



MEMORANDUM

Date: February 17, 2011

To: Chair and Members
Executive Committee

From: Councillor John Filion
Ward 23, Willowdale

Re: Drain Grant and Downspout Disconnection Programs

The decision to, in effect, eliminate these two programs will come as a surprise to thousands of residents across the City, with unfair consequences. Although I realize that the recommendation is to suspend the programs for 2011 and consider their reinstatement in 2012, I think it already obvious that if there isn't available money this year, it is extremely unlikely that there will be next year when there will be significantly greater budget pressures. If the City is to either discontinue or suspend the programs, I would request that Council recognize and rectify the unfairness caused by the suddenness of the decision.

As you know, each year, many hundreds of residents across the City experience sewer backup and other problems caused by City trees creating blockages to sewer pipes on their properties. If the City intends to eliminate this program, it should at least honour its commitment to residents who have already authorized work on their property in the expectation that they would be reimbursed under the program which existed at the time that the work was performed. In many cases, they are unaware that the program may be discontinued and believe they have until the end of the year to submit the necessary paperwork for reimbursement.

I would therefore ask the Committee to approve the following:

That the Executive Committee recommend that City Council approve the reimbursement under the Drain Grant Program for any work performed up to the date of the Council Decision to eliminate the Program, provided that the necessary paperwork for reimbursement is submitted prior to December 31st, 2011.

With regards to the Downspout Disconnection Program, there are 6920 property owners across the City who, in good faith, applied for the voluntary disconnection program prior to its elimination in November of 2007. Through no fault of the homeowners, the City has not yet gotten around to inspecting these properties. Many of these properties are located in combined sewer overflow and basement flooding areas. Because these homes are located in areas that the City will focus on beginning in November 2011 when the mandatory disconnection program takes effect, the situation is extremely unfair. I would request that the Program therefore be continued for the remainder of 2011 to complete the inspection and necessary work in either of the combined sewer and basement flooding areas.

That the Executive Committee recommend to City Council that it continue the Downspout Disconnection Program for those who applied before November 20, 2007 and whose homes are located in either a combined sewer overflow or basement flooding area.

John Filion, Councillor
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