

NIAGARA REGION
WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICES DIVISION

HUMBERSTONE LANDFILL SITE PUBLIC LIAISON COMMITTEE

Notes of a meeting of the Humberstone Landfill Site Public Liaison Committee (PLC) held through ZOOM November 25, 2020.

ATTENDANCE

Committee: Mary Lynn McConnery, Jay Mitchell, Dwayne White, Pat Chiocchio, Regional Councillor, Jim Larouche, Councillor City of Welland

Staff: Jamie Kristjanson, Hydrogeologist Environmental Engineer
Sandy Sawatzky, Waste Management Clerk/Program Administrator
Emil Prpic, Associate Director Disposal Operations & Engineering
Mariano Singzon, Supervisor Waste Disposal Operations

Regrets: Chris Machulla, Jordan Price

1. INTRODUCTIONS

- All members introduce themselves to group and why they are interested in the committee.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

- The agenda was accepted and the meeting called to order at 7:00 pm.
- Committee members approve.

Moved by: consensus

Seconded: consensus

Carried

3. PLC TERMS OF REFERENCE AND VOTING OF CHAIR

- Purpose of the PLC is to inform the community of issues related to the landfill and as a forum for the community to voice concerns to the Region about the landfill.
- Vote for Chair – purpose of the Chair is to ensure the Committee runs effectively and is respectful to all. The Chair can distribute information to the Committee and acts in the role of liaison between the Committee and the Region. Chair is a 1 year term after which the Committee votes in a chair for the following term.
- Any citizen members are able to chair. It is recommended by the Committee to vote for the Chair at the next meeting, as not all of the citizen members were able to attend the current meeting, and an Acting Chair is appointed for this meeting.

Motion: that Pat Pat Chiochio, Regional Councillor, volunteers to be Chair for this meeting; and that the Region will contact all citizen members regarding the duties of the Chair, so that a Chair can be voted for the next meeting.

Moved by: consensus

Seconded: consensus

Carried

4. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS NOTES

Notes of the April 3, 2019 meeting.

- Brief discussion of the Notes and no issues brought forward.

Motion: to accept the Meeting Notes

Moved by: Dwayne White

Seconded: Jim Larouche

Carried

5. THIRD PARTY REVIEW OF THE 2018 ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING REPORT

- Staff explained that the PLC, in the past, had retained a third party (Wilf Ruland) to review the annual environmental monitoring reports for the landfill. Wilf Ruland had been retained by the PLC from the last meeting held in April 2019. The PLC members were provided Wilf Ruland's review of the 2018 environmental monitoring report as part of the Agenda package.
- A member asked if the ponds at the landfill are lined. Staff responded that the storm water ponds are not lined, but the natural clay in which the ponds were dug is of good quality to retain the water.
- The Acting Chair requested a short presentation for the PLC on landfill leachate and how leachate can impact groundwater and surface water.

Action: The Region to provide a presentation on the landfill and environmental effects. (Jamie Kristjanson)

6. UPDATE ON THE HUMBERSTONE LANDFILL EXPANSION CONSTRUCTION

- Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) approved the vertical expansion of the landfill as part of the environmental assessment process. The landfill mound is currently flat. However, the expanded landfill will be higher on the west side of the Site than on the east. The shifting of the mound was done on purpose so that the landfill mound will be shorter in the view from St. George Park, and higher on the west side which is screened from viewing by the forest located west of St. George Park.

- Construction activities include the relining of the perimeter ditch system at the base of the landfill. The ditch was relined with a plastic membrane and then covered with gravel. The trenching has been completed for the secondary leachate collection system, which is L-shaped and located in the southwest corner of the Site where the leachate collection system is shallow.
- Phase 1 of the gas collection system was installed in the north central part of the landfill and Phase 2 was constructed and completed on the west side of the landfill in 2019. A member commented that the gas is flared, but could the energy be used to heat the buildings at the Site. Staff responded that the Region had been approached by companies but it is not a viable option to put onto the electrical grid. The gas system is being constructed in phases and over time will be collecting more gas. At present not viable to heat on-Site buildings as the flare only operates 1 day a week, but it may be considered in the future. With separate organics collection this may actually reduce methane that is produced from any new waste.
- A member mentioned the PCB waste containment cell in the northeast corner of the Site and asked for an explanation for the new members. Staff responded on the history and function. In the 1980s there were sewage lagoons at the landfill, and the landfill accepted sludge into the lagoons from the local industry company (Stelpipe). After the fact PCBs were found in the sludge. The sludge was excavated, dried out, and placed into the PCB waste containment cell which was constructed by the City and Stelpipe. This is basically a separate small landfill unto itself, with a bottom clay liner and plastic membrane, then the PCB sludge, then a top clay cap, plastic membrane and another clay cap. Several studies have been completed around the cell. Testing was completed on the water and sediment of the adjacent creek (the Brown Tap Drain) and on the aquatic life in the creek, as well as in the Welland River where the Brown Tap Drain discharges into the River. The testing showed that there were no effects, but there remains low levels of PCBs in the bottom sediment of the Brown Tap Drain. PCB destruction is federally regulated, and the Region had discussions with the Federal and Provincial environment agencies on whether the cell has to be opened and the PCBs sludge removed and destroyed. Both agencies stated that the cell can remain in place and does not have to be removed.
- A member asks if there have been any recent concerns from residents of odours from the landfill in the community and in St. George Park. Staff responded that there have not been any concerns. Councillor Larouche said that he has not been contacted by residents about odours from the landfill.
- A member asks if the gull control program using the falcon is still going on. Staff responded that the falconer is at the landfill almost daily. The gull control program is part of the Landfill operation.

7. UPDATE ON LANDFILL OPERATIONS

- During COVID the Landfill operations have not changed significantly from 2019. A few measures that were implemented include limiting the number of vehicles at the Drop-Off Depot, and changes on how payment transactions take place. The residents have been good and understand that there can be longer lineups as a result. The number of vehicles is a bit lower than in previous years. There can be tweaks and improvements over time to make the operation more efficient. With second wave upon us we have prepared contingencies to help us deal with pandemic related issues.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

- A member commented that constructing an “Energy from Waste” plant would be better in the long run than expanding the landfill to bury waste, as the burned residue is much less volume than the original waste and the power generated can be put into the electrical grid. Staff responded that an Energy from Waste facility is a large capital and operating investment with significant community involvement and regulatory approval. Over 10 years ago Niagara Region had partnered with the City of Hamilton to assess a possible Energy from Waste facility to share costs and achieve economy of scale. In the end there was no agreement and the decision was made to not proceed. The Province is focusing more on the diversion of recyclable materials, which reduces the amount of waste for disposal. Niagara Region is open to new opportunities as they arise and continues to monitor new and emerging disposal technologies.
- Next meeting: The goal is to have 4 meetings a year. The next meeting will be scheduled for March 2021. Other meetings may be in June, September and December. Suggested dates to be sent to the Committee.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: consensus

Seconded: consensus

Committee adjourned at 8:30pm

Carried