

## The skinny on the stinky mess in city parks

Jul 21, 2009 04:30 AM

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Why not just truck it away?

As people wonder why temporary dumps that have closed aren't being cleaned up, Mayor David Miller said such a move would be very difficult and not practical.

While the mayor didn't say so, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 416, wouldn't stand still while the piles of rotting, stinking garbage were trucked away.

"Certainly, we would view that as crossing the picket line," Local 416 president Mark Ferguson recently told the *Star's* John Spears.

Ferguson added that "what's going to resolve this strike is strong picket lines, and we're not in a position to be removing the waste that has been set at the temporary dump sites. It is a visible indication of the important work that our members do every day."

Some question the legality of using parks and recreation centres as temporary dumps, but Miller spokesperson Stuart Green said the city has approval from the provincial environment ministry.

The mayor is pleading for continued patience from citizens. "We will clean the sites up very, very quickly after the strike is over," he promised. "I understand in (the 2002 strike) it took about 36 hours and everything was cleaned up."

The mayor said he's more concerned about the strike's impact on students who lost summer jobs, welfare recipients who may be losing benefits and children missing day camps. "They're the people this strike is really about, and I think there's a real urgency to getting it resolved."

On Friday, a week after the city publicized details of its latest contract offer, Miller decried the slow pace of bargaining. While he said some progress was made over the weekend, he'd like to see more.

Meanwhile, Miller said city council needs to meet and make decisions on a few urgent items that were in progress when the strike began on June 22.

Details of the special meeting will likely be announced by the end of this week.