

New garbage service should be trashed

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By: Metroland Durham Regional Media Group

So now you have a new excuse in Oshawa to not clean out your basement and garage.

It used to be that twice a year you could get rid of that old couch or rusty barbecue just by calling City Hall and dragging the junk to the curb. No fuss, no trouble. It worked well, at least from the residents' point of view.

So you should've known it wouldn't last.

Now, thanks to the City's new policy for special garbage collections, which came into effect March 17, you have to jump through multiple hoops to get those same items to disappear. You have to call City Hall and schedule a pickup and give officials a detailed list of what you want hauled away. Which means if, at the last minute, you decide to get rid of that old chair as well, it's not going to happen if you haven't already put it on your detailed list.

It's bad enough so far, but there's more.

Once you submit that list, you have to travel to City Hall or the public works yard and get stickers that show your junk is approved for removal. That's a lot of work for something that should be a simple process. It also requires planning ahead, eliminating that spur-of-the-moment weekend purging.

And there's even more. City Hall is now charging you \$25 on top of all those other headaches for the privilege of hauling away that old washer and dryer.

The City expects the new fee will raise more than \$200,000 in revenue in 2008. But how much it will cost the City in good will remains to be seen. Everyone is accustomed to paying a little more for government services -- fees go up regularly a few dollars for various licences and other services that essentially stay the same even with the price increase.

But to pile a hefty \$25 fee on to a new, difficult garbage collection service is a poke in the eye with a sharp stick.

City Hall should seriously revisit this new service. Lowering the fee to a more reasonable rate or making the exercise more user-friendly would go a long way with residents.

But if that doesn't happen, you might want to consider making friends with that guy down the street with the half-ton truck.