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**To:** Mayor and Councillors  
**From:** Peter Russell  
Senior Manager, Sustainability and District Energy  
**Date:** November 25, 2016  
**File:** 10-6175-02-01/2016-Vol 01  
**Re:** City Actions on Harvest Power Odours

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The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize key actions that are being undertaken by the City to eliminate odours from the Harvest Power facility:

#### **Actions related to Regulators of Harvest Power**

- **Meetings with the Province:** Senior City staff met with senior staff of the Ministry of Environment and the also Mayor met with the Minister to request their involvement and support for Metro Vancouver.
- **Enforcement:** At the City's urging, Metro Vancouver has dedicated a team of three officers to respond to non-compliances and carryout inspections. As a result, Metro Vancouver has delivered two Notices of Violation and two tickets to Harvest Power since the new permit was issued on September 30, 2016.

#### **Actions related to Service Agreements and Bylaws**

- **Reviewing Service Agreements:** The City and Metro Vancouver are reviewing provisions in their Service Agreements with Harvest Power to ensure the company is in compliance. The City has raised concerns on numerous occasions and has requested that substantive steps be taken. The City will again be raising these concerns with respect to the Service Agreement. Attachment 1 includes the authorized recommendations as approved by the Metro Vancouver Board of Directors.
- **Rodent Inspection:** City and Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) staff visited the site on November 15, 2016 to investigate the site for rodent issues. The site has approximately 200 traps set around the area; traps are serviced twice a week. Harvest Power also employs a full time falconer to manage birds. There were no non-compliances of City bylaws found.
- **Fire Incidents:** Richmond Fire Rescue (RFR) has responded to six fire incidents since August 2016 related to a storage pile of combustible materials. RFR advises that there are no imminent fire and life safety hazards on the property that affect any structures on the property or neighboring properties. On November 10, 2016, RFR issued a Notice of Violation to Harvest Power, which also included the liability of all costs and expenses incurred by RFR. RFR was onsite Nov 23, 2016 and RFR staff completed a site re-inspection and did not see or note any human waste and or rats/rodents on the property. On November 24, 2016, RFR issued an Order to Comply for non-compliance items with the Fire Protection and Life Safety Bylaw No. 8306, and BC Fire Code. RFR is working with Harvest Power on their response to the Order. See Attachment 2.

### **Actions related to Solid Waste Received at the Site**

- **Diverting Waste:** At the City's request, Metro Vancouver is diverting an estimated 35,000 tons per year of waste away from Harvest Power (Vancouver and North Shore Transfer Station waste).
- **On the Issue of Human Waste (Biosolids):** Some members of the public have alleged that human waste is being treated at the site. Harvest Power and Metro Vancouver have advised staff that, in line with the conditions of their solid waste license and per inspections, the facility does not receive any human waste or animal carcasses. This perception may have resulted from portable toilets coming into the site on trucks. These toilets are used by workers, and the resulting waste is removed by the contractor and treated elsewhere.

### **Actions related to Community Awareness and Complaints**

- **Public Meetings:** At the City's urging, Harvest Power held a public meeting on November 9, 2016 to hear from the community. Over 40 residents attended. A new meeting is scheduled on December 8, 2016 at 7:00pm at the Richmond Airport Hilton (5911 Minoru Blvd) where the company's Chief Executive Officer will provide an update on their actions.
- **Keeping the Community Informed:** Three news releases, social media, media interviews, and dedicated homepage have increased community awareness. All resources inform citizens whom to contact and what the City is doing to address the issue. A new dedicated City webpage provides specific information and links to Council reports and who to contact to share concerns.
- **Social Media and Interviews:** Social media outreach on Twitter and Facebook has garnered extensive public engagement (over 500 reactions, comments and shares; reaching over 31,000 people). Media interviews have been carried out with the mayor.
- **Complaints:** Complaints received by the City are responded to by staff with a summary of what the City is doing to address the issue and who to contact to share concerns.

### **Actions related to the Permit Appeal**

- **Permit Appeal:** Based on Harvest Power's appeal and intent to stay the conditions of the permit, the City decided to file for party status to make a case to maintain the permit's stringent requirements and ensure the authority to close the facility remains intact. The City's application to be a party to the appeals relating to the permit issued to Harvest Power was filed on Thursday, November 17, 2016. On November 18, 2016 the City received notice that, subject to any objections, the City has been granted full party status in the appeals. The City has not been notified of any objections to date.

### **Actions related to Community Health**

- **Health Assessment:** Dr. Lu, as the Environmental Health Officer, is the lead in responding to health concerns related to Harvest Power odours. Further to the City's repeated requests for a formal response from VCH on this issue, Dr. Patricia Daly, the Chief Medical Health Officer, has provided a formal response today (November 25) stating that "while Harvest Power is generating extremely unpleasant odorous compounds, the air emissions from the operation are unlikely to cause health effects in addition to ones triggered by the offensive smell" (See Attachment 3). Staff are continuing to review VCH's letter and will provide further updates

accordingly. The City has requested that a VCH representative delegate at a future public meeting.

A summary of Council's most recent actions is provided in Attachment 4. At the direction of the Chief Administrative Officer, staff investigated and found a process by which the Council Resolutions from the closed report titled 'Addressing Odour Concerns Relating to Harvest Power' dated November 21, 2016, can be released at the open Council meeting on November 28, 2016. The resolutions are included in Attachment 4.



Peter Russell  
Senior Manager, Sustainability and District Energy  
(604-276-4130)

PR:pr

pc: SMT  
Ted Townsend, Director, Corporate Communications and Marketing  
Doug Long, City Solicitor

- Att. 1: Richmond Fire Rescue Emergency Responses and Inspections, 7028 York Road – Harvest Power
- Att. 2: Letter from Vancouver Coastal Health re: Harvest Power's Air Quality Permit, dated November 25, 2016
- Att. 3: Announcement



## **Rise and Report (Items Released from Closed Meeting)**

On November 25, 2016, the following recommendation was authorized by the Greater Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage District (GVS&DD) Board of Directors to be released to the public:

### **Metro Vancouver - Harvest Organics Processing Contract**

*That the GVS&DD Board direct staff to:*

- a) work with Harvest Fraser Richmond Organics Ltd. to immediately redirect residential curbside and commercial organics from the North Shore Transfer Station to an alternative organics processing facility in region;*
- b) initiate a composting best practices study and report back to the Board with:
  - i. a review of Harvest Fraser Richmond Organics Ltd.'s operational processes compared to best practices;*
  - ii. recommendations on how to incorporate the results of the study into the upcoming review of Bylaw 181; and*
  - iii. recommendations on how to incorporate the results of the study into the procurement process for a new contract to replace the existing organics processing contract on expiry or termination.**
- c) write Harvest Fraser Richmond Organics Ltd. to:
  - i. advise that in the event facility operations are not improved to control odours within 90 days, GVS&DD will notify the company that it is in default of its contractual obligations under the organics processing contract; and*
  - ii. request that organics accepted by the facility be limited to regional sources.**
- d) write to Vancouver Coastal Health regarding the potential health impact arising from Harvest Fraser Richmond Organics Ltd. operations.*



City of  
Richmond

**Memorandum**  
Richmond Fire-Rescue

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**To:** Mayor and Councillors  
**From:** Kevin Gray  
Deputy Fire Chief  
**Date:** November 24, 2016  
**File:** 09-5140-01/2016-Vol 01  
**Re:** **Richmond Fire Rescue Emergency Responses and Inspections, 7028 York Road - Harvest Power**

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this memo is to provide Mayor and Councillors with information relating to Richmond Fire Rescue (RFR) emergency responses and inspections at 7028 York Road, Harvest Power.

### **Background**

Richmond Fire Rescue (RFR) has responded to Harvest Power six (x6) Fire Incidents since August 2016, these incidents were all related to a storage pile of combustible materials.

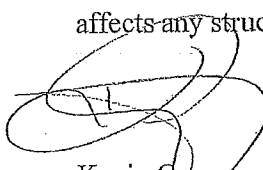
On November 10, 2016 – RFR issued a Notice of Violation to Harvest Power, which also included the liability of all costs and expenses incurred by RFR. The Notice of Violation referenced the BC Fire Code 2012, and City of Richmond Fire Protection and Life Safety Bylaw No. 8306 non-compliance items.

RFR was onsite November 23, 2016 and RFR staff completed a site re-inspection and did not see or note any human waste and or rats/rodents on the property

### **Actions**

RFR will issue an Order to Comply on November 24, 2016 to Harvest Power for non-compliance items with the City of Richmond Fire Protection and Life Safety Bylaw No. 8306, and BC Fire Code. RFR staff will continue to monitor the response to this order as well as working other City Departments to address any other impacts to neighbouring properties.

RFR has noted that there are no imminent Fire and Life Safety Hazards on the property that affects any structures on the property or neighboring properties.



Kevin Gray  
Deputy Fire Chief  
604-303-2700  
KG:kg



Office of the Chief  
Medical Health Officer

#800-601 W. Broadway  
Vancouver, BC V5Z 4C2

November 25, 2016

Peter Russell  
Senior Manager, Sustainability and District Energy  
Engineering and Public Works Division  
6911 No. 3 Road  
Richmond, BC  
V6Y 2C1  
By email: [Peter.Russell@richmond.ca](mailto:Peter.Russell@richmond.ca)

Dear Peter Russell,

**Re: Harvest Power's Air Quality Permit**

Thank you for your letter sent November 4, 2016 to Dr. Meena Dawar seeking a formal response to Richmond City Council regarding any Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) public health investigations or assessments of the potential health impacts of the odour related to Harvest Power. Please find below information on complaints received by VCH, our response to these complaints including a review of the relevant published literature, and the assessment of air quality with Metro Vancouver. In addition, we draw your attention to current provincial policy intentions to addressing odour caused by organic matter recycling.

Like the City of Richmond, VCH-Richmond Public Health also receives complaints from members of the public about odour. The majority of reports are about diminished quality of life ("air used to be fresh in Richmond, now it stinks all the time"), a minority have reported concerns about their own health or of their family members, and a few have mentioned symptoms (nausea, vomiting, headaches, feeling unwell). These individuals are referred to Metro Vancouver as the governing body responsible for air quality monitoring in Richmond. VCH Environmental Health Officers are prepared to speak with the complainants, if requested, and have spoken with approximately 6 individuals in 2015 and 30 in 2016. In addition, Metro Vancouver sends VCH an anonymized list of reports on days when they receive  $\geq 10$  complaints; these have been arriving to Richmond Public Health almost daily in the recent weeks. As always, we also advise individuals reporting health concerns to see their family physician. However, we are not aware of any increase in health care utilization at VCH facilities or in community physician offices from health complaints associated with odour.

VCH staff do not conduct onsite assessments at Harvest Power to address odour issues as this falls within the purview of Metro Vancouver.

We have reviewed the situation with Metro Vancouver staff. Metro Vancouver confirms that the source of the recent odour episodes is likely Harvest Power. Metro Vancouver shared information on complaints received over a recent two day period (November 18-19, 2016). A total of 97 complaints were made by the members of the public who reported the following concerns: Odour (100%), difficulty with opening windows or going outside (14%), and health symptoms (21%). Among individuals who reported health symptoms, the following symptoms were reported: Nausea, respiratory symptoms such as cough or difficulty breathing, symptoms of irritation such

as burning eyes, headache, and vomiting. These are consistent with those noted in the published environmental health literature on the impacts of unpleasant odours from composting (and other sources).

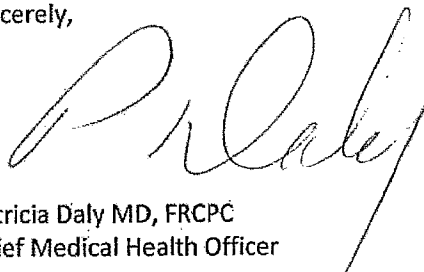
We also reviewed with Metro Vancouver staff their monitoring data for Harvest Power. The total level of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) released from the composting processes at Harvest Power has gone up since 2013. This likely explains the recent increase in odour complaints. Given the sensitivity of the human nose, odour from VOCs produced from composting can be detected at levels much lower than levels that would result in long term harm. Some residents have expressed concern about bioaerosols. Metro Vancouver does not require measurement of bioaerosols (organic particles consisting of animal, plant or microbial particles). Our literature review confirms that while bioaerosols are relevant to the occupational health of staff at the composting facility, they should not impact the health of surrounding residents given the location of Harvest Power relative to the location of residences. Based on the information provided by Metro Vancouver and our literature review, we are satisfied that while Harvest Power is generating extremely unpleasant odorous compounds, the air emissions from the operation are unlikely to cause health effects in addition to ones triggered by the offensive smell. Therefore, as this issue does not meet the threshold of a health hazard, VCH Medical Health Officers and Environmental Health Officers are not planning further health assessments at this time.

Nevertheless, based on calls we and Metro Vancouver have received, the odour from composting operations at Harvest Power is affecting the quality of life and well-being of residents in Richmond. Information from the complaints suggests the odour is causing physical discomfort for some Richmond residents. This is not acceptable.

While even a well-designed, constructed and operated compost system will not be odour-free, it should not produce offensive odours. Metro Vancouver is the delegated authority for regulating air emissions in our region, including odour causing air contaminants. Adequate odour management is imperative for community wellbeing. VCH Medical Health Officers and Environmental Health Officers support the conditions placed by Metro Vancouver on Harvest Power's new permit for odour management.

Finally, the British Columbia government has recognized the need for a better regulatory framework for odour management in the recycling of organic matter. To this end, the Ministry of Environment published an Organic Matter Recycling Regulation Policy Intention Paper in October 2016. The ministry is soliciting feedback to the policy proposals until December 2, 2016.<sup>1</sup> The City of Richmond's experience with responding to odour from the Harvest Power facility could be most informative for the policy reviewers. We encourage the City and the community to submit feedback to this provincial policy review.

Sincerely,



Patricia Daly MD, FRCPC  
Chief Medical Health Officer

<sup>1</sup> <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/waste-management/recycling/organics/regulations-guidelines>

Cc: Malcolm Brodie  
Mayor, City of Richmond

Dr. Meena Dawar  
Medical Health Officer, Richmond

Dr. James Lu  
Medical Health Officer, Environmental Health

Claudia Kurzac  
Manager, Health Protection – Richmond

Ray Robb  
Environmental Regulation and Enforcement Division Manager  
Metro Vancouver



**ANNOUNCEMENT of the  
City's Latest Actions to Address Odours from Harvest Power**

The City has and continues to take decisive actions to ensure Harvest Power eliminates odours from their facility. The Harvest Power facility is located on federal lands and is regulated by Metro Vancouver for air quality, as delegated by the Province per the Environmental Management Act. In an effort to deliver relief to citizens in the short term however, a number of actions by the City are taking place that include:

- Effective January 1, 2017, the City will divert multi-family waste sent to Harvest Power to an alternative licensed facility. Council authorized staff to execute an agreement and approved the annual cost of \$18,880 for this service.
- The City has also requested that Harvest Power take steps to remedy odours from the facility within 90 days, per its Service Agreement with the company. City Council's determination to address the problem in the shortest time frame possible is borne out by the \$150,000 that it approved for funding additional compliance, monitoring and independent research in this area.
- The City has urged Metro Vancouver to require that Harvest Power follow best management practices to control odours and other nuisance matters relating to their operation, including regular progress reports, as part of Harvest Power's commitments in their Service Agreement with Metro Vancouver.

These recent actions are supported by the extensive work the City has already taken to address this issue. Other key actions include:

- Senior City staff met with senior staff from the Ministry of Environment and the Mayor met with the Minister to request their involvement and support for Metro Vancouver to enforce and address the issue.
- At the City's urging, Metro Vancouver has dedicated a team of three officers to respond to non-compliances and carryout inspections. As a result, Metro Vancouver has delivered two Notices of Violation and two tickets to Harvest Power since the new permit was issued on September 30, 2016.
- The City and Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) staff visited the site on November 15, 2016 to investigate the site for rodent issues. The site has approximately 200 traps set around the area; traps are serviced twice a week. Harvest Power also employs a full time falconer to manage birds. There were no non-compliances of City bylaws found.
- Richmond Fire Rescue responded to six fire incidents since August 2016 related to a storage pile of combustible materials. Rest assured that there are no imminent fire and life safety hazards on the property. In response to recent fires, RFR issued a Notice of Violation which also included the liability of all costs and expenses incurred by RFR. Recently, RFR issued an Order

to Comply for non-compliance items with the Fire Protection and Life Safety Bylaw No. 8306, and BC Fire Code. RFR is working with Harvest Power on their response to the Order.

- At the City's urging, Harvest Power held a public meeting on November 9, 2016 to hear from the community. Over 40 residents attended. A new meeting is scheduled on December 8, 2016 at 7:00pm at the Richmond Airport Hilton (5911 Minoru Blvd) where the company's Chief Executive Officer will provide an update on their actions.
- The City has been urging Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) to respond to health concerns related to odours expressed by citizens. On Friday, November 25, VCH provided a written response stating that "while Harvest Power is generating extremely unpleasant odorous compounds, the air emissions from the operation are unlikely to cause health effects in addition to ones triggered by the offensive smell". The City still has questions regarding health concerns and for this reason, the City is asking VCH to attend a future public meeting to provide further explanation.

The City believes these actions work towards a long term solution to the odour issues while bringing short term relief. City Council and staff remain focused on results and will continue to update the community with new information through media and at the City's dedicated website found at [www.richmond.ca](http://www.richmond.ca).

Resolutions of Council from November 28, 2016 related to this matter are included below.

**Addressing Odour Concerns Relating to Harvest Power Report (Closed) from November 28, 2016.**

It was moved and seconded

- 1. That a meeting be held and a letter be sent to Harvest Fraser Richmond Organics Ltd. (“Harvest” or “Harvest Power”) referencing the Service Agreement dated May 15, 2010 between the City and Harvest Power and expressing the City’s concerns regarding current odour emissions and requesting Harvest Power to provide the City with an explanation as to why the incidents are occurring and insisting Harvest Power to undertake steps to remedy same within 90 days.***
- 2. That a meeting be held and a letter be sent to Harvest Power notifying of the City’s intention to direct source-separated organics from the City’s multi-family recycling collection program to an alternative facility effective January 1, 2017.***
- 3. That the City participate with other regulatory bodies, including Metro Vancouver, in support of requiring that Harvest Power follow best management practices to control odours and other nuisance matters relating to their operation, including regular progress reports.***
- 4. That funding in the amount of \$150,000 for the engagement of professional services to facilitate compliance and monitoring of the items identified in Items 1 and 3, above, be approved, with funding from the General Solid Waste and Recycling Provision.***
- 5. That the Chief Administrative Officer and General Manager, Engineering & Public Works, be authorized to negotiate and execute modification terms with Sierra Waste Services under Contract T.2988 (Residential Solid Waste and Recycling Collection Services) for the transportation and processing of multi-family source-separated organics to a City-designated facility.***
- 6. That the estimated added annual cost of \$18,880 for processing source-separated multi-family organic materials, with funding from the 2017 Solid Waste and Recycling utility budget, be approved.***

CARRIED