

February 26, 2012

Public Safety Committee
City of London

Dear Councillors D. Brown, Armstrong, Bryant, Hubert, and Polhill, and Mayor Fontana:

Regarding: additions to the Clearing of Land By-law PW-9 of regulations concerning composters and composting

The Clearing of Land Bylaw (even renamed) is *not* the place for regulations to do with compost, composters and composting.

Compost is valuable, living, organic material which puts nutrient into soil, aerates soil and increases its ability to hold moisture.

Compost is not refuse or garbage. Linking compost with these, as is done in the Clearing of Land By-law amendments report you have received, is an error.

I request you strike the proposed sections 2.10* and 2.11* from any proposed amendments

Compost, composters and composting are hugely diverse topics and belong in the context of broad-ranging conversations about gardens. London should be welcoming gardens of all sorts, all joyous varieties, in many locations and based in the innovative knowledge of gardeners.

Over several years, I have had conversations with Mr. Jay Stanford, Director of Environmental Programs and Solid Waste, as to the need for changes to City bylaws to do with alternative garden styles, boulevard gardening and naturalization of areas on property.

Right now, homeowners' gardens are prized and praised on our urban boulevards ... and every one of them is illegal under bylaws. City committees discuss outdated City infrastructure as relates to rainwater run-off and the overburdened sewage system; there could be encouragement of innovative, bio-diverse plantings on properties to hold rainwater.

Discussions on many aspects of gardens and urban agriculture should begin between Londoners and City staff from several departments.

I was surprised to see that Mr. Stanford or someone in his department was not "copied" on the proposed bylaw amendments. After all, **the City of London, through Environment Programs and Solid Waste programs, supports composting** in various ways on the City website. Pages that *encourage composting* are found at: http://www.london.ca/d.aspx?s=/Recycling_and_Composting/Compost_Main.htm

The City supports the yearly Compost Value Day (http://www.london.ca/d.aspx?s=/Recycling_and_Composting/Compost_Value_Day.htm) and has long been associated with the Thames Region Ecological Association (www.trea.ca), which has long advocated composting and initiated composting programs and recycling programs in the City

It is also important to mention that a review is being done of London's bylaws and policies that might affect the future of urban agriculture in London. Four students from Western's Master of Environment and Sustainability program have taken this on (during this academic term) through a contact they made with London's Food Charter implementation team. I happen to be a member of this group, which is facilitated by Trevor Fowler, program manager with the Ending Poverty Implementation Team out of Child and Youth Network.

To restate: I respectfully request that the Public Safety Committee strike proposed sections 2.10* and 2.11* from any proposed amendments to the Clearing of Land By-law PW-9

I look forward to attending the Public Participation Meeting on March 6 for an opportunity to comment more fully on some points.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your attention and action on this.

Sincerely,

Maureen Temme
Mayor's Honour List 2012 for Environment work

* sections referred to

2.11 Compost – containment and location

Every owner of a residential property shall ensure that all compost which accumulates on their property is: contained within not more than 4 compost containers on their property; and

contained within containers that each:

- (i) have a maximum area not greater than 1.0m²;
- (ii) have a maximum height of not higher than 1.8m;
- (iii) is located in the rear yard;
- (iv) is enclosed on all sides by concrete blocks, a lumber structure, a metal frame, or a commercially manufactured compost container;
- (v) does not include a fence or a building wall as one or more of the sides of a composter; and
- (6) is covered in a manner to prevent the entry of rodents or other animals.

2.12 Leaf Compost – containment and location

If a residential property owner chooses to compost leaves, the property owner shall ensure that all leaf compost which accumulates on their property which is not contained within a compost container as set out in section 2.11 is:

- (a) contained within not more than 1 leaf compost area on their property; and
- (b) contained within a leaf compost area that:
 - (i) has a maximum area not greater than 9.29 m²;
 - (ii) has a maximum height of not higher than 1.2m;
 - (iii) is located in the rear yard;
 - (iv) is enclosed on all sides by concrete blocks, a lumber structure, a metal or wire frame, or a commercially manufactured compost container;
 - (v) does not include a fence or a building wall as one or more of the sides of a compost area; and
 - (vi) holds nothing more than leaves and soil.