



Engineering & Public Works

ENGINEERING SERVICES

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Meeting Minutes

Hart Highlands Sanitary Sewer LAS – Phase 4

November 16, 2016 – 7:00 pm
Heather Park Elementary School
Multi Purpose Room

Preliminary Public Meeting

City Representatives:

Hayley Sedola – Supervisor, Engineering Projects
Adam Homes – City Engineer
Ian Sinclair – Engineering Assistant
Steven Olson – Jr. Engineering Assistant

Property Owners:

Approx. 55 attendees

Minutes prepared by Steven Olson and Ian Sinclair.

Hayley Sedola opened the meeting with introductions of the City representatives and a slide show which provided information about:

- LAS process
- Construction costs
- How the project is funded and the plan for what happens next

The purpose of this meeting was to provide information about the possible project and collect feedback from the residents.

Generally this process is initiated by the property owners and is facilitated by the City. The City's has committed to provide the engineering design and construction management. For the LAS to be created it must be approved by the majority of properties and be approved by City Council. The City of Prince George will work over the winter to create the engineering drawings and a detailed cost estimate.

In order for the project to proceed, a formal petition process is required. 50% of the property owners would need to vote yes and the total value of the yes voted properties must be over 50%. If the LAS is not successful the City will inform the property owners, report to City Council and it will be the end of the project. If the LAS Petition is successful the City will inform property owners, report to City Council to seek approval, draft a bylaw for City Council approval, and request loan approval. Once this is completed the LAS is created and the City will start planning for construction.

Construction is planned to start in 2018 and to be completed in 2020. Estimated construction costs are to be between \$22,000 and \$27,000 per property. This cost includes the sewer main, services up to property line, restorations of the disturbed area and individual engineer consultations for each property owner. Costs that are not included are the connection to the house, restorations that take place on property and decommissioning of existing septic tanks. Alongside this project the City of Prince George is planning to upgrade the water main, provide new services and new fire hydrants. This will increase flows for firefighting, and to bring it in line with the current standards. The water system upgrade allows the property owners to share construction costs on the overall project and reduce the disruption on the neighborhood.

The City will also introduce road widening to bring it closer to the standards, safer, and more usable in the winter. Funding for the pavement will be covered by 75% from the Asphalt restoration funds, 12.5% from the water project and 12.5% for the sewer project.

The next steps are to collect the informal survey, send an update letter, complete the design and cost estimate and provide info and schedule another public meeting.

The floor was opened for questions from residents:

Questions were asked by residents.

Answers were provided by Hayley Sedola unless otherwise stated.

Q: Why is one street, that already has a majority of residents in favor for the project, have to be lumped in with everyone else?

A: It makes a nice size of project to manage and will save costs. It also provides certainty to all of the other residents.

Q: What if not approved and we still want it?

A: We will look at the possibility of a smaller service area.

Q: What if we don't want it and it is still approved?

A: Fill out the surveys and tell us what you want. We will look at options from there.

Q: If I don't want to connect can you just carry on past?

A: Everyone that has the opportunity to connect must pay the LAS and utility fees.

Q: Where do City taxes go?

A: The City of Prince George is run on a budget and cannot use the budget for a new service. Other residents pay utility fees and pay for the installation of the service with the value of the home. It is not fair to ask them to pay for a new service.

Q: If the sewer project does not get approved will the water upgrade happen?

A: No, only if the sewer is approved. The projects will be timed together to ease costs and cut down on neighborhood disruption from construction.

Q: Why can the project not be done in 5 smaller groups and can they be done individually?

A: It is possible due to sanitary flows but the size of the proposed project is similar to the older phases. Provides certainty. The City of PG may look at splitting the project into smaller groups

Q: How much value will this project provide to the lot?

A: Unknown

Q: Frustrated homeowner since 1970. City was given 6 million to install the sewer and it never was

A: Can't speak to promises made decades ago but can provide the opportunity to have a sewer main installed

Resident Statement: I Don't want to pay interest for 20 years

Q: Where do funds come from and how do we pay for it?

A: You can either pay it as a lump sum or have it amortised over 20 years and pay with property taxes. The LAS stays with the property and you have the opportunity to pay it out.

Q: Do late fees apply on taxes?

A: Don't know at this time, we will find out.

Q: Is there interest on the loan

A: Yes the interest rate is not known but the previous phase was 3%. You may also seek private financing.

Q: Why can't we put the construction to tender and have a contractor perform the work.

A: That is an option, please write it down on the survey form.

Q: Do people ever work on the weekends getting paid double time?

A: Yes, sometimes work is required like watering the roads to keep dust down.

Q: What about grants?

A: Grants were looked into extensively previously and there were not many available. One grant was closely considered but City Council could only approve one application for that grant and it was decided that grant should benefit the whole City. We are not currently looking at grants for the funding of this project.

Q: Why no costing to have this contracted out?

A: Tell us what you think on the survey form.

Q: Why should we have to pay for the water?

A: The City of Prince George pays for water.

Q: How do we know what is being charged to each project?

A: City of Prince George uses work orders tied to each budget. Workers track time relative to work being done.

Q: Contractors may do cheaper because you are not paying for idle time. I want to hear what you have to say.

A: Tender is an option. In my experience it is not cheaper but we can look into that as an option.

Q: Why is this price similar to the other projects when the City is paying for the water?

A: Previous phases are similar where the City paid for the water and 87.5% of the roadworks cost. What affects the cost is the depth of the main and the number of manholes. The City will attempt to service by gravity as much as possible. Corners can add manholes and increase the cost.

Q: Which areas will be done first?

A: Residents of Poyner came first so they will be the next. Langley is required as a part of Poyner. Glengarry, Dunbar and Carleton done after. Followed by Montgomery in 2020.

Q: What is the driving force for putting the sewer lines in, are systems failing?

A: There are issues with systems and changes to septic requirements are making it more costly on smaller lots.

Q: It was mentioned earlier that the City facilitates, how can we use contractors?

A: We can use contractors to complete the construction. The City will still play a role by overseeing and monitoring construction. The City is providing engineering design free of charge.

Q: If we went with the contractor would we still have the same loan?

A: Yes you can still amortize over the 20 years.

Q: Is the Interest rate fixed or floating.

A: Not sure on that yet and will have an answer at the next meeting.

Q: How much land will the City be taking for the road widening?

A: None, the City owns a 20 meter wide right-of-way. However the road widening will be by approximately 1 meter on either side of the road.

Q: Why is the City still involved if the engineering is done right. Can't the contractor complete it on its own.

A: The contractor would be on their own with minimal City involvement.

Q: Has the City costed jobs with the contractor? Can we find our own?

A: We have not currently gone to a contractor but a quoted contractor price may not be the high end. Contractors sometime charge extras and may be more expensive.

Q: If the City does the work can there be extras? Does the City eat the cost?

A: City provides the highest probable cost for the worst case scenarios and if the cost is lower, then the residents will pay less. The community charter states owners pay actual cost. If the contractor is hired no money is returned if under budget.

Q: How did previous projects do for budget?

A: The previous projects have gone well and phase 3 KSW project is currently under budget.

Q: Our street was just paved, isn't that a waste?

A: Normally road work is well planned out. Montgomery was paved as an extra and was made as a fast decision. The asphalt will be recycled and will not be wasted.

Q: Poyner came to the City for the watermain. Not heard of people wanting sewer?

A: In 2012-2013 a survey to support Wallace form was copied by a resident and handed out to Poyner (Street and were sold as a water upgrade.)

Q: We have turned down this project before, why is it coming up again.

A: This has come up before so let us know in the survey form.

Q: This project costs so much and it doesn't make sense why people want this project.

A: Some people see this project as a benefit.

Q: Not everyone has 40,000 to pay for this

A: Septic systems can be expensive and City financing is not available for that

Q: How much does it cost to hook up?

A: Depends on the layout of the house. We haven't collected this information, but we've heard anywhere from \$2,000 to \$10,000.

Q: How many people have problems with septic systems? (Asked by residents, to resident.)

A: Majority of the room has no issues with their septic systems. (Answered by show of hands)

Q: Can the private portion be included in the Loan?

A: No, can only include the City infrastructure.

Q: If someone cannot put in a new septic system is it the city's responsibility to provide service?

A: Not sure on the legality. We will find out.

Residents had discussion about septic costs in the area. One resident reported that the blockbuster employee knew of 5 septic systems in the area which have problems.

Q: At least three properties on a street are below the road, would you deepen the sewer or have to pump?

A: It is a balance to accommodate as many people as possible while at the same time keeping costs down for the construction.

Q: Who would provide the pump?

A: The homeowner would provide the pump.

Q: Would you have not benefited having a contractor here to answer questions tonight?

A: This is a preliminary meeting to provide information and get a feeling of the project.

Q: Who completes the connection from property line to the house, can the homeowner do it?

A: The property owner is responsible to hire the contractor and the City is not able to do the work.

Q: Resident reports most field failures are due to grease build up and the lines can be steamed. Why are the septic cost people are talking about so high?

A: Costs were for a full system replacement.

Q: Can we get septic fields tested?

A: Blockbuster can do it. (Answer provided by a resident)

Q: If my septic field stops working while waiting for construction, can we still fix it?

A: Yes, there are new requirements for working on septic systems and requires a qualified person.

Q: What is the monthly cost?

A: Do not have detailed numbers on hand.

Q: Is the City going to provide a full cost estimate before the petition and can we vote it down then?

A: Yes

Q: The cost provided by the city is not representative of the whole cost?

A: The cost that is provided by the City is the cost that all the home owners will have to pay.

Q: Is the interest rate set by the City or the bank?

A: The loan is obtained from the Municipal Finance Authority and is a low rate.

Q: Is this an interest free loan?

A: No there will be an interest rate.

Q: Why do the residents have to pay for a 30,000 dollar hookup when new developments don't?

A: When development is done it is part of what you are paying for in your new lot and is included in the cost.

End of Meeting.