

FRENCH RIVER SOURCE WATER PROTECTION COMMITTEE

A meeting of the French River Source Water Protection Committee was held at the Tatamagouche Fire Hall on September 18, 2019 at 10:00 am.

- Present:** Councillor Mike Gregory, Chair
Deputy Mayor Geoff Stewart
Mayor Christine Blair
Greg Watson, Citizen Rep
Perry Swan, Village Commission Rep
Kim Baldwin, Citizen Rep
Crawford Macpherson, Director of Community Development
Michelle Newell, Director of Public Works
Michael Allen, Nova Scotia Environment (Watershed Planner)
- Regrets:** Doug Bastow, North Shore River Restoration Group
- Approval of Agenda:** The meeting was called to order at 10:10 am.
The agenda was approved with one addition – review of citizen petition.

Motion by Greg Watson, Seconded by Kim Baldwin.
All in favour.
- Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the meeting of August 19, 2019 were approved, moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart, seconded by Greg Watson.
All in favour.
- Business Arising:** The Province has not yet responded to the Mayor's letter of May 3rd. A motion was made that a follow up letter should be sent to the Province to request a formal response to the May 3rd letter, and to request an update on the RFP for exploration rights.

Moved by Kim Baldwin, seconded by Greg Watson.
All in favour.
- Review of Citizen Petition:** A copy of the citizen petition was provided to the Committee and Greg Watson summarized the main points. He noted that he, Kim and Councillor Gregory had met with some concerned citizens from New Annan on Monday. They discussed two petitions which had been circulated by the residents – one for the prohibition of mining only, and the other asking for a complete prohibition on any type of regulation. Approximately half of the watershed residents appear to have been contacted with the petitions. Approximately 54% were in favour of regulating only mining, and 65% were not in support of any type of regulation. The results of the petition are summarized in the petition document as submitted to the Committee by the residents.

Residents felt poorly informed and left out of the process. There were concerns that the introduction of regulations would pit

neighbours against one another when issues are reported to the water utility.

The Committee asked that water data, previous minutes and the timeline of events be posted to the County website for easy access by residents.

The Committee reviewed and provided answers for a list of questions that was provided by concerned residents.

There are public concerns regarding the addition of new regulations to the watershed area over time. Staff and Nova Scotia Environment reiterated that any changes or additions to the regulations would be subject to the same process as is currently being followed, including Council support and public consultation.

Review of Committee Questionnaire:

Staff reviewed the results of the public questionnaire as issued by the Committee in August. It was confirmed that the mailout was focussed on having each owner within the watershed receive only one questionnaire. The results show that although 70% of respondents were in favour of controlling certain activities, only 50% were in favour of introducing regulations. This is consistent with the citizen petition. In terms of regulation of mining only, 70% appeared to be in favour.

Draft Regulations:

The Committee reviewed the draft regulations and discussed possible changes.

The option of modifying the definition of watercourse was discussed as the provincial definition is very broad. Staff agreed to explore option to refer instead to 'the French River and its tributaries.' Nova Scotia Environment to review as well.

The document was reviewed section by section, as follows:

- There are two Section 4's, and these need to be renumbered. The first Section 4 can remain as-is.
- Under the second Section 4, most items are already covered by existing provincial regulations, or other sections of the draft regulations. The Committee agreed to remove Section 4 'Restricted Activities'. Moved by Greg Watson, Seconded by Kim Baldwin. All in favour.
- Section 5 Landfills – the Committee agreed to retain this section and clarified that it relates to the establishment of new sites only. Moved by Kim Baldwin, Seconded by Geoff Stewart, with all in favour.

(Mayor Blair left at 11:05 am.)

- Section 6 Onsite Disposal – this item is already regulated by the province, with the only proposed change being notification of the Water Utility. The Committee agreed to remove this section. Moved by Greg Watson, Seconded by Kim Baldwin. All in Favour.
- Section 7 Forestry – There are existing provincial regulations in place, and these are currently under review by the Province. The Committee agreed to remove this Section, moved by Geoff Stewart, Seconded by Kim Baldwin. All in favour.
- Section 8 Agriculture – there are no existing provincial regulations relating to this item, only best management practices. The Committee noted that setbacks should be established from the French River and its tributaries as identified on 1:50,000 mapping, in place of using the term Watercourse. The Committee agreed to remove clause 8.1 and keep the remainder of the Section. Moved by Kim Baldwin, Seconded by Greg Watson. All in favour.
- Section 9 Pest Control Products – commercial products are already covered by provincial regulations. Only change was the requirement to notify the Water Utility. The Committee agreed to remove this Section. Moved by Greg Watson, Seconded by Kim Baldwin. All in favour.
- Section 10 Erosion – the Committee discussed the need to express concerns to TIR re: the sedimentation caused during road ditching. There is a need to improve education and reporting of sedimentation within the watershed area. Sedimentation causing adverse effects is already covered by provincial regulations, however this approach is reactive and not proactive. This section will remain in the document.
- Section 11 Stormwater Management – The Committee agreed to remove the requirement for stormwater management plans as this will likely be captured by the development office. It was agreed that a 10-metre vegetated buffer should be included in this Section. The proposed changes were moved by Geoff Stewart and seconded by Greg Watson. All in favour.
- Section 12 Pits and Quarries – these are already regulated by the Province, with the only change being a notification to the Water Utility. This Section is being kept highlighting that Pits and Quarries are excluded from mining.
- Section 13 Mining – this is currently regulated by the Province, however there is no prohibition on establishing mines within a watershed area. This Section will remain.

Next Meeting:

The Committee agreed that additional public information sessions should be scheduled, and that the draft regulations should be available to the public before the meetings. These items to be discussed at the next meeting.

Next Committee meeting will be held on October 21 at 10am at the Warwick Mountain Recreation Centre.

(The meeting date was later adjusted to October 23 at 10am at the Warwick Mountain Recreation Centre in order to accommodate the Federal Election.)

Meeting adjourned at 11:38 am.

Moved by: Greg Watson



Michelle Newell