

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

JOINT MEETING OF THE

**PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES COMMITTEE
AND
PUBLIC WORKS AND UTILITIES COMMITTEE**

REPORT PHSC 16-PW 21-2004

Minutes of a joint meeting of the Public Health Services Committee and Public Works and Utilities Committee held in Committee Room 4, Regional Municipal Building, Thorold, Ontario, on October 12, 2004, commencing at 3:15 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Committee: Councillors Redekop, Co-chair and Timms, Co-chair; Partington, Regional Chair; Angelone; Bailey; Bodner; Brock; Burroughs; Eke; Goulbourne; Harry; Hodgson; Leavens.

Staff: Mr. Trojan, Chief Administrative Officer; Mr. Neville, Commissioner, Public Works; Dr. Williams, Medical Officer of Health; Ms. Reilly, Legislative Assistant.

Staff

Part-time: Mr. Brcic, Director, Water & Wastewater Services; Mr. Christensen, Director, Health Protection and Promotion; Mr. Hunter, Manager, Health Protection and Promotion; Ms. Papaiz, Communications Coordinator; Mr. Sidawi, Director, Operational Support Services; Dr. Sider, Associate Medical Officer of Health; Mr. Steele, Project Manager, Water & Wastewater Engineering.

Others: Dr. Husain, MacViro Consultants.

PRESENTATION

1. Lakeshore Water/Sewer Committee

Betty Konc, Chair, Lakeshore Water/Sewer Committee, attended on behalf of the Committee to speak to the Drinking Water and Waste Water Disposal Issues in the Township of Wainfleet and the subsequent Environmental Assessment. Ms. Konc expressed the concerns of the Committee, most specifically to the costs for the recommended water and wastewater servicing solution and asked whether alternative solutions have been considered. She highlighted such alternatives as: holding

tanks to replace defective septic systems with a schedule for pumping out the tanks; communal septic systems with the home owners responsible for installation and maintenance on a shared basis; and hiring qualified inspectors to “police” and “enforce” septic systems to become compliant with appropriate building code requirements. Ms. Konc also asked that the Region and Township seek out other communities that may have had the same problem and gather information from vendors and suppliers of alternative systems. In conclusion, Ms. Konc asked that open communication and a joint effort of the Community and the Region take place in order to find an equitable solution.

REPORTS

2. Report PWP 53-2004/PHD 75-2004
Water and Wastewater Servicing Issues
Township of Wainfleet

Mr. Neville, Commissioner, Public Works, advised that the purpose of the slide presentation and joint report is to apprise members of the background and issues related to the Wainfleet Water and Wastewater servicing Environmental Assessment. Mr. Neville commented that the presentation will outline the public health concerns identified and the need to develop appropriate, long-term servicing solutions.

Mr. Steele, Project Manager, provided a map highlighting the Wainfleet Lakeshore Study Area for the Master Servicing Plan Class EA, noting the characteristics of the study area. Information was provided on the various background studies taken over the period August 2001 to October 2003.

Mr. Hunter advised that at the request of the Township of Wainfleet, Public Health completed a sanitary survey in August 2001 and it was concluded that many private septic systems are failing for a variety of reasons, thereby having a detrimental impact on groundwater supplies and Lake Erie. Residents were notified of potential health risks and advised that frequent testing or proper utilization of water treatment devices should be instituted.

Dr. Husain, MacViro Consultants, apprised Committee of the findings of the Hydrogeological study undertaken to assess potential human health concerns associated with private water and wastewater services. The study also examined local geology, hydrogeology and land use. It confirmed a significant impact on local water supplies from malfunctioning private individual sewage disposal systems and the potentially serious human health risk facing residents in the urban areas along the lakeshore.

Mr. Hunter summarized Public Health Concerns as follows:

- Widespread nature of drinking water contamination and sewage system failures have led to a substantive health risk
- 80 years of cottage development and conversion (cause)
- Building Code enforcement strategies are limited in their effectiveness
- Studies confirm contaminated drinking water
- Requiring holding tank installation is not a viable permanent solution

In conclusion, a communal Water and Wastewater solution is needed to resolve this serious community-wide health problem.

Mr. Steele provided an update on the status of the Environmental Assessment Process, detailing the three Public Information sessions held. The most prominent issues identified by the Wainfleet community related to property owner costs and affordability. A chart was summarized detailing the project cost financing for a total of \$48.3 million with \$25.4 million as the cost to Landowners. Mr. Steele commented that Regional staff has recognized homeowner concerns regarding affordability and technical approaches to infrastructure design and construction are being explored that will result in a refinement of preliminary estimates to reduce overall project costs. The most significant cost reductions would be achieved through securing additional federal and provincial funding and opportunities will be afforded by the new federal/provincial Canada-Ontario Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (COMRIF).

Mr. Steele outlined the Next Steps or Follow-Up Actions as follows:

- Address affordability issue: Federal/Provincial Funds
- Refine preliminary cost estimates
- Expand the Communications Plan
- Further define geotechnical conditions
- Explore on-site treatment options
- Review policy options: Hook-ups, payment amortization, allowances for functioning systems, etc.
- Examine feasibility of phasing W&WW
- Review alternative assessment methods
- Township initiate a Secondary Plan process

Committee in response to the presentation, expressed their support to the Follow-Up Actions and it was:

Moved by Councillor Eke
Seconded by Regional Chair Partington

That Report PWP 53-2004/PHD 75-2004, October 12, 2004, respect Water and Wastewater Servicing Issues, Township of Wainfleet, be received and that the Follow-Up Actions, as outlined in the slide presentation be endorsed; and

That a sub-committee or working group be established, including community representatives and other appropriate stakeholders, in order to find a solution to the water and wastewater servicing issues.

Carried.

3. PHD 61-2004
Drinking Water and Waste Water Disposal Issues
In Wainfleet Township

Moved by Councillor Harry
Seconded by Councillor Brock

That Report PHD 61-2004, September 13, 2004, respecting Drinking Water and Waste Water Disposal Issues in Wainfleet Township, be received.

That this report be received for information and that the Regional Chair be authorized to write and meet with the Provincial and Federal governments requesting financial support, including the Canada Ontario Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund, for the proposed extension of municipal sewers and water to the lakeshore communities of Wainfleet.

Carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Committee adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Wayne Redekop
Co-chair

Gail Reilly
Legislative Assistant

Bruce Timms
Co-chair

Pam Gilroy
Regional Clerk
/Associate Director of Corporate Strategy