

King votes to support N6 waste contract

By Mark Pavilons

Despite some claims of secrecy and a lack of available data, King councillors voted to support a joint, multi-million-dollar contract for waste services in York's Northern 6.

Councillors voted to support staff recommendations for the contract, after a lively debate and closed-session discussion.

Councillors went along with their N6 neighbours and voted to extend the contract to Green for Life (GFL) over eight years. The new contract will cost the municipalities roughly \$10.3 million per year.

The current contract expires Aug. 31, 2017 and N6 staff prepared the RFP and reviewed the three bids. The evaluation process weighed both cost and technical expertise and customer service.

In his report, Andrzej Drzewiecki, public works director, noted garbage and recycling collection is vital for every household and there is a risk when changing service providers. With GFL, there will be virtually no transition period.

Newmarket council suggested in order to save money they implement a two-bag limit for garbage, collected every two weeks.

In conjunction with the contract, the N6 will share an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to share resources and costs.

Drzewiecki noted King's costs will rise roughly \$250,000 per year, above the budgeted amounts, starting in 2018. The current contract was set in 2007 and industry pricing has increased significantly over the years. The cost escalation, he said, is largely driven by increases in the cost per tonne.

Residents spoke out against the move, and awarding the contract to GFL without more definitive ranking data. None was contained in the report.

Anthony Ferritto, a 30-year resident, noted this is a huge contract and residents should receive the best level of service.

Quinn Moyre said there aren't enough facts contained in the staff report in order for councillors to make an informed decision. He wanted to see the detailed evaluation scores of all bidders. It's not always about the bottom line, he said.

Paul Morassutti said council was making this decision in the dark, adding GFL's track record is poor. He was shocked to see GFL given another contract.

Councillor Cleve Mortelliti noted the residents had some valid points, and he asked why this valuable information was lacking.

There was some confidential information contained in the bidding documents and evaluation, but Drzewiecki said each municipality did their own thorough review.

Councillor Linda Pabst noted service in her ward has been terrible.

Councillor David Boyd wanted to know what King's share of the total would be and Drzewiecki estimated it at roughly 9%.

King CAO Susan Plamondon helped shed some light on the issue, noting the RFP was deliberately structured to weigh customer service and technical prowess. There was a consensus following this very rigorous process. She noted waste contracts are typically long-term, because the contract is both labour and equipment intensive.

Negotiating as a collective through the N6 has saved municipalities millions.

Councillors still wanted to see the numbers and the scores, so they went into closed session and reviewed the material.

When they emerged, they voted in favour of the contract.