

Wainfleet Water & Sewer Servicing Project
Public Liaison Committee

Meeting Notes of May 19, 2009
Wainfleet Township Hall

In attendance:

Jayne Campbell

Anne Hetherington

April Jeffs

Ashleigh Miatello- Skrubbeltrang

Wayne Redshaw

Mayor Barbara Henderson, Township of Wainfleet

Scott Luey, Chief Administrative Officer, Township of Wainfleet

Kimberlee Lambe, Communication Specialist, Niagara Region

Mary Lou Tanner, Manager, Niagara Region

Regrets:

Betty Matthews-Malone, Director of Water & Wastewater Services, Niagara Region

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:02 p.m. and the agenda was adopted with additions under "Correspondence".

2. Meeting Notes and Follow up

The meeting notes from March 17 were approved and, as follow up to the notes, Mary Lou Tanner reported that the Q&A on the website now includes the Q&As that arose from the Meet & Greet.

3. Correspondence

Recent public correspondence from Andrew Watts has contained incorrect information to the extent that it warranted an immediate letter to the Editor from the Region's Public Works Commissioner, in response.

PLC members expressed their concern that the information contained in Mr. Watts' correspondence continues to be 'twisted from what was the truth'.

Action – Media articles and letters to the editor will continue to be monitored and responses will be issued when/if necessary to ensure residents are provided with the most current/factual information.

Another resident has asked if Terms of Reference are available for the Social Impact Assessment Study – specifically section 28; subsection 2 and section 38; subsection 2.

Action: Mary Lou stated the information predates her tenure with the Region and she will review and follow up.

Mary Lou reported that an individual contacted the Privacy Commissioner regarding the Social Impact Study survey wanting to know if the Township/Region had the

right to collect the data they did in the survey. After consultation with the Privacy Commissioner, it was reaffirmed that yes, the Township/Region did have the authority to collect that information under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA).

A resident asked "what is meant by 'affluent'?" - Mary Lou responded by saying the survey company asked questions about income, source(s) of income, mortgage etc. and used standard formulas for calculating 'affordability'. By those standards, and since most Wainfleet homeowners have no mortgage and have incomes levels above the national average, it was determined that they were more 'affluent'.

Action: Once the issues have been resolved by the Privacy Commissioner, the consultant's report will be posted on the Township/Region's website.

The letter from Nancy Giles was discussed. It contained some incorrect information...for clarification:

- There is a 50/50 split in the cost of the project between the Township and the Region.
- Work done from the property line to the house is considered to be done on private property and is done at the expense of the homeowner. This is a consistent practice across Ontario.
- If truly comparing apples to apples – the operation and maintenance fees associated with on-site systems over 75 -100 years need to be compared to the costs associated with the proposed infrastructure – it has been proven that the proposed infrastructure would then be significantly less expensive.

Action: this information will be communicated back through the PLC to Nancy.

4. Project Status Update

Design – awarded to AECOM Canada. Their team did the Georgina project (similar to the issues being faced by Wainfleet). They are well experienced. They will be required to give three different detailed designs/cost estimates (systems incorporating traditional servicing; grinder pumps; small bore gravity) – as well as fire flow with and without hydrants.

Archeology – awarded to ASI. They are currently doing background research and will have a report in the next few weeks.

Financial Policy – no update

Natural Heritage – Dillon is currently out in the field gathering data. They have met with the Conservation Authority, Ministry of Natural Resources, and Niagara Region's Planning staff who all provided feedback on Dillon's work plan. Dillon will be proceeding with installing 12 'monitoring wells' on road allowances in Wainfleet (not on private property) to test water quality and quantity.

A letter will be provided to residents explaining the need for the wells, which will also require roads to be partially closed for a portion of the day (not more than half a day in any location). It is expected that this work will begin the first week of June. It is expected that Dillon will begin providing reports on their findings in the new year.

5. Public Meeting and Open House

The request by Betty Konc to hold the meeting during the evening was discussed – as was potentially moving the date of the meeting into July to allow seasonal residents to attend. It was decided that a Saturday morning in July was most suitable and would ensure the largest turnout of both permanent and seasonal residents.

The first hour will be an Open House and the following two hours will be a facilitated public meeting. The main focus will be the social impact study. It is hoped that there will be representatives from Dillon as well as the engineering design team present.

Action: Mary Lou to investigate the possibility of rescheduling the event to July. Note – this has since happened and scheduling conflicts resulted in the event remaining scheduled for June 20 from 9 am to 12 noon.

The PLC was asked what they would like to see as part of the Open House presentation material. It was suggested that:

- staff 'bring residents up to speed in terms of the timeline from August 2007 (date of last public meeting) – without rehashing the past.
- discussion focuses on the costs and how they are only estimates that are not yet confirmed.
- residents be asked what they'd like to see/hear at the session.
- the Wainfleet Rate Payers Association be offered a table at the event to present their documentation to residents.

Action: Ask residents, through the Wainfleet Update on via the Township website, what they'd like to see/hear at the upcoming meeting.

Action: Mary Lou to invite Wainfleet Rate Payers via Betty Konc.

6. Other Business

PLC asked questions/clarification regarding:

Why is the Socio-Economic Report labelled "Draft"?

As part of the Minister's conditions, Socio-Economic report findings have to be shared during an opportunity for public consultation. Once that consultation happens, the report will be finalized.

What are some of the proposed financial assistance options?

There are a number of financial options being reviewed including extending the repayment period and putting a lien on properties so that payment is only required once the property is sold.

Is there an affordability threshold?

Once we know all the figures in terms of project costs, affordability numbers will be 're-run' to determine if the project will be affordable to most residents.

In the case(s) where the project becomes unaffordable, 'hardship' policies are being developed that will be taken to the Township and Regional Councils for consideration/adoption.

Is the recession affecting anyone's income (relative to a resident's ability to pay) and will this be factored into the final equation?

The working group will be continually monitoring economic information for the Township throughout the project (ie: average income; unemployment rate etc.). The 2008 information is not available yet and it will be some months before information is available on income level changes.

Can the PLC get demographic information on Lakeshore residents specifically?

Information can not be gathered that will contain that level of specificity. The information the working group uses comes from census data. PLC members were directed to the Statistics Canada website (2006 – 2A information) to see for themselves how Wainfleet compares with other municipalities.

How can the PLC/Township/Region truly show residents the difference between fact and fiction in terms of what they see/hear related to the sewer and water project?

Continue to provide timely, transparent information to residents – with supporting documentation when applicable.

Tuesday evening PLC meetings are not working well for a number of members – it was decided that meetings will now be held on Thursday evenings.

Meeting adjourned – 8:17 pm.

Next meeting – June 18, 7pm Wainfleet Township Hall
(Since changed to June 11, 2009 to incorporate PLC comments into the display material for the Open House and Public Meeting).