

APPROVED MINUTES

Regular Committee Meeting – Stanhope Peninsula Potable Water System **Tuesday, June 29, 2021 3:00pm** **North Shore Community Centre**

PRESENT:

Chair Mayor Gerard Watts, Committee Members, Stephen Murphy, Peter Vriends, Doug Smith, Jim Revell, Howard Ellis, Norman MacLauchlan, Al Goodwin and CAO Stephanie Moase.

Meghan Senechal on phone

Guests from the Province Morley Foy, Ben Lanigan and Qing Li

2 Members of the Public

Regrets: Ken Hubley

1. CALL TO ORDER: 3:06pm by Committee Chair Mayor Gerard Watts.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

It was duly moved and seconded that the agenda be approved as presented.

Moved by Jim Revell seconded by Doug Smith

All in Favor

MOTION CARRIED

2.1. Disclosure of Pecuniary (Financial) or Other Conflicts of Interest

Division 4, Section 96 of the *Municipal Government Act*

Declarations: There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: June 16, 2021

It was duly moved and seconded that the minutes of June 16, 2021 be approved as presented

Moved by Doug Smith seconded by Howard Ellis

All in Favor

MOTION CARRIED

3.1. Business arising from the minutes

Member inquired if we had received a copy of the 2007 updated study from CBCL from Jody MacLeod, CAO stated it was placed in the shared folder.

4. NEW BUSINESS:

4.1. Question Period with Provincial Reps

Mayor Watts introduced guests from Provincial dept of Environment, Energy and Climate Action. Ben Lanigan (Water and Wastewater Supervisor) began with an overview of the saltwater intrusion in the central well at Lighthouse Point. Upon routine testing it was discovered that one of the 2 central wells had levels of sodium and chloride above the Health Canada guidelines, a letter was issued to the HOA to inform them they would be required to find another source. An application was later received by

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the Municipality for development on one of the lots and the Province provided comments that at that time no new connections should be made to the system. The HOA had a new well drilled on the property. The quality of the water still shows higher than normal levels for PEI, but are within the Health Canada guideline limits. The issue has been resolved for the interim but it is unknown for how long this well will remain good, it could be one year or could be five but most likely sooner than later they will be required to find a more long term solution.

Qing Li (Hydrogeologist) shared with the committee an explanation of groundwater recharge and how saltwater intrusion occurs. Mostly PEI has very good groundwater recharge, one of the best in Canada, however some areas, close to the ocean, still have difficulties getting freshwater. When a well is drilled it creates a column in the ground with which to draw the freshwater through, but when it is close to the sea, the freshwater is on top and the heavier saltwater is on the bottom, and as you draw the freshwater out, the saltwater can enter the well gradually. Often a new well can be great the first year but after a couple of years can become salty, this is most often the case, as saltwater intrusion happens over time. As more and more wells are drilled along the same area, the wells begin to compete for the freshwater, drawing the saltwater in further. Two factors will affect the amount of freshwater, first the recharge. Stanhope Peninsula is not a very large area, surrounded by seawater, it does not have a really high recharge rate. Second factor is elevation, the higher the elevation, the more freshwater sits on top of the saltwater, however the Peninsula is relatively flat, not very high above sea level. This causes more difficulties in getting freshwater, especially long term. Some people may say, right now we have enough groundwater but down the road in the next 3 to 5 years it is more uncertain as more properties are built on and neighboring wells compete with each other. So for the longterm, on the entire Peninsula, from a scientific point of view, a central water source, farther away from the sea water should be considered and investigated.

Morley Foy (Quality and Compliance Manager) stated the Central wells for Lighthouse Point would potentially feed 22 properties (if all become developed). The current well is an acceptable interim solution but they will need to keep looking for a long term solution. As Qing already pointed out, as more areas become developed, there is more competition for that freshwater. The timing of when saltwater intrusion can happen is uncertain. At this point it is important to determine next steps, not only for Lighthouse Point but for the Peninsula as a whole. Morley stated he had done his first Public presentation at North Shore for a plan for water in the Peninsula in 2001 and there have been several plans developed since then. The most recent Public discussion was in 2017/18 and there was some Public hesitancy then, mostly due to lack of or miscommunication regarding how the Project would be funded. Mayor Watts stated this Committee was struck to do more thorough research. They have just started and do not have all the answers yet, but will have clear information on how a project could be funded to provide to Council and the Residents. The primary focus of the committee is the development of practical options which are technically detailed, fully costed, have identified sources of funding and are compliant with all regulatory requirements. Morley also discussed some options of how a large Project could be broken up into phases to deal with the most severe areas first and phase in other areas as problems begin to arise. The study done by CBCL in 2007 may have shown that phased in approach.

A member asked the question, in a full build out scenario of Lighthouse Point (all 22 lots) is there a calculation to determine the rate of how long it would take for the well to become saltwater again?

Qing answered that it is really uncertain. A fracture in the rock underground could allow saltwater to flow in at anytime. There is a calculation that would tell you based on how many homes there are whether there is enough groundwater recharge, however neighbors also have an impact on the well. Outside of the 22 homes on the well, the surrounding wells are also competing, bringing the freshwater table down. If that table is brought below sea level, the saltwater can push in. The whole Peninsula will be impacting each other as the whole underground aquifers are linked together. So we cannot only look at the 22 lots, as all other developed lots around will impact. So exactly how long, we cannot give a number, it could be three years or it could be ten years. Basically, the recharge has to be more than what is being withdrawn.

There was further discussion on what types of options there could be for a phased in approach, the Province is suggesting this approach. Norman MacLauchlan asked if connecting to Charlottetown should be considered. This could be an option to be further studied by the consultant.

A further discussion on what further data may be required and where it should be gathered to gauge the overall water health of the Peninsula. This will be designed into the RFP to ensure current data is updated to provide the most up to date information for Council.

Could check with Stratford and Victoria for information on how they have established their utilities. Kelly Galloway (EngTech) did a needs assessment for the Peninsula in 2009, very detailed, that could be updated.

It is imperative that Council make decisions that are going to protect the values of the properties on the Peninsula.

4.2. IRAC Questions

Mayor Watts requested that the Committee come up with a list of questions to forward to IRAC for guidance on the development of a utility, and rate setting.

4.3. Communications Strategy

How will we ensure to communicate with the Public throughout this process? Placing the minutes and information on the website. Do regular updates in the newsletter.

Develop Terms of Reference for the RFP for a Consultant.

5. NEXT MEETING: Wednesday July 28, 2021 3pm

6. ADJOURNMENT: 4:30pm

There being no further business,

It was duly moved and seconded the meeting be adjourned.

Moved by Peter Vriends seconded by Howard Ellis

SIGNED: Gerard Watts, Chair

DATE:

SIGNED: Stephanie Moase, CAO

DATE: