

# WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

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*We are Westmount*

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*Other garbage changes to come*

## By-law to ban recycling, compostables in garbage

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

It's goodbye to the plastic leaf bag and hello to putting out the blue box the night before pick-up.

Those are two of many changes that will affect Westmounters' garbage habits in 2012 that have come to light with the in-

roduction of a new garbage by-law presented by city council without comment at its October 3 meeting.

The proposed draft reflects Montreal's by-law that sets out the do's and don'ts of what will be accepted at the island's recycling and composting treatment centres.

It also restricts from the regular garbage those items being banned from landfill by federal and provincial governments over the next three or four years, said city environmental coordinator Marina Peter.

The bottom line for anyone not currently participating in ..... blue box, green bin or *continued on p. 14*

# Garbage changes, updates

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*continued from p. 1*

hazardous waste collections is this: You won't have a choice under the new regulations. **Throwing food or even grass cuttings into the regular garbage will be subject to fines ranging from \$100 to \$4,000.**

In short, if an alternative service is available for disposal of something that can be eliminated from landfill, it will be prohibited from the regular garbage. This includes construction and renovation ma-

terial, which must go to a Montreal eco-centre.

"After the by-law is adopted, there will be a period of education with the assistance of the Healthy City Project," Environment commissioner Theodora Samiotis said last week.

"One of the new law's emphases is to keep computers and other electronic waste out of landfill along with other hazardous waste," Peter explained.

The new by-law is expected to be adopted at a subsequent meeting of coun-

cil either in its draft form or with amendments.

The draft retains many existing and local customs that exist in Westmount's 1980 by-law and subsequent amendments. Garbage will still be collected from the back yard.

But it also enshrines into law many of the recycling and composting guidelines the city has issued regarding newer programs, such as the green bin and garden debris collection of compostables.

**But there are some anomalies and significant changes. Used cat litter and small animal bedding shavings that now go into the green bin for composting will no longer be accepted and will have to go into the regular garage. Why? Because they aren't on Montreal's acceptable list, Peter said.**

## ***Tightens garden debris disposal***

Among changes related to garden debris is the tightening of restrictions on contractors, in particular. Anyone who blows or throws leaves, grass clippings or other debris onto the sidewalk or street – even briefly before cleaning up – will violate the new by-law.

This is aimed at stopping a current practice reported by Public Security in which contractors blow leaves from many neighbouring properties into the curb before returning with a collection truck, meanwhile allowing wind and passing cars to scatter them about.

Bundles of branches limited in size will also be restricted in number to six that will be taken away at any one time.

Another key change is requiring the exclusive use of kraft paper leaf bags rather than clear or compostable plastic ones now accepted, Environment commissioner Theodora Samiotis pointed out last week.

"As I went down the street the other day, I noticed it was lined with plastic leaf bags. This will be the last year for those."

And that's why, Peter said, that "we want to give people a heads-up that this is coming so they won't stock up on plastic

leaf bags."

## ***Blue box changes***

For people unable to put the blue box out earlier than 7 am on collection day, being able to do so the night before, after 8 pm, will likely be a welcome change. The new by-law, however, will make it mandatory to flatten and bundle all cardboard boxes, something that has been only a guideline.

A long list of accepted recyclable items for the blue box is contained in one of three appendices that also provide detailed lists for prohibited waste and specifications for containers (garbage, storage bins, recycling, organics and yard waste).

These lists are not necessarily straight forward, however. Some items not expressly mentioned in the draft are those dealing with pet waste and the disposal of animal remains.

All animal waste will be destined for landfill including dog feces in plastic bags. It's the plastic that makes the difference.

While the by-law states the city will pick up and dispose of dead animals up to .25m<sup>3</sup> (a 10-inch cube), Peter said that birds, squirrels and other small animals such as hamsters may be placed in the regular garbage if well wrapped. Pets larger than the 10-inch cube should go to a veterinary clinic, though this directive isn't spelled out.

Completely extinguished ashes will still be accepted in the regular garbage.

There are also special stipulations and detailed lists for large "bulky items," such as mattresses and appliances. These are to be picked up by city crews on the day of the regular garbage collection but must be placed at curbside. Public Works will have to be informed a day before at 514.989.5311. Smaller pieces that would typically fit into a garbage bag, however, may go into regular garbage.

And how will the average resident learn about the changes? "We plan to distribute highlights of the new by-law," Peter said.

# Alternative, compostable litter invented here

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Recent news that the city of Westmount is dropping used cat litter from the list of materials accepted as household waste for composting (see “By-law to ban recycling, compostables in garbage,” November 1, p. 1) has prompted a Victoria Ave. veterinarian to remind cat owners of a relatively carefree option for cat litter that does not end up in landfill.

The Chatonnel product was developed by Dr. J. Marc Vaillancourt of the Westmount Animal Hospital. Made from biodegradable cellulose fiber obtained from recycled paper products, only a relatively small amount needs to be used and is very absorbent.

While conventional granular cat litter produces dust which cats ingest as they groom their fur, causing some potentially serious health problems, Chatonnelle is dust-free and doesn't necessarily have to be thrown out with the garbage.

Vaillancourt claims it can be safely flushed down the toilet without compromising the plumbing.

It is also treated with an odor neutralizer and has the added advantage of spilling out of the box much less frequently than granular cat litter. It's lightweight compared to regular litter and is easy to carry.

In addition, because the product is

white, it's easy to see if there's blood in the cat's urine, a sign of sickness, resulting in a quicker intervention if necessary.

Chatonnelle, which has been around for a decade, is available at the Westmount Animal Hospital. It can also be ordered from the hospital and select veterinarians, and delivered directly to your home.



*Westmount Animal Hospital manager Laura Gregory some packages of Chatonnelle.*