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The Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

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OPINION

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

More than rules at market

Re: Much to lose at farmers market, editorial, May 19.

As a member of Stouffville's farmers market committee, I am glad to see media coverage of the market.

This editorial graciously states, "Where an empty lot once sat, community was built".

From Day 1, the committee has worked to create a market that benefits vendors, residents and the town itself, all in the spirit of community.

The editorial also questions "what a farmers market is all about" if it denies shoppers out-of-season, imported produce and the vendors who sell it.

I would like to offer some clarification: the market rules only prohibit vendors from selling non-local produce if others are selling the same produce that they themselves have grown.

The rules also require farm-

HAVE YOUR SAY, WHITCHURCH- STOUFFVILLE

► What do you think of these issues or others? E-mail letters to the editor to jmason@yrmg.com

ers to grow the majority of the food they sell.

While a farmers market needs rules, it is not all about rules – it is about community.

The rejection of local vendor Barry's Gardens is justified not only by this vendor's history of non-compliance, but by the disregard and disrespect shown toward the market community.

Of course, the customers, not the committee or town council, have the final say.

So I encourage all residents to visit the market, meet the vendors and find out where and how their food is produced.

MYLES O'BRIEN
STOUFFVILLE



What's the fuss about compostible bags?

So, what's the big deal? I don't get why some people in municipalities across York Region are objecting to the ban on using ordinary plastic bags for organics collection.

I see some letters to the editor and complaints to regional councillors objecting about the cost of buying the approved compostable bags for the little collection bin under your sink.

In one open letter to Richmond Hill Regional Councillor Vito Spatafora, copied to the media, a Richmond Hill resident complains she bought 10 for \$4.99 plus tax, driving the cost per bag to 56 cents, she says. These are apparently "brown bags with a plastic liner".

Mr. Spatafora responded he has purchased a package of 100 three-gallon (17-by-16 inches) bags made by Bag to Nature from Costco for \$9.89; with the resulting cost per bag being about 10 cents each.

Now, I'm not the best comparison shopper around, but the No Name brand of compostible kitchen bags — the same size as Mr. Spatafora refers to — costs me \$4.79 at Loblaws for a package of 20; that's 24 cents per bag.

Obviously, Costco has a much better



Marney Beck

price, but not everyone has a Costco membership.

Personally, I don't mind paying a little more for compostible organics bags, when one box of 20 lasts me about four months.

OK, so some of you are thinking that if I only use one bag per week, my kitchen must be pretty stinky.

Not so. If I decide several days before our collection day that my organics bin smells less than pleasant, I tie up that bag and take it out to the green bin in my garage and use another bag.

When I've had lots of extra company or when my daughter and boyfriend

visit us for a few days, I may also need to use two bags in one week, but usually one bag per week does the job for our family of three.

So 24 cents per bag is not a high price to pay to do my bit for the environment and reduce our reliance on landfill.

Again I ask, what's the big deal? In Markham, councillors have actually delayed the implementation of the plastic bag ban for use with organics, so concerned are they about the public backlash over price and confusion concerning other town recycling efforts.

Vaughan politicians apparently can't agree among themselves whether the move to force residents to use the compostible bags is good or bad, while Whitchurch-Stouffville is doing a "soft roll-out" and will still collect organics in plastic bags.

Richmond Hill and Aurora councils are urging residents to "make organics collection even greener" by complying with the ban on plastics.

It sure makes sense to me. Why encourage everyone to divert compostible organic materials, if you tie it all up in a bag that won't decompose for a thousand years?

Several callers and letter writers

have urged what I think is a good idea — and it seems Regional Councillor Spatafora agrees.

Why not encourage grocery companies to make compostible plastic bags so they can serve two purposes: carrying home your groceries and then being used for organics collection much as many of us have been doing for years?

It all comes down to money. Mr. Spatafora points out the Region of York does not ask grocery stores to charge 5 cents per plastic bag.

They charge for bags as a business decision and it would seem to be a good revenue-generating decision, as some put the actual cost of making each plastic bag at 0.002 cents.

Mr. Spatafora believes "public pressure on the grocery chains to convert to compostible plastic bags" would benefit everyone and has sent this suggestion to the region's environmental committee.

A win-win idea if I ever heard one: but until that time I'll keep paying 24 cents a week to use a compostible bag.

Marney Beck is a York Region Media Group editor.