable A/C units. It is not necessary to permit drop-off of these appliances.

Efficiency Nova Scotia has confirmed an interest in partnering with Halifax Solid Waste to provide drop-off opportunities for residents who have appliances to 'retire' which do not currently fit under the scope for their pick-up service. The drop-offs could be offered alongside education and outreach events held at a variety of venues during special events (Waste Reduction Week, Environment Week, Earth Day, etc.). When a resident drops the appliance off they will be able to fill out the appropriate paperwork to redeem the \$10 rebate offered by the retirement program. Both organizations would benefit from this type of event with an added opportunity to educate residents on waste management and energy efficiency. It is possible this event could be held in conjunction with another SWR outreach/promotion campaign.

Residents are still able to call ARCA to arrange a drop off time at ARCA's facility in Burnside if they desire to have A/C units disposed of quicker, rather than waiting for the multi-residential property to collect more units.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Co-hosting a one-day special event in partnership with Efficiency Nova Scotia can be accomplished within the budget allocation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was conducted in drafting this report.

ATTACHMENTS

No attachments.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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