

NEWS

Plastic bag ban nearly set in Grand Bay-Westfield



Mayor of Grand Bay-Westfield Grace Losier said she doesn't anticipate any changes to the bylaw banning plastic bags ahead of its third reading on Feb. 22.

Photo: Caitlin Dutt/Telegraph-Journal

Marlo Glass | Telegraph-Journal

Published 02/11/2021

Grand Bay-Westfield is one step closer to instating a ban on plastic bags, joining Quispamsis, Moncton, Dieppe and Riverview, along with Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Grand Bay-Westfield town council held their first and second reading of the bylaw banning plastic bags on Monday night. The bylaw would prohibit businesses from providing plastic bags to customers at checkout, with some exceptions.

The Fundy Regional Service Commission has asked all municipalities in the region to implement such a bylaw by June 30. The move came after the commission stopped

accepting plastic bags in its recycling program in early 2020 due to lack of demand for the recycled product.

Grace Losier, mayor of Grand Bay-Westfield and a member of the Fundy Regional Service Commission, said the commission “has no market for plastic.”

She said the commission is "storing it by the tonne, so there has to be reality here. People are going to start using their own bags.”

In the Fundy region, about 35 million plastic bags are used each year, according to the commission’s website.

The final reading and enactment of the bylaw will take place at the town council’s Feb. 22 meeting. Losier doesn’t anticipate any changes being made to the bylaw before the third reading.

“Council completely endorsed the first and second reading,” she said.

She added that there have been prior opportunities for the council to raise concerns, but they’re happy with the final product.

The plastic bag ban originally came to council in early 2020, but proceedings were tabled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Quispamsis was the first city in the Fundy region to pass the bylaw, voting on the matter at its January town council meeting. The vote was not unanimous, as one councillor expressed concerns that current store inventory of plastic bags could go to waste.

Losier said businesses have been given ample time to adjust ahead of the bylaw.

“We feel the work has been done leading up to this recommendation,” she said, noting the Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce has worked to garner consensus among the business community.

“There have been a lot of opportunities to ask questions, and that was done then,” she said.

– With files from Nathalie Sturgeon and Caitlin Dutt