

Tatamagouche Source Water Meeting December 5, 2017

A meeting was held at the Tatamagouche Firehall on December 5, 2017 at 10:00 am.

Present: Councillor Mike Gregory, Chair
Deputy Mayor Bill Masters
Greg Watson, Citizen Rep
Kim Baldwin, Citizen Rep
Perry Swan, Village Commission Rep
Michelle Newell, Director of Public Works
Garth Demont, Department of Natural Resources
Michael Allen, Nova Scotia Environment (Watershed Planner)
Crawford MacPherson, Director of Community Development

Regrets: Doug Bastow, North Shore River Restoration Group

Best Management Practices for mining within the watershed: The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the development of Best Management Practices for exploration and mining within the watershed.

Garth Demont from DNR clarified that the upcoming request for proposals relates only to the award of a license for exploration and not for mining. Issuing the RFP is a way to gauge interest from various companies. Interested parties will have to put forward their exploration plan, including their community engagement plan.

DNR expects that the first phase of the exploration program will include airborne/land based geophysics, especially due to the large block of land. Because the deposits are in a vein, the geophysical signature won't be large and will be hard to map, especially through the Nova Scotia's heavy till. The exploration could also include a more detailed on-the-ground survey, and soil/sediment samples will be analyzed to help zone in on potential targets. Following these steps (which could take up to 2 years), the exploration will likely include a drilling program, and modelling of the drill program results. The entire exploration program could take up to 5 years, and usually, mining is carried out by a different company than the exploration company.

The process of drilling during exploration was discussed in more detail. Garth indicated that drill rigs would likely be connected to a skidder for access in wooded areas, or be mounted on a small trailer/ATV. The drill rigs would need clean water around the bit for flushing, water sources could be streams/lakes or a water truck. There could be a collection system for used water, to recirculate it, and to filter out fines. Traditionally, a sump is dug for wastewater, then it is buried. Mud is sometimes used for drilling as well, and cuttings could be collected and hauled off site. Some cuttings could be acid bearing. Once drill holes are no longer used, then the casings must be removed and the hole

cemented. Existing provincial regulations would require setback of drilling activities from water courses. Also, stream crossings or wetland impacts would need approval from NS Environment/DFO. Watercourse alteration permits would also consider species at risk.

DNR would provide oversight on a drilling program if it takes place on Crown land. NS Environment could also be on site for compliance reasons. In our case however, the watershed land is mostly private, and not crown. The request for proposals could require more oversight during the drilling program, and could also require the proponent to hire an independent firm to monitoring exploration activities on behalf of the water utility.

The new Mineral Resources Act contains some wording about community liaison during mining, however not for exploration. Regulations have not yet been developed for the new act. The Request for Proposals could include specific requirements for community liaison during exploration, perhaps 'good neighbour' agreements. Members of the Tatamagouche Source Water Protection Committee could also be on the review team for the request for proposals (RFP). The RFP could also ask for a company's track record with communities and ask for references.

The option of using land use restrictions to control the exploration and mining activities was discussed. The group discussed the possible designation of the watershed as a protected area. Staff were unsure if this approach would allow us to control mineral exploration or mining activities. It may be possible to limit processing and wastewater storage/treatment, but extraction may be provincially controlled. Michael Allen to check any similar recent files have required environmental assessments.

The option of including mining controls within the RFP for exploration was discussed. For example – requiring process to occur outside of the watershed. The committee felt strongly that this approach should be taken. It was unclear if the terms of the RFP or the Best Management Practices (BMPs) would apply to the land after exploration was completed.

The Committee discussed the option of having Council approach UNSM or the Minister of DNR over watershed protection going forward.

County staff could begin drafting the BMPs by looking at existing provincial regulations to see which are already applicable to the exploration and mining activities. For example, mineral resources regulations, forestry regulations, fuel storage regulations, sedimentation/erosion control guidelines, or watercourse alteration regulations. DNR has staff who could support the County in their efforts to draft the BMPs. Garth to send examples of BMPs in other areas (Minnesota, Saskatchewan). Greg

Watson to send along info on existing Forestry Regulations.

“That the Committee recommends to Council that staff resources be assigned to the development of Best Management Practices for mineral exploration within the French River watershed”.

Moved by: Bill Masters
Seconded by: Greg Watson

Watershed Activities

The committee discussed the increase in land leasing for agricultural crops within the watershed. This topic should be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be on February 13, 2018 at 10:00 am. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the drafted Best Management Practices.

Meeting Adjourned



Michelle Newell