



CITY OF PRINCE GEORGE

Engineering and Public Works
In Pursuit of Service Excellence
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Killarney-Sussex-Wildwood Sanitary Sewer LAS
Pre-Petition Information Session
Heather Park Elementary School
Minutes of October 27, 2015 – 7:00 pm

City Representatives			
Hayley Sedola	Todd Angus	Al Clark	
Working Group Resident Representatives			
Bertha Strasdin	Rob Carstairs	Dennis Friesen	Sharon Lemp
David Pow	Gord Simmons		
Residents	Approx. 60 attendees		

Minutes by Todd Angus. Please contact the writer with any errors or omissions.

Residents were given a copy of the Cost Estimate as they entered the meeting. Hayley went through a PowerPoint presentation which included a project overview, estimated costs, and a recap of the LAS process and next steps.

The formal petition will be mailed out to residents next week (November 2-6) and must be returned to City Hall by November 25, 2015. If residents are away during that time-frame, the petition can be emailed to them but will need to be returned by mail or courier to City Hall. Results of the vote will be known before the end of December, 2015. Hayley gave reminders that petitions not returned are considered No votes and that if two or more people are on the property's title, the petition must be signed by a majority of the owners on title.

The floor was then opened for questions from residents.

Q: Road widening. How wide will they be and what is the standard?

A: The roads are currently approximately 6.3-6.5 meters. Roads will be widened where possible, but not to the full 10 meter standard. The design hasn't been started yet.

Q: On Berwick, what was the average cost for the private side (property line to house) connection and can it also be financed over the twenty years?

A: We do not have an answer for that but from word of mouth we've heard \$4-6,000.00. The amount can depend on factors such as front, back or side access to the house. Most contractors in the city have been involved in these projects and they could be asked for a quote.

Q: Financing that cost over the twenty years?

A: We haven't done that for other projects. There are varying scenarios for each property and the costs would not be able to be divided equally among all residents. Also, the City can't do that work on your property.

Q: The two year grace period?

A: Utility fees will be charged after the two year grace period whether you are hooked up or not.

Q: How deep are the services (lateral lines)?

A: Two meters of cover at least, but can be deeper, below the basement, if possible. We can also send out communication to those that will need a pump to get sewage up to the main. We also have drawing here that we can look at after the meeting.

Q: What is the code for pipe size, from the property line to the house?

A: Governed by the BC Building Code/Plumbing Code. On the City side, we use 100mm or 4 inch diameter pipe, with a minimum 2% grade.

Q: Do the property owners have any input on where the service is located?

A: Yes. One of the costs on the estimate is for "Onsite Engineering". An engineer will meet one on one with property owners, giving advice on location, saving trees where possible and considering other factors.

Q: This all came up very quickly. We received the costs estimate on Saturday. The Working Group is frustrated. It was only in September that the City had information to pass on to the group. Can you give one to two weeks for it to be looked at? There was no input from residents. The amounts are on there but there's been no consultation.

A: The plan is for the petition to be mailed out next week with a return date of November 25th. [The group was asked, by show of hands, if those timelines needed to be pushed back, and no one else indicated a desire to delay the petition.]

Q: Comparisons between the two projects. Expenses will be split between the water utility and sewer. The City is taking only half of that water costs. Why split half and half when the water project opens the ground up anyways? What about traffic control?

A: Take traffic control. This project will be more complicated than Wallace, so traffic control will be more expensive even though the cost will be split. We cannot completely block off all roads. The school, busses and intersections all increase traffic control costs.

Also the water project is being done on this timeline because of the sewer project, but only if this LAS project goes through.

Q: What about the school and sidewalks? For example the 2013 Gladstone \$180,000 sidewalk project, the City paid for that.

A: We see a need for wider roads in this area, and that's why the City will be paying to widen the road. A sidewalk would be too expensive as it brings in curb and gutter, which in turn requires catch basins and a storm sewer.

Q: Was money given to them for that? Can you look into it?

A: Gladstone was a Capital Project.

Q: What are the regulations for where the sewer service goes, near existing water service?

A: For sewer mains, the minimum separation is 3 meters, services can be closer together. Pipe joints can be wrapped to protect against cross contamination if there will be sewer-water spacing conflicts.

Q: Some houses already have both connections. If there are new regulations, is it grandfathered if the services are less than 3 meters?

A: Would have to check with Northern Health.

Q: Why wouldn't the City do that?

A: The 3 meter separation is for sewer and water mains, not for services. Services can be close together. The plumbing code takes over here. Water services are solid copper pipe. Mains have joints and need to be separated to eliminate contamination.

Q: What is the cost for inspection?

A: A plumbing permit is \$140.00 and includes the cost of inspection. We're still waiting to see if the fee may be able to be included in the total project cost.

Q: Wallace had no consulting fee. Why was \$80,000 (\$82,400) on estimate?

A: We learned from the Wallace project that people felt lost when it came to planning their onsite work. Expertise helps a lot. We did this with Ridgeview and feedback has been positive.

Q: For the City hooking up to my existing connection, will fill be put on my lawn to be reclaimed?

A: Anything disturbed will be restored. City crews will restore the City side. If we disturb part of private property it will be restored. If the property owner comes in after and disturbs the ground, then they would be responsible for that restoration.

Q: Will the engineer come before the vote? What if changes are needed?

A: No, we cannot. There is a large cost associated with this and the service will only be provided if the LAS goes through.

Q: Why not use City engineers? Why pay for consultants?

A: The City is responsible for the service to the property line. The engineer would cover from the property line to the house. The City isn't able to advise on private property matters.

Q: \$1000 per homeowner (for Onsite Engineering)? What was the Ridgeview cost?

A: This cost came from Ridgeview experience.

Q: In cases of joint ownership, will there be two forms to each house?

A: There will be a single petition with spaces for signature of all owners. As per provincial legislation, if only one signs but there are two owners, that would count as a no vote. [note: multiple property owners may sign separate forms, as long as all original signed forms are returned.]

Q: The 3% interest rate is not guaranteed?

A: Yes, the 3% rate would be guaranteed over the entire twenty year term. We can guarantee that interest rate and it will form the basis of the LAS Bylaw, which outlines all project details.

Q: What if interest rates come down? Will the rate be reduced?

A: It is a fixed rate for the duration of the 20 year payback period. Owners could secure a private loan, and use it to pay off the LAS debt in full.

Q: Are we the last area to be hooked up?

A: After this group, there are still approximately 110 homes in the Hart Highlands to be hooked up.

Q: For a two year project, which houses will be hooked up first?

A: That has not been fully decided yet. We need to tie into the existing sewer on Wildwood, so we plan to start there. We can only schedule the school area for July and August construction. If there are houses with urgent septic issues we could try to do those first.

Q: Why is the water main being upgraded?

A: The size of the main is small, six inches. We would be installing an eight inch main. The current main is also old and brittle.

Q: Does it contain asbestos?

A: Yes, the material is asbestos cement. It's only dangerous when cut, and we have procedures to make sure that hazard is handled safely.

Q: Are there any water pressure issues, or with the school?

A: A water network study was recently completed which identified parts of the city with insufficient fire flows. This was one of the projects identified. Higher standards are in place now than when this area was first developed.

Q: Will fire hydrants also be replaced?

A: Yes, water services, valves and hydrants would all be replaced.

Q: This all stems from the school and busses, so we're taking on that cost. The water utility should pay for the school, plus safety for the school. A past utility bill insert says increases are because user fees go to capital infrastructure. We're not investing enough. We're paying \$24,300 and are joining up to a city which is short on money. Residents are being put on the spot. Can the City look at it? The working group had not input on that?

A: The school benefits and all residents benefit. The water utility will pay for the water project and the City will also pay for road widening.

Q: Why pay sewer utility fee plus pay for the LAS to hook up?

A: The sewage still needs to go about 10 km to the Lansdowne Waste Water Treatment Centre, going through existing infrastructure and being treated there. Utility fees cover the cost of operating maintaining that system.

Q: We're paying the full cost of our hook up. There have been huge increases in the last five years. Can't the City utility pay more towards that? Water is water and sewer is sewer

A: This is not other people's new sewer system, it's just for this project area. You're paying for the services to get to your property line. We cannot use the sewer pot to pay for these residents.

Q: We're paying \$25,000 plus. We have a failing system downtown. Five years of increases and we join in and pay increased fees. Is there room, or ways for costs to residents to be lessened? We've been paying the water utility. 80 people will be splitting cost unfairly, 50% of cost. Residents pay sewer part of restoration costs, City pays the water part of restoration costs.

A: The City sees that we can do both the water and sewer projects at the same time and share costs. It is a benefit to the area. Residents need to ask if they want to join the sewer system or maintain septic systems.

Q: No information has been coming. Hard to see cost savings. Looking at Wallace, what was their contingency? 10%? Ridgeview 15%? Why are we 20%

A: It's an allowance in case it's needed.

Q: I was told we might have to pay more than \$24,300?

A: Residents will not pay more than this highest probable cost. We have a 20% buffer which is higher than Wallace but they paid actual project cost (higher or lower than estimate). This LAS is highest probable cost. If the cost is lower, residents would pay less.

Q: We had a working group that did nothing.

Q: Will the City be replacing survey pins?

A: Yes, if they are disturbed.

Q: Federal and Municipal grants. \$100,000 grants have been extended to October, 2016, from October, 2015.

A: Are you asking about the Small Communities Building Fund? Council decided not to go for that grant for this project. There were other Council priorities.

Q: They want us to pay, with no grant.

A: Another project was more likely to get funding.

Statement from Rob Carstairs, resident member of Working Group:

The Mayor said the working group was to reduce costs. This hasn't been done. The working group was just a way for the City to communicate with residents. For the first six months, nothing was done. We were well informed, but disappointed about cost savings. Figures were received late, but we have a better understanding of cost savings now.

Not sure if we'd see cost savings with contractor as we went estimating the project ourselves, and the prices per square meter are right in line. The City has good people, a better project will be done by the City. It took time to get the estimate going.

Eight houses in my area have failed septic systems. If there are 3 or more people in a house, showers and laundry need to be spread out over the day. Our septic system will fail, guaranteed. You can do the steam thing to get an extra two years but it's just postponing the inevitable.

The price is not going to go down. Ten to fifteen years ago the cost was \$17,600. Wallace and Ridgeview will be lower and hopefully we will be too. This is not the same City or Council from the seventies.

Q: Why not grants?

A: Rob: We were never getting a grant. The City must OK grants to apply for.

Q: There was no water main mentioned in the past

A: Rob: We're getting wider roads and sewer being hooked up. A better bang for our buck. Systems will fail and costs will go up.

Q: New homeowner in area: Can new homeowners be brought up to speed?

A: Rob: \$22-23,000 estimate plus approximately \$4,000 to hook up to the system.

General discussion on failing septic fields.

Q: What is the cost to decommission septic systems? What needs to be done?

A: Decommissioned septic tanks need to be filled with sand or gravel so they won't collapse in the future.

Q: For Wallace, we could see that the City did sod then residents ripped up the sod to complete their connection.

A: Sod can be rolled up and re-laid and still be fine. We tried to work around that so houses that wanted to hook up right away were landscaped last. We're looking for ways to do this as efficiently as possible. For Ridgeview, landscaping is scheduled for next year, which gives a bit more time for homeowners to hook up first.

Q: Detour traffic speeds, many near misses witnessed. Could City give more money for signs and crosswalks? This is a big concern. Please give it your consideration.

A: We have posted 30km/hr maximum speed signs and can look into putting more up. We also had the speed reader board set up in the school zone for a couple days.

Q: Fast dump trucks were the main problem.

Q: What time-frame for paving being ripped up and repaved?

A: We're looking at doing smaller chunks of the project at a time and repaving as we go. It will not be totally repaved at once. The aim would be to have no gravel over the winter. Probably looking at one to two months per section.

Q: Ridgeview numbers compared to Wallace, or this project?

A: Ridgeview is under budget. A lot of underground utilities there, so was more difficult than Wallace.

Q: Ridgeview estimate was \$28-29,000?

A: Yes, they voted on that amount.

Q: With 15% contingency?

A: Yes.

End of meeting – 8:10 p.m.