

Council to Weigh Alternatives to Sauble Sewers

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by Paul Jankowski

South Bruce Peninsula councillors agreed Tuesday to look into alternatives to sewers in Sauble Beach.

After a short history of the long-debated project from consultant Jeff Graham of Genivar, council's committee of the whole voted to recommend that Genivar's latest report on sewage treatment for Sauble be filed until councillors "fully understand the information contained in the report and are offered alternatives to the recommended plan."

Council would revisit the question no later than Aug. 31, 2011, under the recommendation to file the report made by Marilyn Bowman, one of the two councillors from the Sauble area.

The Genivar report, a third addendum to an environmental assessment carried out in 2001 into bringing water from Wiarton to Hepworth and building a sewage treatment system for Sauble Beach, came up with a new preferred alternative for Sauble sewers.

The so-called 5A plan would see the town begin with a \$27.8 million collection and treatment system that would serve 719 lots. The system would expand over three subsequent phases to eventually service 2,435 lots. The report does not include prices for the expansion phases of the project.

Janice Jackson, the other councillor from the Sauble Beach area, questioned Graham's statement that the 5A alternative was based on input from the community.

"The input from the community was very strong and loud that we're not interested in sewers at all," she said.

"There's no argument there's a problem in the downtown core," Jackson continued before being interrupted by Sauble resident Steve Pollack, who loudly voiced his opposition to the sewer project. Pollack ignored requests by Mayor John Close to stop disrupting the meeting, continuing later to loudly state his opposition despite councillors voting to refuse his request to address the committee.

"I resent the way this has been handled . . . I resent you hearing from Genivar when you already know the people don't want this," Pollock said. "You shouldn't waste our time and our money regarding this . . . This is utter nonsense to even consider putting shit into the lake," he said to applause from some of the three dozen or so people who showed for that part of the meeting dealing with the sewer issue.

Jackson asked if the town could even proceed with the 5A option given that the Ministry of Environment approval for a sewer project was based on one that would serve only 303 lots in the downtown core "and nothing beyond that."

Jackson added that she was "absolutely certain" the 5A plan, which recommends the effluent from a secondary treatment plant be discharged 800 metres out into Lake Huron, would be opposed by the neighbouring First Nation.

Asked later who would provide councillors with alternatives to a sewage system, Bowman said "we, the Ward 3 representatives, will be making suggestions" including another look at the

Clearford system for the downtown core that had been proposed earlier, biofilters and dry composting systems.

"The alternatives need to come from outside of Genivar," Jackson added. "Everything the town has received has all come from Genivar. What we wanted to do is give ample time to go out and assess the situation, get other alternatives presented to us and we delayed that time period to the end of August so that we could get some community input as well."

She also said that "after how many years and \$1.2 million" the town's consultants still haven't shown "there's even a problem out there."

"There's no question the DCA (downtown core) has a problem we need to address, nobody's arguing that. But do we need the big pipe Sauble wide? No, we don't need it," Jackson said.

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