

Biweekly garbage pickup here in 2012

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The City of Ottawa is proposing a four-bag limit for residents on garbage day. (OTTAWA SUN file photo)

City council is giving Ottawa residents an extra summer of weekly garbage pickup before the service is cut in half in November 2012.

The changes to garbage collection sailed through council Wednesday on an 18-4 vote.

Councillors Stephen Blais, Allan Hubley, Bob Monette and Doug Thompson opposed the changes, which will increase green bin collection to every week, year-round.

The major policy shift never seemed in danger of being voted down.

Mayor Jim Watson supported the plan and Coun. Maria McRae, chairwoman of the environment committee, has been selling the changes to her colleagues and residents across the city.

McRae offered a last-minute reprieve by suggesting to delay the implementation five months to autumn 2012.

Council liked that idea, but an overwhelming number voted against a motion by Innes Coun. Rainer Bloess, who wanted to "soothe" the grumblers by keeping weekly trash collection in the summer months. The extra service would cost \$3 million.

"My fear is if we move this way, we're going to be undermining for three months of the year. We're going to be causing confusion," Capital Coun. David Chernushenko said.

Kitchissippi Coun. Katherine Hobbs agreed.

"What are we telling young people? That the environment only matters when it's easier to do something?" Hobbs said.

The city predicts the changes will bring \$9 million in annual savings for six years.

Watson insisted the changes have nothing to do with the controversial Orgaworld contract, which currently has taxpayers paying for organics it's not sending to the processing plant.

The extra green bin pickups are expected to send more waste to Orgaworld, but still not enough in the immediate future to fill the annual 80,000-tonne quota the city paid for.

Focus needs to be placed on extending the life of the municipal dump, Watson said.

"We can't continue to address the garbage issue by piling it into mountains of waste," he said.

The city still has to figure out what to do about potential privacy concerns surrounding people placing special bags on the curb for diaper or incontinence pad collection. Staff told councillors residents have managed fine in other cities with biweekly garbage collection.

Included in the budget will be a \$400,000 provision for education and information programs to get spread the word about the impending changes.

Barrhaven Coun. Jan Harder said it will also take all councillors to educate residents on the new trash protocol.

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