

# Bin levy passes committee

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The city's planning and environment committee voted 6-2 yesterday in favour of making residential taxpayers fork over a special levy on a June utility bill to pay for the green bin recycling program.

The alternative would be to include the cost of the program on the property tax bill, as is currently the case with the blue and black box recycling programs.

Some city councillors want to know why the city waited until the last moment to figure out how taxpayers should pay for the green bin program. Council endorsed the program more than a year ago and it launches in January.

If council endorses the payment plan, taxpayers would see garbage and recycling collection rolled into one bill. In addition to the \$86 they pay for garbage collection on the June utility bill, a \$68 charge for the green bin program and \$41 for the blue and black box programs would also be included. The average resident will pay \$57 more a year for curbside collection.

## Hundreds of e-mails

Orleans Coun. Bob Monette said his office has received hundreds of e-mails since the levy proposal was unveiled a week ago.

He wonders why staff didn't sort out payment details when council was considering the green bin project in 2008.

"Day and night I'm responding to them," he said. "Why did we not put the emphasis on how it was going to be paid for?"

Committee chairman Peter Hume said the city has always known the cost of the green bin program. He couldn't answer why the levy payment option wasn't presented earlier.

"Good question," said Hume, adding that if the city determined how to pay for it sooner it might not be facing the current public backlash.

"Traditionally you don't make that decision until it appears on the city budget," he said. "I know it's a little bit painful but we are bringing in a new service."

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