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Sidewalk cafes, waste tackled by Business Improvement Area

By Peter Richardson

The Shelburne Business Improvement Area hosted a presentation from Dufferin County's Manager of Waste Services, Melissa Kovacs Reid, at the BIA's recent meeting.

Melissa outlined the County waste and recycling programmes for members and took suggestions as to how it could all be improved in the eyes of the business community.

One of the County initiatives to help inform and assist the residents in understanding what goes where and how, is a new, comprehensive app, the Dufferin Waste App.

Ms. Kovacs Reid explained that, with the app, everything you want to know about waste and recycling was now at your fingertips. She also presented the new Waste Collection Guide, for 2017/2018. The guide hosts a wealth of features, including a collection calendar and a handy illustrated guide as to what is waste and what is recyclable in Dufferin.

The guide can easily be attached to a cupboard or refrigerator door, for handy reference on collection day.

In general, the County is doing well with its programmes, though she pointed out that there was room for improvement, especially in the areas of glass, electronics and hazardous wastes. The proposed goal from the County, is to see a 60 per cent diversion rate from landfills to recycling within a few years.

One area of note was the matter of textiles.

There are numerous companies that purchase textiles for non-clothing related uses. They purchase the cloth by the pound and then process it into everything from rags to compost. One member suggested that perhaps a bag could be designed for rags, just as is now available for batteries and people could then put them out for collection on specific days during the year.

Suggestions from the floor included the use of blue bags instead of open containers.

Shelburne is located in a very windy area of Ontario and consequently blue box contents are often scattered about by the wind. Council in Mono has seen a similar suggestion, for the County to move to boxes or bins with lids so the problem is certainly more widespread than just Shelburne.

Other comments from the members suggested more public information and awareness campaigns, more hazardous waste collection days and possible small generator exemptions for small businesses. Currently, hazardous wastes from businesses must be taken to either Toronto or Barrie for disposal.

The Farmers Market, which has been a huge success, is once again being held and already there are 24 vendors signed up, with only a couple more spaces available for this year. The Market wants to retain an emphasis on farmers and so a majority of spaces are allocated for that purpose.

A new marketing proposal for the market would see three local chefs being invited to prepare a meal, with produce available at the venue. The meals could be prepared in the United Church's kitchen and then served at the Market.

Finally, Robert Costelloe of Fiddleheads Pub on Main Street came to ask the BIA for an endorsement for the concept of having street furniture in Shelburne. The chair clarified that this was an issue for the Town, rather than the BIA and asked for a formal

presentation before they would consider an endorsement.

Robert's proposal would leave a six foot wide avenue for pedestrian traffic and would allow the rest of the space to be used for chairs or benches or even a Boulevard Cafe. It was then suggested that he spearhead a sub-committee to advocate for such cafes.

He noted that everyone that he has approached, so far, has been in favour of the idea, including Steve Wever, the Town planner, the police, fire and health departments.

Naturally, those approvals were provided the idea met with all applicable regulations and Mr. Wever pointed out that although he agreed with the concept, his role would be governed by the Town, for whom he works, as any further involvement by his office could potentially become a conflict of interest.

Eina Lils Kotwan, owner of Jelly Craft Bakery Cafe said that since there were many concerns regarding downtown parking at present she felt that these needed to be addressed prior to any discussion regarding boulevard cafes.

In the end, the executive did endorse the concept, thus allowing Robert to utilize this as something with which to promote the idea.