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Buck-a-bag garbage fee considered by mayor

BY LISA QUEEN
Staff Writer

Admitting it won't be a popular move in an election year, Newmarket Mayor Tom Taylor is considering copying Georgina's controversial buck-a-bag garbage fee.

And it may become an option in other York municipalities as well.

After listening to Georgina Mayor Rob Grossi praise his town's switch to the collection system at a Friday committee meeting of the Greater Toronto Services Board, Taylor said he'll have his staff investigate adopting the plan.

"Maybe we should. I'm going to have my staff talk to Georgina. We should look at it."

Taylor noted Georgina launched user pay garbage collection three years ago when faced with a "crisis" — something other municipalities are now facing.

The province had cut municipal grants four years ago, a move that threatened to raise Georgina property taxes between 10 and 15 per cent.

At the same time, the town dump was operating on an emergency permit that would expire in January 1997.

Grossi said council "bit the bullet" and adopted user-pay collection.

The strategy has been a success, he said. Recycling has increased by 48 per cent, allowing Georgina to divert 57 per cent of waste from the landfill.

That makes Georgina the only municipality in the GTA that achieved the province's 50-per-cent diversion target.

However, Grossi admitted many residents were furious their property taxes only dropped 0.5 per cent while they were faced with purchasing buck-a-bag garbage tags.

Other towns are also struggling with garbage costs. For example, Aurora is asking residents to stick to a three-bag limit.

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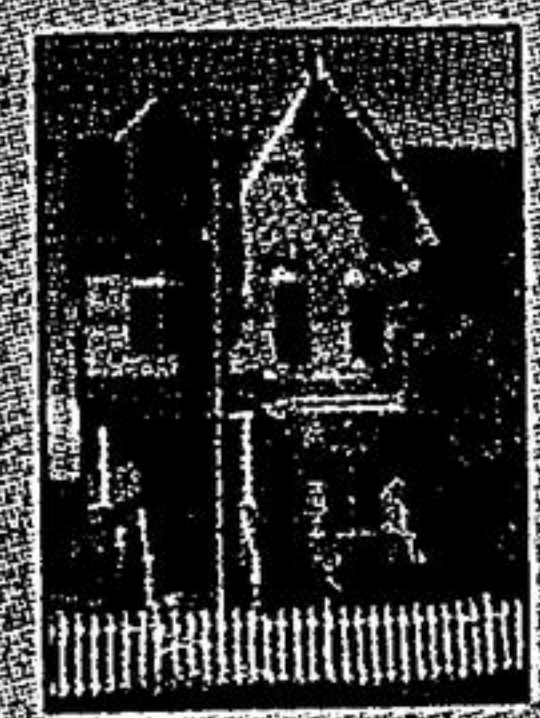


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