

**Regulating Gas Powered Small Engine Equipment
Discussion with Lawn and Property Maintenance Companies
Tuesday, November 24, 2009
9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Location: Leaside Memorial Community Gardens – Banquet Hall
1073 Millwood Road**

SUMMARY NOTES

Introduction/Background

Lawson Oates, Director of the Toronto Environment Office, invites residents and members of the landscaping community to share their thoughts on potential measures, including regulatory options, to help reduce the harmful greenhouse gas emissions and smog-causing pollutants caused by small engine equipment, i.e. leaf blowers, chainsaws, lawnmowers, trimmers and concrete saws.

On November 24, 2009 a discussion with Lawn and Property Maintenance Companies was held. The agenda included:

- Presentation by Mike Mulqueen, Sr. Environmental Planner, Toronto Environment Office
- Questions & Answers Period
- Facilitated Small Group Discussions

Welcoming Remarks

Cheryl Dow, Public Consultation Unit welcomed participants to the discussion with lawn and property maintenance companies and introduced the presenter Mike Mulqueen, Toronto Environment Office.

Presentation

Mike Mulqueen, Toronto Environment Office delivered a presentation on the Small Engine Equipment Greening Strategy. The PowerPoint presentation is available on the City's Get Involved website at <http://www.toronto.ca/involved/projects/2strokes/index.htm>

Question and Answer Period

Q: *For the Mow Down Pollution initiative, why not have a local retailer instead of domestic retailer to try and keep the revenues generated from recycling these mowers in our country rather than exporting the retail sales down south?*

A: We wanted to get a pilot in place for the fall. The Clean Air Foundation had already had those relationships with Home Depot and the manufactures so it was an easy fit to get some experience in that area. Going forward next year we are in discussions with Canadian retailers to see what they are able to offer.

Q: *Why is the city planning on holding the next round of stakeholder meetings in January and February? Why not hold them in March or April when you may get a better turnout?*

A: We want to expose ourselves to a broad range of opinions and experience that we can draw from which is why we are providing different opportunities to get involved. It is also important that we make progress on this issue.

Q: *What were the comments from the discussion with Toronto Residents?*

A: We received some very interesting feedback and some options we hadn't considered. Already we have new ideas about how to approach this topic. Residents who attended the discussion with Toronto residents were very prepared, they have done a lot of work in this area and they came with concrete proposals about what to do. We are having consultations to see if these ideas can actually be implemented.

Suggestion: *Instead of calling it Small Engine Equipment, call it Outdoor Power Equipment.*

Comment: *A lot of manufactures are creating more advanced, cleaner equipment and they have been for the last number of years.*

Q: *Could you elaborate more on Cut It Out Toronto program?*

A: The biggest challenge with Cut it Out Toronto was that we went to Council in May and we got approval to get partnership and immediately we had a City strike so we lost about two months and in those two months we lost the opportunity to get really good incentives from the manufactures. This is the major thing that will be changed going forward. This year as an incentive, participants received a \$10 coupon from Home Depot and participants were entered in the competition to win a free electric blower and mower from Black and Decker or a recharge offer solar powered ride on mower. I didn't get the impression that the incentives were driving the participation, where as in the Mow Down Pollution Home Depot event, participants received a coupon book with \$100 off towards a variety of equipment, I got the impression that the incentives really drove participation in that program to a greater extent. Next year because we will start off earlier, we will have an opportunity to get a better incentives package together for the Cut it Out Toronto program. A lot of people I talked to were participating just because they were happy to get rid of the old equipment. The City is dealing with people who have different motivations to participate in such a program. I think we do need to have strong incentives, so that people who may otherwise be inclined to dispose of their equipment could be convinced to dispose of it and buy something cleaner.

Q: *Where did people drop off equipment?*

A: It was at Councillor Environment Days. We had a total of 15 events plus one event at a farmer's market. It was spread fairly equally around the City. There was varying degrees of participation. Communication and public education is important for creating awareness and increasing participation.

Q: *What incentive was there for people to drop off the equipment?*

A: Yes. They got a coupon and there was an opportunity for public engagement at the community environment days. People could attend the event, hear about the incentive and bring their equipment back later in the day. The results we had were quite encouraging to get that much equipment out of use in such a short period of time.

Q: *Will the City of Toronto be having their annual equipment sale? The City should be the first to change.*

A: No. One of the directions was to change the auctioning process. It is important that if we are going to show leadership in this area that we are not allowing someone else to buy our old polluting equipment. The City partners with the automotive recyclers and we have just gone through a process to purchase our first batch of equipment that has been manufactured to 2010 standards, it will be delivered shortly and they will come by and pick up the old equipment.

Comment: *Landscape Ontario has 2,400 companies that belong to the association. In terms of profiling, you call it the lawn care strategy, it is really grounds maintenance. Lawn care is a specific sector that basically takes care of fertilizing just the turf itself, but this is a broader group, it is grounds maintenance, it includes lawncare. You need to realize that the endpoint you (the City) have is our endpoint as well. So if you look at trying to reduce emissions, I bet every person around this table has the same input. When you sense pushback it is not because of the end point, it is because what are the strategies and techniques to get to that endpoint that's going to affect them from an economic perspective. I think our best goal today is to come up with really good concrete prioritize methods of actually working together to reduce emissions. That is the common ground around this table. We need to be asking a broader question. The person here who said call it outdoor power equipment, I think this is a better way of looking at this because now you are looking at all the emissions produced by industry. I also like that you (the City) are looking at this issue internally too. Because if you want to change things you need to change the inside first and then provide leadership which is fabulous.*

Q: *Since you have dealt with this internally with your parks systems and your public works, what are those items that you have identified internally that can help us in the private sector?*

A: Two items that stand out are 1. Landscaping techniques including looking at naturalizing areas, creating turf areas to horticultural gardens, using some manual tools, and looking at an integrated pest management approach. Second item is around the use of premium fuel. Premium fuel it is driven by budget so very few people are using premium fuel in equipment which greatly increases emissions.

The Toronto Environment Office looked at the full range of equipment; there are about 22 different types of equipment (e.g. concrete saws, augurs, etc.) The consultant essentially created a comparison matrix for each piece of equipment, they consulted with City staff to understand how they use the equipment and their operational needs and they compared that to what is available on the market as a replacement in terms of fuel efficiency, equipment, ergonomic, safety, cost, etc. For each piece of equipment they recommended a technological alternative. In some cases it was a four stoke engine, in some cases stratified charge, etc. For each type of equipment they determined what is the best alternative moving forward so that is what has informed the replacement strategy. The other piece of information was identifying what is most polluting which are the mowers, trimmers and pruning chainsaws. Those pieces have the most accelerated replacement because we use them most often.

Comment: Obviously the City has done their homework. We would like for the City to share that information with us so that we can start doing the same thing. We (Landscape Ontario) had an emissions committee, we also have an environment committee and we have been looking at this stuff too and we can start sharing together. If a report has been done for you, share it. Lets get some seminars out there and change the way we do things through education.

Comment: I am disappointed in the City's lawn care strategy. There strategy is to come along mow or trim the grass down. Every where I go in the City the boulevards are rampant with weeds and they are not cut until they are knee high and then they are left there, and if that is their solution to use less power equipment, I don't think that is a good solution I don't think it looks very nice. And they don't sweep it up because it takes too long and it is not cost effective.

Comment: There is a real divergence in opinion happening around what the standards for the maintenance of public spaces should be. This is a balance that needs to be worked out at a local level and one of the recommendations that the Toronto Environment Office brought forward was for Parks, Forestry and Recreation to work with local Councillors to develop local landscaping standards.

Comment The Toronto Environment Office's policy goal is to reduce emissions and we are trying to figure out the best way to do this.

Comment: Education is very important. We all have the same goal. Need to pass information along the chain so that everyone has the facts.

Comment: A lot of the City's replacement equipment is two stoke engines, they may be two stoke engines with a built in catalytic converter but it is still the basic two stoke technology, particularly for chain saws because they have to be operated overhead. If the City implemented a ban on two stoke engines that would mean all the equipment that we are purchasing we could not use ourselves. So it does not seem realistic at this point that we would go in that direction, it is still possible that we would ban certain types of equipment, that is still part of the discussion that is what we are here to explore.

Comment: A ban on leaf blowers would not work. Customers are paying for their lawn to be manicured.

Comment: Lyne Kyle, Communications is interested in knowing how she can reach the stakeholders who would be interested in discussing regulating gas powered small engine equipment. Lyne requested that participants let her know where they go for information (e.g. websites, publications, sessions, seminars) so that stakeholders including meeting participants are aware of what is happening with the City once we get closer to having a strategy.