

Residents of Forest Lakes subdivision  
Ardoise, NS  
B0N 3A0

July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Municipality of West Hants  
76 Morison Drive  
PO Box 3000  
Windsor, NS B0N 2T0

Mr. Mayor and Councillors:

The residents of Forest Lakes subdivision in Ardoise have been working with Mayor Zebian to assist with the issue of solid waste collection in the neighborhood. To date, we have received a second garbage bin from GFL to provide additional space for garbage and recyclables to alleviate the frequent “overflows”, but that is not solving the major issues.

The placement of the garbage receptacles for the community is near the entrance to the subdivision; however, they are remote relative to the houses in the subdivision. The first residence is over one kilometer from the entrance making it incredibly difficult to monitor the receptacles that are approximately 300 metres from Highway 1. This placement has made the receptacles ideal to surreptitiously leave garbage for those who do not wish to make the trip to the landfill and pay the tipping fees. The result has been several instances of dumping garbage in these bins that are not in accordance with the *Solid Waste Management By-law* (the By-law), and therefore, not collected by GFL.

We know this garbage is not from Forest Lakes residents; to remedy the situation, we now have volunteers who diligently go through the offending garbage and re-bag the contents into clear bags so they will be picked up. Through this process, the volunteers have been able to identify individuals who do not live in Forest Lakes and have also come across the unmistakable signs of restaurant refuse in the form of used oil and other items. As you can imagine, this is not a pleasant task and creates significant health and safety risks when residents are left to rummage through garbage of unknown origin. We have resorted to adding a padlock to the garbage bin in the hopes of limiting this behaviour, but this cannot be a permanent solution and only partially solves the issue.

Forest Lakes is a beautiful area with new houses and pride taken throughout the neighbourhood with well-kept lawns and gardens. But as the name suggests, it is forested and home to many forms of wildlife. We have squirrels in particular who can squeeze into the bins and tear apart the garbage, and if garbage does need to be left outside the receptacles, our resident raccoons have a mighty feast. Again, the result is a mess that will not be collected by GFL as it contravenes the By-law. Our volunteers must also clean up this mess, again putting themselves at risk of being in contact with unknown substances including potential medical waste.

It is both untenable and unconscionable that this is considered a permanent solution. While the By-law states clearly in Paragraph 23 that “*The Municipality ... shall provide collection services to all households within the Municipality located on highways plowed by the Department of Transportation or the Municipality ...*”, for the safety of our residents, consideration must be given to curbside collection for houses on a well-maintained road, built to the specifications of the *Subdivision By-law*. This By-law requires streets to be designed using the same requirements of public streets that are readily serviced by GFL. In fact, we note that curbside collection is afforded to Stillwater Road, and we contend that Eagle View Road, the main artery into our subdivision, is much wider with appropriate ditching. Further, there is solid waste collection on Irishman’s Road, also a gravel road that is narrower in spots than our main access road.

The residents believe that removing the garbage bins and having regular solid waste curb pickup is beneficial to both the residents of Forest Lakes and the Municipality. By removing the unsightly garbage and assuring new residents that they will have curbside solid waste collection could contribute to future growth, meeting -- or perhaps exceeding -- the recent three-year growth rate of 100%. As lots are sold, the Municipality stands to receive any tax arrears and deed transfer tax while the community will have future benefits in terms of higher re-sale value of existing homes and more households to contribute to our shared costs. In turn, higher assessed values will benefit the Municipality and residents through higher taxes in the community, especially as new construction takes place. For reference, recent sales of houses in the subdivision range from \$425,000 to \$695,000.

As discussed during the meeting with Mayor Zebian in January, we are in the process of establishing an association that will petition the Municipality to create a Charge Area under By-law R-002, *Private Roads By-law*. This will ensure the road is maintained to a level that is acceptable for GFL trucks to traverse safely. It will most certainly avoid the primary issue we are having with others in the area using our bins as the landfill and attracting wildlife.

A jurisdictional scan of neighbouring municipalities (Halifax Regional and East Hants) has confirmed that these municipalities collect solid waste curbside for all residences without regard to the type of road it is on. For County of Kings, there is a provision for waste to be collected on public streets and roads but includes an exception for “*private roads identified by the Authority*”. Given these three examples, we ask with great respect that an amendment be passed by Council to the *Solid Waste Management By-law* Section 23 that takes into consideration private roads that are serviceable and have sufficient households to warrant curbside collection.

Best regards,

Residents of Forest Lakes  
Ardoise, NS