

Committee of the Whole Delegation

Town of South Bruce Peninsula

October 19, 2010

To: Mayor Gilbert and members of Town of South Bruce Peninsula Council

Prepared by: Concerned residents of Sauble Beach

Spokesperson: Nancy Brent

Good afternoon. This is my second time to this podium. As you may recall, my first visit was February 23, 2010 asking Council to defer the vote to rezone the Municipal Rd proposed sewage treatment plant site. We know the history and the conclusion, due to public outcries and the EA. We thank you for rescinding this bylaw and are hopeful that the new council will utilize that parcel of land wisely. It is a tax burden on all of us now.

We are here to introduce 3 important issues:

- First, to ask that you do not pass a bylaw that will contractually bind the Town to Genivar;
- Secondly, we believe that Council should re-evaluate the Sauble Sewer Project and disconnect from Genivar regarding this Project, and;
- Thirdly, to present suggestions for moving forward for the community.

I am requesting that you give careful consideration to our views on these three issues all directly related to the Sauble Sewer Project.

This Project has grown far beyond the requirements of the Sauble Beach community. In 2007 Council decided by majority vote to find a small scale solution for the development control area (DCA). In 2008, the application was submitted for \$9,360,000. Government funding of \$6,200,000 was awarded. The decision to reopen the EA in 2010 did not withdraw this direction. This project was to cost 300 residents approximately \$10,000 each. Instead, on October 9th, 2010, a preferred option servicing all of Sauble Beach, at an average cost of \$25,500, plus HST, plus the interest cost of 4.5% and other servicing and maintenance costs to over 2500 residents has been chosen and presented. Genivar also stated that there would be continuous bump-ups which mean additional expenses. The opposition at the public meetings was obvious.

I am here as a spokesperson for those deeply concerned and who will be gravely impacted like:

- my 80 year old neighbours who recently received their \$10,000 municipal water bill and are now experiencing high anxiety with the individual projected cost of the sewer project;
- Rita, a senior on a fixed income. She will not be able to manage this sewer cost on her pension, old age security and supplement;
- Gail, who is also on a fixed income due to a disability;
- Young mother, Christeen, who spoke at the October 9th meeting. She and her husband are barely making ends meet now; and, of course;
- Seasonals and numerous permanent residents who have invested in Sauble Beach, as Ontario's Natural Retreat, to enjoy the simplistic, healthy lifestyle, also find this a financial challenge.

This excessive monetary burden is causing emotional anguish with a sense of fear that they will lose their homes and their way of life! I, too, am very concerned.

At the COW March 2, 2010 meeting, as project prices started to escalate, a Councillor was adamant that he would pursue additional government funding. Unfortunately, he was unsuccessful. Minister of Finance, Jim Flaherty has ruled out further stimulus funding. In fact, Canada is currently \$55.6 billion dollars in debt.

There is tension and unrest amongst the citizens. This has been created through the presentations by Genivar and Town Staff of unsubstantiated claims of pollution caused by septic systems not only in the DCA but also throughout the Beach. At the July 2010 public meeting, South Bruce Peninsula's Chief Building Official stated that he would approach council to approve a septic re-inspection for the DCA. At the October meeting, this was not presented.

Genivar has been blindly leading Council through the process.

1. Genivar was working on this file in 2003 and prepared the failed funding application in 2004. In this application they claimed the project was construction ready when it was not. Why? Because no acceptable method for a large scale discharge of effluent has ever been found by this firm.
2. Subsequently, Genivar proposed discharging everything from Hepworth and Sauble to the river in their 2006 Amendment 2 update. This was immediately subjected to justifiable bump-ups.
3. Genivar recommended a small DCA system to Council in 2007 as the way to proceed. A small system costing \$9.4 million was approved with a very limited river discharge. Genivar then greatly increased the capacity of the system in 2009 (without direction from Council) creating major concerns with the Ministry of the Environment and Sauble residents which caused the EA to be reopened in 2010 and the process started all over again!
4. In August 2009 Genivar made a costly error for the Town by advising council to purchase a parcel of land for the proposed Sewage Treatment Plant without meeting all the necessary criteria to obtain a Certificate of Approval. The price tag was \$450,000.
5. Genivar has not initiated any testing for contamination at Sauble and has openly admitted at both July and October's public meetings that there is no evidence that septic systems are causing any problems. They state that the Town has not directed them to conduct tests. Genivar is the Engineering Consultant and has the responsibility to insist that testing be done or withdraw from the project. We are all concerned about public health and safety regarding possible ground water and beach contamination. Without an independent environmental study of point sources and non-point sources, we will never know the source of E.coli and other pollutants or how to correct the problem. While Sauble Beach was closed for a day and a half, many of our neighbouring cities and towns that do have sewers were closed for several weeks this past summer. Since there is no evidence of septic leakage into Lake Huron or the water supply; we have no reason to believe that a sewer system is necessary for Sauble Beach. Also, neighbouring Native lands on the Sauble River and the south end of the Beach have not been included in this Project.
6. At the July meeting, Genivar said that they do not believe reports from the Ontario Source Water Protection Agency regarding Water Well contamination, and at the October meeting, they dismissed the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario regarding contamination from Municipal Sewage Plants. This is absurd! What will Provincial funders think of a Town that doesn't believe the reports from Government Agencies?

With the current choice of 5A nothing will move forward. It truly reminds us of the public revolt at the Hepworth Legion in 2005. It is time to halt the continuous link with Genivar. Do not give Genivar any contract for any term. There should be no baggage carried forward to the next Council.

Based on concerns presented, we now look at constructive steps going forward for the community.

1. Please retain the services of an independent environmental consulting company to evaluate where the Town is and should be with this Project. This can be accomplished for under \$20,000. Also, commence the necessary testing to determine if there is any pollution problem and, if so, determine the source and correction.
2. Contrary to the October 9th, 2010 public meeting, The Manager of Public Works stated in an interview with the Owen Sound Sun Times immediately after the Genivar presentation, that “he would not recommend that Council proceed with the project without more Government funding”. As already presented, there will not be further stimulus funding. A letter from the Town must go out to all ratepayers of Sauble Beach stating that “this project will not proceed without justification and the Town will commence testing to determine if there is cause for concern from septic systems. All further work on this Project will cease until the results are analyzed.” By sending out this letter you will help reduce the fear that is spreading in Sauble Beach among its residents.
3. Please instruct Town Staff and Genivar to cease providing the media and the Public with unproven claims of pollution and its causes at Sauble Beach.
4. The bylaw to contract with Genivar will simply continue a long and financially wasteful process. With the amount of community opposition the EA will continue unresolved. The style of persuasion that Genivar has used to try and gain community acceptance for this project has failed to accomplish any goal. Do not pass a bylaw that will allow this to continue.

CONCLUSION:

- Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent by Council thus far that have produced little other than great fear and distrust in Sauble Beach. Stop the fear! This project has become insanely out of control!
- Send a letter to residents that their homes are not in jeopardy and that further environmental analysis will be done!
- Conduct an independent review of the process!
- Bring the Sauble Sewer Project back into the control of Council where it needs to be!
- Do not pass a bylaw that will tie the Town to Genivar for this Project for any length of time!

We are quite content with managing our own individual water and septic systems and do so diligently. As none of you live in Sauble Beach, this Project will not affect your personal finances. I shall safely assume that many if not all of you have private wells and septics. Based on this presentation, please put yourselves in our positions.

Thank you.

Concerned Residents of Sauble Beach