

**Discussion with Toronto Residents  
Re: Regulating Small Engine Lawn and Garden Equipment in Toronto**

**Monday, February 8, 2010**

**6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

**Location: Etobicoke Civic Centre, 399 The West Mall, Meeting Room 1**

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**SUMMARY NOTES**

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**Introduction/Background**

Lawson Oates, Director of the Toronto Environment Office, invites Toronto 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 February 8, 2010 a discussion with Toronto Residents 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 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**

***Question:** I see a failure in programs when it comes to taking in air conditioner units and giving credits to people. I've seen people drop by the counter to pick up coupons without dropping off equipment. There is a failure in these programs in that these machines are not being destroyed on site in front of the homeowner who brings the machine in. They either need to be crushed or a nail needs to be driven through the piston. A situation could occur where a machine could potentially come into the store, go out the back door and go out back onto the streets.*

**Answer:** As part of the Cut it Out program we will have a partnership and legal agreement with the Ontario Automotive Recycling Industry. The Ontario Automotive Recycling Industry will come and there are very specific terms on how they disassemble the equipment, what they do with the gasoline, what metals they sell, etc. It is a legally enforceable contract that we (the City) have with them where we specify the terms on which it is recycled. It is a bit of a businesses opportunity for them as they make a small amount of money from this, so it is actually a good fit

where they pick up the equipment from the City, but the City gets to dictate the terms on which they dispose of it. City staff have been working with Solid Waste and the automotive recycling industry to set those terms.

For the Cut it Out pilot program, we partnered with the Clean Air Foundation because they have run the Mow Down Pollution program nationally since 2001, they also run a Car Heaven program so they have a lot of expertise built up with the recycling industry about what can actually be done with this equipment. What traditionally happened in the City is that we would have an old piece of equipment that would go out for auction and it would allow someone else to buy and continue using it. One of the things we changed is that our (City) equipment no longer goes to auction. In a similar vein, it would be completely counterproductive for us to encourage residents to drop off this old equipment if the recyclers then turned around and sold it to a secondary market, which is part of the condition in partnering with them, is that they have to dispose of them in an environmentally responsible manner.

**Comment:** *A lawnmower that is not functioning is a lawnmower that is not polluting. The foundation is getting lawnmowers that people have been picking up from the garbage to collect on that program. Those lawnmowers aren't working. Why don't we have a program that says take your lawnmower into Home Depot, and you get three pulls – if the lawnmower starts we will give you money for it.*

**Reply:** There is no tax payer's money going into this program. For the pilot program we did pay the Clean Air Foundation partnership, however going forward this program is all about partnerships which is why City staff are currently negotiating with the retailers. The City is not paying a direct incentive. People tend to overplay the role of incentives in that it doesn't actually take a large financial incentive to convince someone to change their behaviour. A really small incentive can change behaviour. It is really the opportunity to dispose of something, to get rid of the old equipment, and that is a service that we are providing. It could be more of a waste of staff time to test all of the lawnmowers to see if they work when they arrive. The lawnmowers are still going to be recycled. I think it is best to leave the recycling expertise with the recycling industry. Either way it is still an old piece of equipment that is being recycled.

**Question:** *Where does the money come from for the incentives?*

**Answer:** The incentive is part of what we (Toronto Environment Office) are negotiating. We are speaking with a number of manufactures and retailers. Last year in the Cut It Out Program, the Clean Air Foundation had a number of relationships through Home Depot, Black and Decker, and Recharge Solar Mower. The incentive was in the form of a gift card for Home Depot. Participants also had a chance to win a solar powered mower from Recharge and a battery powered mower from Black and Decker.

**Question:**

*Why can't manufactures themselves not run this program on their own so that tax payer's money is not used?*

**Answer:** We (Toronto Environment Office) are not working with the Clean Air Foundation this year. We originally put some money into this initiative because the Clean Air Partnership has expertise. We are not planning to use tax payer's money for this program.