



Media Release

June 21, 2019

Notice- Clarification Regarding Single-Use Plastics

At the Council meeting on June 3rd, 2019 a Notice of Motion was put forward by Deputy Mayor Odette Bartnicki and approved unanimously by Council. Since the meeting, there has been a lot of discussion and inquiries received by members of Council and staff regarding clarification and further information related to the motion regarding single-use plastics.

The motion unanimously approved by Council at the June 3rd, 2019 meeting consisted of the following three parts:

1. Direct staff to promote a voluntary ban on the use of single-use plastic bags, plastic straws and stir sticks effective July 1st, 2019; including the promotion of the voluntary ban through a coordinated media campaign that states and includes the following text:

“Council supports the protection of the environment of the Town of The Blue Mountains through the reduction and future elimination of single-use plastic bags, straws, stir sticks and water bottles, and encourages all businesses, community members and visitors to avoid the use of these products whenever possible. Council recognizes and appreciates the efforts of all stakeholders towards measures that support the sustainability of the natural environment in the Town of The Blue Mountains.”

2. The referral to the Sustainability Committee for consideration and recommendation to Council by August 26th, 2019 regarding four specific actions (as outlined in question #3 below) that the Town could take by December 2019 regarding single-use plastics in Town-owned facilities, which would assist with the reduction of single-use plastics within the community.
3. The direction to staff to work with the Sustainability Committee and all stakeholders through a public consultation process to develop a plan for inclusion in the 2020 budget to reduce and/or eliminate single-use plastics by July 2020.

Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

To help provide clarification, the following FAQ's and answers have been provided:

Question 1: Why was this Notice of Motion brought forward?

The Notice of Motion was brought forward by Deputy Mayor Odette Bartnicki to address the issue of single-use plastics which is of particular significance in the Town of The Blue Mountains as a major tourism destination.

Other municipalities and cities across Canada, including tourist destinations such as Bayfield, Ontario, Vancouver, BC and world-class resorts such as Whistler Blackcomb have already started to consider this issue.

Council has referred any further consideration of single-use plastics to the Sustainability Committee.

Question #2: What is a voluntary ban?

A voluntary ban is a request from the Town to all stakeholders including the business community, residents and visitors to consider opportunities for the reduction of single-use plastic wherever possible. This resolution does not mean that the Town is prescriptively banning the use of single-use plastics. In addition, this statement does not require local businesses to eliminate single-use plastics from their operations, however it encourages local businesses to continue their commitment to sustainable environmental initiatives.

Question #3: What has the Town asked the Sustainability Committee to do?

The Sustainability Committee is an advisory committee of Council with a mandate to support sustainability and further sustainable initiatives on a community and regional level.

The motion passed by Council gave direction to the Sustainability Committee regarding two specific items.

1) Report back by August 26th, 2019 to Council with recommendations on the following items:

- *Phasing out the sale of bottled water and the use of single-use plastic cups, straws and stir sticks at all Town-owned facilities and events by December 2019 in order to model good environmental practices;*
- *Developing a three-year plan to increase the number of water bottle re-filling stations on Town-owned properties, to be included in the 2020, 2021 and 2022 budget cycles;*
- *Developing recognition/reward signage (i.e. “We’ve gone green for a Blue future” or similar) for business operators who model good environmental practices by not supplying single-use shopping bags, water bottles, straws and stir sticks;*
- *Investigating the development and costs of a Town of Blue Mountains reusable bag-for-life or fabric bag options with appropriate logo for possible purchase by retailers at cost, and to be used for various promotional events; by the Town;*

2) That staff work with the Sustainability Committee and all stakeholders, including the business community, residents and visitors through a public consultation process to develop a plan for inclusion in the 2020 Budget to reduce and/or eliminate single use plastics effective July 1st, 2020.

Question #4: What does the following sentence within the motion mean?

“That Council directs staff to work with the Sustainability Committee and all stakeholders through a public consultation process, to develop a plan for inclusion in the 2020 Budget to reduce and/or eliminate single use plastics effective July 1st, 2020”

This means that the Sustainability Committee and staff are directed to engage with stakeholders including the business community, residents and visitors to receive feedback and develop a plan that will be included within the 2020 budget with the target of reducing and/or eliminate the use of single-use plastics, with initial implementation of the plan effective July 1st, 2020.

The target date of July 1st, 2020 does not indicate that all efforts to reduce and/or eliminate single-use plastics will be in effect at that time. The plan will be implemented as of that date, but individual actions will be phased in as determined through stakeholder consultation.

Question #5: How will this plan be coordinated with other levels of government?

Since the June 3rd, 2019 Council meeting, there have been announcements by both the Provincial and Federal Governments regarding a reduction and/or ban of single-use plastics.

Through the government consultation process, Council will work to ensure that The Town of the Blue Mountains policies can be coordinated with the plans put forward by other levels of government, and that maximum use can be made of funding opportunities which may arise.

Question #6: How can I be involved going forward?

The Town will engage in a public media program that encourages all residents and taxpayers to reduce their use of single-use plastics wherever they can. The Town encourages all residents and taxpayers to participate in the consultation and planning to be completed.

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