

CITY OF IQALUIT
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING #04
May 6, 2014 at 6:00 PM
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

PRESENT FROM COUNCIL

Deputy Mayor Mary Wilman
Councillor Kenneth Bell
Councillor Stephen Mansell
Councillor Terry Dobbin
Councillor Joanasie Akumalik
Councillor Simon Nattaq
Councillor Romeyn Stevenson

ABSENT

Mayor John Graham
Councillor Noah Papatsie

PRESENT FROM ADMINISTRATION

John Hussey, Chief Administrative Officer
Valerie Collin, Recorder
Keith Couture, Director, Public Works
Melodie Simard, Director, Planning and Development
Jeanie Eeseemailee, Senior Interpreter/Translator

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion PL14-15

Moved by: Councillor Stevenson
Seconded by: Councillor Dobbin

That the agenda be adopted as amended:

Add 3-(b) – Joel Fortier – Sewage Back-up Issues

Unanimously Carried

1. MINUTES

None

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None

3. DELEGATIONS

a) Janet Armstrong

Mrs. Janet Armstrong thanked the committee for giving her the opportunity to present and for addressing her previous concerns relating to old housing units in her neighborhood. She noted that the city has the Solid Waste By-law No. 341 which indicates that owners of burnt out buildings must apply within one hundred and twenty (120) days for necessary permits to restore, repair or demolish the structure.

She expressed her concern with large item collection throughout the community and noted that the garbage collection fee recently increased after Council accepted the 2014 budget; the increase was minimal but garbage collection can be costly. She believed that there was a tremendous amount of garbage in Iqaluit in excess of what many other communities have and this is partially due to the number of transients in Iqaluit; many of them leave and leave their garbage on the property rather than properly disposing of it. She wondered if Council had review the garbage collection system in Iqaluit prior to increasing the garbage collection fees.

Councillor Bell noted that Council recently adopted the new Solid Waste Management Plan which will also address the collection of large items. He did not believe that this current Council had reviewed current garbage collection practices but believed that the Solid Waste Management Plan would address all current issues that Council felt should be addressed.

Mrs. Armstrong stated that she would be interested to know if the garbage collection system has changed during the last thirty (30) years. The current system seems to be outdated and insufficient for the residents of Iqaluit, which is very obvious when looking at the number of mattresses, stoves, cars, furniture, et cetera that litter the community. She noted that the current residential garbage collection system provides two collections per week and sometimes, based on certain residents and their neighborhood, collection is done 2 days in a row. The city currently holds a large item pick up day in the summer months as part of the community clean-up; large items are not only taken out the day prior to the large item pick up, but whenever the resident feels they should be left outside and are left there for months at a time.

She stated that many other cities across Canada only have garbage collection once per week, and in fact, many of them now, collect garbage once every other week, and on the second week, they alternate between waste and recyclables.

Individuals are also limited to the amount of garbage that they can have picked up, they are charged per bag, and in some places, are fined if they exceed their limit.

Mrs. Armstrong stated that she would like Council to consider whether or not the city requires residential garbage collection two days per week; she has often seen in her neighborhood, as garbage collectors arrive, and went to collect garbage but the boxes were empty. This occurs on a regular basis and she believes, unless there is a specific reason why residential garbage collection is required twice per week that this is unnecessary and that once per week would be sufficient. Residents may be encouraged to produce less garbage if collection was only once per week which is one of the main reasons why garbage collection in many southern cities has been changed to once per week or once every two weeks.

Meanwhile, no one is collecting large items or residents do not take the responsibility of properly disposing of their large items; it is the responsibility of the residents themselves or is it the city's responsibility to collect large items. Residents currently do not dispose of their large items and if the city expects them to, they should educate the public to advise them that it is their responsibility to dispose of large items and that they cannot remain on the property for an extended period of time. The city has an unsightly land by-law that needs to be enforced to ensure that the community is clean and that garbage is disposed of as it should.

Mrs. Armstrong asked if that the city could consider changing their garbage collection system to have residential garbage picked up once per week and have a large item pick up once per month.

She also stated that vehicles, all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles have nowhere to go. How can residents dispose of these items if they are not permitted at the landfill? There are a number of derelict vehicles throughout the community but as per the city's Solid Waste Amendment By-law No. 635, adopted in 2006, the city no longer accepts these at the municipal landfill, but does have a disposal fee for disposal of these, as per Solid Waste Amendment By-law No. 709, adopted in 2010. She stated that she has asked a few people where derelict vehicles are to go and if they are permitted at the landfill, but no one knows where they are to be disposed of, and many believe that they are permitted at the landfill.

Chairperson Bell stated that derelict vehicles are permitted at the landfill but the individual must pay a disposal fee, which most individuals do not want to do.

Mrs. Armstrong stated that Solid Waste Amendment By-law No. 635, adopted in 2006, states:

Car/truck body and snowmobiles will be considered "unacceptable waste" and will not be accepted at the Municipal Landfill, Effective July 1, 2006.

She stated that unless this has been rescinded, the by-law states what it states.

Chairperson Bell noted that Council decreased the tipping fee for disposal of derelict vehicles for a short period of time in summer 2013.

Councillor Stevenson believed that the reason why the solid waste by-law was amended to reflect that derelict vehicles and snowmobiles were not permitted in 2006 was due to the lack of space in the landfill. The city then entered into a contract for removal of metal in 2010 and permitted derelict vehicles as metal was being removed from the landfill and from the community as much as possible; the city decreased the tipping fee in late fall 2013 to permit additional derelict vehicles to be removed from the city.

He fully agreed with Mrs. Armstrong and her concerns and that the city currently faces challenges with garbage collection and large item disposal. The city has been reviewing the garbage collection system by adopting a new Solid Waste Management Plan and including all aspects of it in the new plan, some of which will not be implemented immediately but in the near future.

He stated that the city is accepting derelict vehicles and the individual must pay a fee for the disposal of the vehicle. The city no longer has a contract for metal removal but is managing the landfill facility as best as they can and will address current issues with the new Solid Waste Management Plan.

He noted that Council has discussed the current garbage collection system and including recycling and reduction of waste during the last few years but did not believe that changing the current system would be a good idea as the city does not currently have an alternate site for diversion of waste; individuals are currently comfortable with the two day per week collection and until the city identifies a way to reduce waste it should remain as is.

Mrs. Armstrong noted that the city has many by-laws in place that are not regularly enforced and this needs to change; several of her concerns could be addressed by simply enforcing current city by-laws.

Councillor Mansell thanked Mrs. Armstrong for expressing her concerns and agreed that the city needed to enforce their by-laws on a regular basis and that this would address most of her concerns. He did not believe that large items left outside should be the city's responsibility and the residents should be responsible for removing these from their property.

Mrs. Armstrong agreed with Councillor Mansell and noted that the public also needs to be aware that it is their responsibility as many may be under the impression that the city will collect any garbage, at any time, small or big.

Councillor Akumalik agreed with Mrs. Armstrong that large items should also include vehicles and all-terrain vehicles and asked if her request was that the city collect garbage once per week and collect large items once per month.

Deputy Mayor Wilman explained that the city does its best to communicate with residents and keep them informed as much as possible but it does not seem to be as successful as the city would like it to be; she asked Mrs. Armstrong for suggestions as to how best communicate with the residents of Iqaluit.

Mrs. Armstrong believed that the issue was that many residents simply are not aware that they cannot leave their large items outside, on their property. She stated that she met with the Iqaluit Housing Authority and discussed the issue where residents leave their large items when moving out from one of their units; they indicated that they would work on including a clause in the rental agreement indicating that large items as well as all other waste must be removed from the property when moving out. She stated that the issue is not only with tenants of Iqaluit Housing Authority but also with private home owners which is why she believes that residents of Iqaluit are simply not aware that it is their responsibility to dispose of large items from their property.

She suggested that announcements be made on the radio, that posters be posted throughout the community, including in the newspaper, create interesting stories with pictures making residents understand that large items must be removed at the responsibility of the resident. This should be advertised all year to prevent these items from remaining on properties for an extended period of time.

Councillor Nattaq stated that the committee likes to receive suggestions and ways in which things can be improved. The city does not have the same infrastructure as southern cities have and this makes it difficult for the city to manage their solid waste. He explained that residents of Iqaluit normally just leave their large items on their properties until the spring clean-up where the city picks up large items but should be made aware that the city has a by-law in which they can enforce if one does so. Many residents do not consider the harm waste has on the environment and even smokers who simply throw their butts everywhere as opposed to properly disposing of them.

Councillor Dobbin agreed with Mrs. Armstrong that the public needed to be educated and that many residents believe that the city is responsible for picking up all large items. The city has an unsightly land by-law which clearly states that residents are responsible to ensure that their property remains clean at all times. He agreed that the end of life vehicle issue needed to be addressed as soon as possible.

b) Joel Fortier

Mr. Joel Fortier thanked the committee for giving him the opportunity to present his concern and stated that he resides at house 1682 located in Happy Valley. His sewer line has frozen or backed up five times since March 2014 and believes that it may be due to the issues the city is currently having with the utilidor system in that area.

He stated that the city currently pumps out the main sewer line in front of his house three days a day as sewage is building up along the main line and collecting in a large sewage tank.

During late fall and early winter 2013, the city hired a company to dig up the entire section north of the holding reservoir that is replacing the main line; issues with his sewage line occurred shortly after this work was completed.

Mr. Fortier stated that in early March 2014, the sewage line coming from the house to the main line froze; this was apparent because water/sewage began backing up into his bathtub. Plumbers went to the home and verified that the line was frozen and spent many hours blasting the line to thaw it. With the assistance of the plumbers, he measured the distance from the house and they were seemingly past his property line before it started flowing; the total cost for this work was two thousand seven hundred and eighty seven dollars and seventy five cents (\$2,787.75.00).

On the night of April 10, 2014, the sewage line froze again. Plumbers verified once again that the line was frozen and blasting of the line did not take as long as the first time, however, plumbers did indicate that they had to go all the way to the road before getting to the ice in the line. This was amidst relatively mild spring weather and the total cost for this work was five hundred and seventy eight dollars and eighty one cents (\$578.81).

He stated that on the night of April 19, 2014 at approximately 7:30pm, the sewer line was full once again and seemingly frozen; water began to back up into the bathtub. The city's truck arrived at approximately 9:00pm to do their routine final pump out for the night and once they began pumping out, the line was suddenly cleared up. It became clear that it was the backup sewer main line that was causing his issues and his line to freeze well beneath the ground.

On April 21, 2014, Easter Monday, the sewer line froze again. The city workers pumped out the sewer at approximately 8:20am until 8:50am, seemingly later than the 7:00am schedule they normally follow; this time, the line did not clear. He contacted the plumbers once again to clear his line; they verified that the line was frozen and agreed that this was not normal. The bill for this work has been sent in the mail and has yet to be received.

On May 5, 2014 at approximately 1:00pm, sewer water began to backup into the bathtub once again as they were completing house chores. He then contacted the city, Mr. Pat Wolfe, who agreed to come to their home and inspect the sewer reservoirs. There was sewer water in the reservoir near his home and at approximately 3:00pm, the city sewer workers pumped out that location. Pumping out failed to resolve his issue and he once again contacted Mr. Pat Wolfe to provide him with an update. He asked if the city could use one of their sewer blasters to thaw his line instead of him contacting plumbers and paying for the service; Mr. Wolfe arrived on site with two other workers and successfully thawed his line. Once again, it was apparent that the frozen section was where his sewer line meets the main sewer line.

Mr. Fortier believed that the freezing of his pipes he had encountered was due to the main line being full and backed up. Standing water will freeze if in below zero temperatures especially underground with no sunlight. The Public Works Department has dismissed this issue in the past mentioning that since the main line is flowing, it must not be the city's issue. He contends that the city's line may not freeze as rapidly as his line since the city's lines have much larger diameters than his four inch segment connecting to the main. He asked that the committee keep in mind that his issues with freezing pipes have occurred when they were using plenty of hot water, washing dishes, doing laundry, et cetera.

He stated that he would like to ask if the city is planning to address the sewer line near his house and if there are planned retrofits to the sewer line in the near future. Neighbors have indicated that sewer lines in the area were to be worked on prior to the roads being paved a number of years ago.

He stated that it is clear that the city should be pumping out more often or for a longer period of time than what they currently are; according to conversations he had with some public works staff members, the sewer reservoir may not be completely cleared every time the trucks do their pump outs; perhaps more than three pump outs per day is required.

Mr. Fortier stated that if the issue persists, he would strongly be interested in pursuing the option of installing a sewage tank on his house until the issue is addressed. This way, he would no longer be required to deal with backups in his home but would require the city to service his sewage tank on a daily basis as other homes throughout the city, including house 1692.

Chairperson Bell noted that house 1692 recently installed a sewage tank after making the request and being given permission by Mayor Graham until such time where the system issues are addressed. He believed that if the issues with Mr. Fortier's sewer lines were due to the city's system that this would need to be addressed as soon as possible.

Councillor Mansell asked if there is a correlation between the issues with house 1692 and Mr. Fortier's house.

Chairperson Bell believed that the issues are different; house 1692 is experiencing issues as they are at a lower elevation than all other houses in the area and once the reservoir tank is full, it backs up into his lines and into his home. The service has been disconnected from his home until the issue is addressed.

Councillor Nattaq suggested that the expenses incurred by Mr. Fortier for the freezing of his pipes be reimbursed by the city and that the city complete an emergency repair to the sewer line or install a heat trace on the sewer line to prevent future freezing.

Chairperson Bell suggested that additional pump outs be completed in the area to avoid further issues until the sewer line is completely fixed.

Deputy Mayor Wilman asked if the committee could have further discussions with staff to identify what the issue is and how it can be best addressed.

Councillor Akumalik asked if Mr. Fortier was aware of any issues relating to the sewer line prior to purchasing the home.

Mr. Fortier stated that he was aware that there had been issues a few years ago but that they were different from those he experienced recently; the communication with the previous owner has been difficult due to his new location as well as receiving a history on the property.

Councillor Akumalik agreed that additional pump outs should be completed until the issue has been fully addressed and asked if that would be acceptable to Mr. Fortier.

Mr. Fortier confirmed that additional pump outs would be acceptable as long as they prevent future issues with his pipes.

4. DEFERRED BUSINESS AND TABLED ITEMS

None

5. NEW BUSINESS

None

6. IN CAMERA SESSION

(1) In Camera was to be discussed:

- Legal – Update: Rocks and Posts

Motion PL14-16

Moved by: Councillor Mansell
Seconded by: Councillor Stevenson

Committee goes In Camera at 7:10pm
Unanimously Carried

Motion PL14-17

Moved by: Councillor Akumalik
Seconded by: Councillor Stevenson

Committee returns to Regular Session at 7:55pm
Unanimously Carried

Motion PL14-18

Moved by: Councillor Stevenson
Seconded by: Councillor Mansell

Committee recommends adopting the following criteria to be used by the Department of Public Works for the removal of wooden posts/boulders throughout the community:

Any post or rock can be removed by the direction of the Director of Public Works if it:

1. Impedes the normal flow of traffic
2. Are in excess of what is necessary to delineate between road and sidewalk
3. Impedes operations of snow clearing and/or roadway maintenance

In spite of meeting these criteria, if any post or rock is deemed necessary to maintain pedestrian or road safety, then it must be left or replaced with another form of sidewalk separation.

Unanimously Carried

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion PL14-19

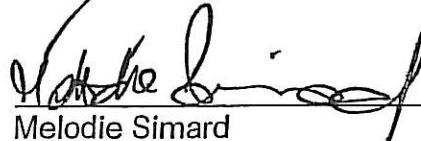
Moved by: Councillor Stevenson
Seconded by: Councillor Dobbin

Committee adjourns at 8:00pm.

Unanimously Carried




Councillor Kenneth Bell
Chairperson


Melodie Simard
Director, Planning and Development

Approved by City Council on the 28 day of October, 2014, AD.