

## Zero Waste ideas proposed to Gibsons council

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Buddy Boyd with a handful of Gibsons Gold, a nutrient enriched soil made entirely out of food scraps and horse manure that is created on-site at the Gibsons Recycling Depot as part of Boyd's zero waste initiative. - Jacob Roberts Photo

Gibsons Recycling Depot owner Buddy Boyd is literally digging up support for zero waste, and he pitched his ideas to Gibsons council last week.

At the Feb. 17 council meeting, Boyd presented council with an overview of what constitutes real zero waste compared to what a lot of businesses and governments across Canada and around the world present — erroneously, according to Boyd — as zero waste.

Boyd's main goal is "to replace the Draconian, 19th century solid waste management plan."

"That thing is hideous. It's outdated, it's outlived its usefulness," Boyd said during his presentation. "Solid waste management planning for communities is akin to designing buggy whip factories."

Boyd is not the only zero waster to take offence at the semantics of waste management companies. The website [zwia.org](http://zwia.org) (Zero Waste International Alliance) defines zero waste as a goal to ethically and economically "guide people in challenging their lifestyles and practices to emulate sustainable natural cycles."

Basically, all discarded materials are designed to become a resource for others to use.

"In conjunction with reducing waste, we have to look at ways of reusing what there is," said Mayor Wayne Rowe in a follow-up interview on Feb. 25. "Gibsons Recycling Depot is certainly a leader in that category and have done a good job with their recovery depot here."

Every day Boyd's two electric vans leave his depot to collect food scraps from local businesses like Molly's Reach, Marketplace IGA, Starbucks and the Blackfish Pub. The vans are powered by electricity harnessed through on-site solar panels.

Sunshine Coast residents can also drop off their own food waste at Gibsons Recycling for the cost of one dollar for a five-gallon bucket of anything from vegetable matter to meat and bone scraps.

The food scraps go into a large trommel — with some horse manure to get things moving — then they are gently agitated until everything breaks down into a nutrient-rich soil. Boyd calls it Gibsons Gold, and it's for sale.

“What we're doing is engineering nutrition to put back into our nutrition-starved earth on the Sunshine Coast,” Boyd said on a tour of his facility this week. “The by-product is that we're creating jobs in our community, as well as contributing to the tax base with local, economic development opportunities here by taking something that was once in the waste stream and adding value to it as a resource.”

The real problem for zero waste systems is that there isn't nearly the same amount of money being invested into them as there is for traditional waste management systems (like incinerators or landfills). Boyd has to subsidize the work he does at his facility from his own pocket.

For example: if you buy a can of paint, you're paying an additional fee (called stewardship) that gets reimbursed to recycling plants like Boyd's for the cost of disposing the mostly empty paint cans. Boyd has a few large bins full of them.

The only thing is, the stewardship doesn't pay for the full cost of the disposal. Boyd has to pay for that himself.

“It really is hard,” he said. “I don't get paid. I don't pull a pay cheque through here. I haven't for years.”

Gibson's council thanked Boyd for his presentation last week, but no action from council was taken.

“The audit that was done recently on waste at the landfill indicated about 30 per cent is organic material. That's a fair bit that could go a ways to reducing the impact on the landfill,” Rowe said.

“We certainly have to be cognizant of extending the lifespan of that landfill for as long as we can. We're only going to do that through processes like what Gibsons Recycling is undertaking.”

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