

Subject:

Date: Sat, 3 Jan 2004 08:17:32 -0800

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A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST - GARDEN WASTE.

District Council has now received a report from the Manger - Waste Reduction on YARD TRIMMINGS COLLECTION PROGRAM - COMPOSTABLE/DEGRADABLE PLASTIC BAGS.

The issue was of some controversy to the extent that a municipal controversy in the District is possible. The issue was plastic bags versus paper bags for yard trimmings.

The report was issued on November 24, 2003 and was received by Council on December 19 - speed is clearly not a District forte.

In the report the Waste Reduction manager insists, as he did when the issue was discussed in Council, that North Shore municipalities are providing leadership by eliminating plastic bags. In a North Shore telephone survey the report continues, 83% of the residents polled, either strongly or somewhat strongly agreed that, the elimination of plastic bags was a good decision. Take note of the word AGREED for this connotes that the survey questions were biased. It is an old trick by people who do surveys. It is a suggestive question and will result in a biased answer.

Because of the decrease in the tonnages, the report continues, the yard trimming tipping fee was lowered from \$ 50.00 per tonne to \$ 40.00 per tonne for 2003.

"A pilot project was conducted to assess the suitability of compostable/degradable clear plastic bags". "The plastic bags did not degrade completely after four months (why four) and could not be effectively used as top soil. Based on pilot results FRSF would reinstate debagging fees resulting in an increase in tipping fees" it states.

What was not in the report is the additional cost to the residents for paper bags since they are more expensive. Also left out was that since paper bags are not transparent, many people will put not only yard trimmings into the bags but also rocks and other garden debris. Also, YARD TRIMMINGS, UNLIKE HOUSEHOLD WASTE, IN MANY CASES IS TREATED DIFFERENTLY SINCE COLLECTION OF YARD TRIMMINGS IN MOST CASES HAS A DIFFERENT TIME ELEMENT ATTACHED TO IT.

The final gem in the report is the statement that since bags are not acceptable (who decided?) there is no need to consider other issues to be addressed before the municipalities could consider accepting paper bags in their curbside yard trimmings collection program.

This is a curious statement IF NOT PRESUMPTUOUS. I would have thought that after a staff report was done it should come back to for Council to decide. But the Manager of Waste Reduction apparently decided what Council wanted to do next. A most curious situation.

It may well be that Council following a debate will decide to follow the advice of the manager of "WASTE REDUCTION" but I think this decision should be made by Council and I will make a motion to that effect.

