

September 24, 2018 Delegation to the Town of Cobourg

Trash to Treasure

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Good afternoon.

My name is Lydia Smith. My co-presenter is Wally Keeler.

Thank you for the opportunity to present today.

Cobourg has much to be proud about.

Cobourg also has some things that could be improved. In our presentation today, we would like to address the state of the waterfront trash cans and offer some suggestions to beautify the waterfront and bring together our community.

1. This first bin serves the zone of respect around the Cenotaph. The bin is surrounded by solemn beauty and a well-tended garden. In a sad contrast, it sits like a wardrobe malfunction of benign neglect.
2. This dilapidated bin is found in the heart of the harbourfront promenade - our 'main street' for strolling folks. It is an equal opportunity offender – offending visitors, boaters, strollers and residents.
3. Our last example is located at the Cobourg Ecology Garden entrance to the boardwalk. Because The Ecology Garden acts as both concierge and sentry to the natural west beach, it should be dignified with a worthy bin.

Our waterfront does not deserve this string of blight, but a string of bright trash bins that displays our civic pride in the crown of our waterfront. The white rails along the harbour front are painted every year. At a bare minimum the Town could paint these cans the same blue and white every year; however, doing so would be a route to plain vanilla mediocrity.

We are not here to spread mediocrity across our waterfront. Instead, we would like to champion bright, beautiful and cheerful beach colours. Fun as opposed to formal and conservative heritage colours.

Trash cans do not have to be trashy-looking. Trash bins can be a venue for creativity and art as a bonding opportunity for community and as an enhancement to our waterfront. This is trash talk we can all get behind.

Here is an example.

The Town should make a call for local and county artists to submit their proposals to decorate a trash can. There is much talent to draw on. Here's a partial list of Art Clubs.

This trash can project presents an opportunity for community groups to promote themselves while creating more beauty and building community. Students could be sponsored to create themes compatible with the groups; e.g. boating for the Cobourg Yacht Club, nature for the Ecology Garden, a drama/comedy silhouette for the Northumberland Players, poppies at the Cenotaph sponsored by the Legion, etc. The possibilities are unlimited.

Supplies could be provided by the Town.

Here are some examples of what's been done in other places to beautify and build community.

The city of Brentwood, Missouri has sponsored a community paint-in of their trash cans. The Brentwood Spirit newspaper published the following:

“On Saturday the Brentwood Public Works Department’s garage, which usually houses dump trucks, snowplows and other equipment, was transformed into an art collective.

About 60 residents turned out for the city’s 13th annual trash can painting party. Within a few hours they had decorated 37 cans.

Most of the cans were decorated by youngsters and their parents,

Here’s another example.

In Alton, Illinois, the city sponsored a trash can project. The Alton Telegraph reported,

“A permanent art exhibit on 55-gallon canvases opened Saturday in Alton’s James H. Killion Park at Salu as the beautification efforts by area young people there were officially unveiled. More than a dozen metal trash cans painted by students from Alton High School, Alton Middle School, East Elementary, North Elementary, and the Alton Boys & Girls Club now adorn the neighborhood park that was inundated with litter just eight months ago. Now, thanks to the Together We “Can” Campaign, park visitors have circular works of art in which to place their trash.”

Here are a couple of examples we have found in our own community.

Another option for these trash cans is wraps. Our time constraint does not allow for a discussion here but we would be happy to discuss the idea with any interested parties.

In conclusion, we request that Council initiate a public engagement process by submitting this proposal to an appropriate committee who can invite interested parties to participate.

Let the trash talk begin!

Thanks!

Notes/Suggestions on Wraps

They require smooth surface. Some of the well-worn cans can be replaced with new smooth cans that will lend themselves to long-lasting wraps or decals. It provides the opportunity for the Town to wrap cans with big over-sized portraits of Suzanna Moodie, (on the east pier where she landed), James Cockburn, (in James Cockburn Park) Marie Dressler, (after all, we did name a bottom-feeding dredger after her) and other Cobourg residents of historic note.

The Cobourg Historical Society could suggest the cans be wrapped with images of the harbour front through the ages. This could be a theme for a year or two, then another theme or none at all for a free for all as years go by.