

Waste Diversion Officer Report:

October 1st, 2020 – January 1, 2021



Waste Diversion Officer Update

October 1 – Jan. 1, 2021

HHW

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) has been busy leading into the New Year. We completed our roaming HHW in the Town of Lockeport on October 3rd, 2020. There was a slight decrease in the amounts received this year, versus last year, however many of the residents who brought items for disposal mentioned that they had accessed the service the previous year. We had a full trailer/truck load by the end of the day, it was secured in our Public Works building the same day and this writer itemized and lab-packed for 2-3 days following.

We had Terrapure and Recollect shipments go out on October 1st, to prepare for the Lockeport HHW and since October 1st we have filled 21 barrels of chemicals, 5 fluorescent light boxes (300 lights) and 2 pallets full of 5-gallon pails that will be sent out in early January. This is a significant increase we have received in comparison to the same reporting period last year. It was noted on the last WDO report that we had an increase, however given it was Spring and Summer, paired with Covid-19, this fall/winter increase is really more so indicative of an overall increase of use by our residents.

I have had an appetite for Saturday HHW, with many of the users who attended on Saturday's during the summer asking if this will be ongoing, or if it were possible to do on a regular basis. As mentioned in previous reports, the list of items as to what must go to HHW, versus curbside will continue to grow as items find new recycling streams. One big increase we have received is with regards to waste oil, oil filters, oil rags and empty oil containers, we have almost doubled our accepted rate of used oil since UOMA came into effect this time last year.

In this reporting period I have been able to send out 10 battery boxes that were packed during the last reporting period. This was delayed due to Covid-19 and has since resumed. We have a considerable backlog of batteries that need to be packed and sent out. We had 6 scheduled HHW days in this reporting period, I spent an additional 4 working days to assure lab-packing was done within the timelines indicated in our permit with the Department of Environment.

Next reporting period I will have completed the Department of Environment Annual report and will share the metrics on what we accepted annually with a brief comparison of last years totals.

RMRF

Regional Materials Recovery Facility has had a host of challenges this last reporting period. In mid-late September Nicole Townsend was hired for a casual position vacancy to assist us with backfilling shifts, but in turn covered for the RMRF manager for this entire reporting period due

to a medical leave of absence. Nicole has fit into the role seamlessly as she is familiar with most of the customers and has gained a proficient understanding of item placement, paired with establishing boundaries to assure that customers are accountable to the policies in a positive educational way. With the temporary departure of our RMRF manager this writer has been providing coverage when necessary and worked 3 shifts during this reporting period.

One of the examples of boundary setting we have had within this reporting period would be with regards to scavenging. Since Covid-19 restrictions loosened and allowed for Scavenging to resume on Thursday's we have had a notable increase in customers utilizing the service. We typically had 5-7 attend the site, we now have a line up at the gate most Thursday mornings and our numbers have doubled to 10-15 regular users every Thursday. We provided printed copies of the RMRF Disposal policy which includes scavenging rules, for those who wanted to see the policy and assured that Nicole was communicating to the scavengers the policy as they frequented the site.

The culture of scavenging had changed from where a scavenger was coming into the site to find a missing piece to a barbeque to a customer spending upwards of 2-3 hours picking through piles and sometimes wanting to take away over a 1000lbs. of metal (our only source of revenue). Staff are responsible to ensure this does not happen and are supported by the details of the policy. Nicole has reported that in November when our metal was being processed by Ross and Sons, there were times when scavengers would prevent the crew from working because they wanted something in the pile that was to be processed. The crew manager spoke with this writer regarding this concern as a safety issue. We will not permit scavenging during metal processing going forward for this reason.

We have continued to have concerns with our scale during this reporting period. Weigh-Tronix has been communicative and responsive to our site needs to date. We have had them attend the site 4 times from October to January for various concerns. We were getting fluctuations in our weights that were not allowing us to zero the scale. The scale allows for a certain amount of "zero-ing" discrepancy, but once it has reached its threshold it will no longer allow the operator to zero, meaning the scale will only read in the minus, or plus, but without any accuracy. The first time we had an operator in, our cell box was completely full of water. The cell box was made with a PVC type plastic and was original with the purchase of the scale. It was cracking and leaking at the seam so the cell boxes were replaced with stainless steel boxes that will be compatible with a new scale in the future.

The next issue was a load cell issue. We had to replace a front-end load cell on November 26th, the realization was made that the load cells were tied together. This was a common fix that was used in the past; however, it does not meet current regulation. We were able to keep 1 existing load cell of the 2. The additional costing really comes in with the need to do a calibration after the replacement of a load cell as the costing is similar with our annual calibration. This writer attended the site on the 26th to supervise the work, as well as to assure a proper assessment was completed to determine the life expectancy of the scale. When the

deck port was removed it revealed the degradation of the steel deck and there were visible holes in the steel that was ¼ inch when the scale would have been purchased second hand approximately 15 years ago.

In the first week of December, we had experienced the weight fluctuations again and it was determined that our indicator was not working correctly. The indicator relays the weight from the scale cells to the screen to assure accurate weight to determine billing. We were doing estimate weights for 2 days until Weigh-Tronix was able to bring us a “loaner” indicator while they diagnosed the issues with the site indicator. After they contacted the manufacturer it was determined that the indicator was no longer supported by their team as it was outdated. We are in the process of purchasing a new indicator for the site that will be compatible with a new scale to assure we do not take on any additional costs with the purchase of a new scale in the future.

With the additional costing to keep us operational, paired with our RMRF manager on leave we decided that it would be best to wait for the technological upgrades until Post-April to assure that all staff will be trained properly as well as ease budgetary concern until the new fiscal. Then starting April, we can start tracking our operations digitally for easy and organized access.

Education, Solid Waste Removal & Enforcement

In this reporting period I have fielded 347 calls and responded to 47 Facebook queries in this reporting period. The calls range from complaints of rejected waste, neighbor concerns with relation to curbside waste, green cart deliveries, or item placement. Each phone call/query is an opportunity for education with relation to solid waste.

I attended 14 residences within this reporting period, all of which were related to materials placed for curbside pickup that was not permitted. I provide the collection guide, my business card, as well as an information sheet that identifies items as well as where the items are accepted with addresses and contact information.

Another opportunity for education is green cart deliveries and red bag deliveries. I completed 23 green cart deliveries; Andrew and Dan completed 2 green cart deliveries in this reporting period. Typically, the deliveries allow an opportunity for residents to ask any waste related questions that come to mind. One example from this reporting period for education was when delivering a green cart, the neighboring property was being “cleared out” as the owner had recently passed away. It provided a great opportunity to assist with item placement to assist with an already overwhelming task for the resident.

This writer and Angela Taylor with R-6 went to 7 businesses in the Town of Lockeport and the Town of Shelburne on October 22nd to remind business owners that on October 30th, 2020 as planned by the Provincial Government that the plastic bag ban will be in effect. We attended

the schools in Lockport as well as Shelburne to do waste audits in their external garbage bins. They utilize private waste pickup as opposed to our curbside waste pickup; therefore, they do not receive rejections for non-compliance for the solid waste bylaws. With that, this year has posed challenges as we are not allowed entry to the school due to Covid-19 protocol. We have identified concerns with 1 school in-particular and will be reaching out to see if we can assist with Custodian education through the form of an educational video pertaining to sorting. In contrast we have another school that is sorting properly and utilizing all 3 stream of waste and continuing to do education with their students despite the isolation that has been required with Covid response.

There was also a presentation completed with the Continuing Care students at NSCC on December 11th, by Angela Tayler with R-6 to speak to bio-medical waste and the importance of assuring that it does not go into the regular curbside waste streams.

The Enforcement report that is forwarded to R-6 and Divert NS for our enforcement funding was completed and submitted on October 20, 2020 that covers the reporting period of April 1st-September 30th, 2020.

We had 147 curbside rejections from April-September 2020. This was up from 58 in the same reporting period from 2019. The increase can be attributed to closer inspection of black bags to assure the black bag does not continue to be a “catch all” bag to avoid sorting. This also contributed to the higher call-volume this writer received in the last reporting period.

The calls I received in the 2019 report relating to rejected bags was 32, which increased to 107 in the 2020 reporting period. The increase in contact is a positive statistic as it reflects that residents are reaching out to find out why a bag was rejected to assure they do it correctly the next time.

Changes in Services

Plastic bag ban on October 30th, 2020. *See education portion of this report for more information.*

UPCOMING:

1. Freon Removal “hands on” training to be able to provide freon removal for our residents.
2. Solid Waste bylaw review.
3. Budget review.
4. Continued education and conflict resolution provided throughout the Shared Services area.
5. Data entry and tracking systems for all relevant programs.

6. Xmas tree collection.