

DEBERT SOURCE WATER PROTECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Debert Source Water Protection Advisory Committee was held at the Debert Hospitality Centre on November 16, 2022 at 2:00pm.

- Present:** Councillor Marie Benoit, Chair
Mayor Christine Blair
Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works
Paul Smith, Director of Community Development
Peter Dellewell, Business Rep
Beth MacMichael, Citizen Rep
- Regrets:** Michael Allen, NS Environment and Climate Change (NSECC)
Charlotte Sullivan, NS Environment and Climate Change (NSECC)
Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq
- Introductions:** Attendees provided introductions as this is the first meeting with this group.
- Approval of Agenda:** The meeting was called to order at 2:08pm.
- An agenda was prepared and circulated for the Committee's review and approval. County Wide Planning was added as Item 9a.
- Moved by: Mayor Blair
Seconded by: Beth MacMichael
- "That the agenda be approved as amended."
- Motion carried.
- Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the meetings held on May 21, 2019 and November 18, 2019 were circulated for the Committee's review and approval.
- Moved by: Mayor Blair
Seconded by: Peter Dellewell
- "That the Minutes from the meetings on May 21, 2019 and November 18, 2019 be approved as presented."
- Motion carried.
- Business Arising:** Councillor Benoit inquired about the status of the salvage yard approval for 250 Dakota Road. Charlotte Sullivan from NSECC confirmed via email that this property was issued a Salvage Yard Operating Approval in 2019. Charlotte also noted that the active salvage area for 450 Dakota Road does not meet the threshold for a permit. As such, their department will not visit the site unless there is evidence of harmful activities, as reported by the County or the Public. Any reports must be specific and detailed.

Review of Terms of Reference:

A general review of the Committee's mandate, terms of reference, and the requirements of our water utility's operating approval was provided.

Watershed Uses – Review of Risks:

The Committee discussed the salvage activities on Dakota Road. Michelle will check with NSECC on the renewal implications for the salvage yard permit at 250 Dakota Road. The province's new (2019) regulations do not allow salvage activities within the 5-year groundwater travel time for Well 2A, however the permit for 250 Dakota Road may have been issued before these regulations came into effect. The Committee may explore purchasing the two properties in future – Michelle to discuss this matter with the Economic Development Officer. If the properties come up for sale, there may be an opportunity for purchase.

The Committee also discussed the fuel spill on the Sobeys property, which was cleaned up and should not be an issue.

Exploration Program – New Wells:

The County is currently conducting a project to find new wells to supplement the existing water supply. Existing wells off Ventura and Hudson are being assessed with the hope that we can find volume to meet future demands and provide redundancy. Once a new well is identified, we will need to consider zones of influence and activities of concern in the area. The ability of the existing water system to meet the demands of the proposed new housing development on Hudson is still under review.

Source Water Protection Monitoring Program:

Water Utility staff continue to conduct regular visual inspections and water quality testing within the recharge areas of the wells. No issues were identified this year.

The location on Staples Brook Road was selected as it was within Well 2A's influence zone and the owner's willingness to participate. No issues have been identified in the sample results.

Public Education Initiatives:

The Committee suggested providing the local school with information on our watershed areas; as well as including an updated pamphlet in the upcoming water bills. Michelle to coordinate.

County Wide Planning:

Paul Smith talked about County wide planning, which has been mandated by the province by 2024. Right now, we only have a few planned areas with zoning in Colchester, namely the central/urban core and Tatamagouche. We now need to create planning documents for the entire county. The County has hired a consultant to begin the community engagement process and to begin identifying stakeholder issues and items of interest to the communities. The process will include discussions with various stakeholders such as Council, the Planning Advisory Committee, businesses, developers, and public members.

A county wide plan can regulate types of land uses and some types of activities, which can be a helpful tool for watershed protection. Activities such as fuel storage, chemical storage, fertilizer blending, hazardous waste depots and salvage yards can be addressed within the plan. This provides an opportunity to be more stringent than existing provincial regulations. We also have the ability to remove grandfathering for existing uses when the use has ceased for greater than 6 months.

In terms of groundwater protection, municipal planning can help in many ways to address water quality and quantity. Areas of concern can also include areas along existing rivers, and the plan could better protect these riparian zones – it will all depend on the priorities of the communities and the feedback received. We have an obligation to address the five statements of provincial interest in our County wide plan: flooding, housing, agricultural land, infrastructure and drinking water.

We may use a coordinated effort with the French River Source Water Protection Committee (Tatamagouche), this Committee, and the Stewiacke Water Utility as all will have similar goals of watershed protection within the plan.

New Business:

None.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 10am.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm.

Michelle Boudreau
Recording Secretary