

# Sauble Septic Inspection Plan Pointless if Sewers are Installed

## Owen Sound Sun Times

March 10, 2011

by Dick Waugh

Hearken back to the years gone by and zero in on 1993. That was the year that I ran for council in the former Amabel Township.

Now focus into the all-candidates meeting at the community centre of that time and this is exactly as I recall it.

The question was put to me and here is how it went: Can this municipality afford the cost of sewers and water?

My answer was thus: This municipality must afford this program. It is to the benefit for a long-term solution and brings the whole issue to a head.

The council discussed and discussed it and eventually turned to other subjects that were more important to the electors.

Amabel is amalgamated into South Bruce Peninsula and now 2011 and, some 17 years from the time I was questioned, and some 30 years from the time the issue was originally talked about, councils have since argued about whether it should be or not be.

Engineers were engaged, presentations were made to senior governments, reports were drawn up, land was obtained for treatment facilities.

During the last council the feds, through Grey-Bruce-Owen Sound MP Larry Miller, provided funds to do some 300 properties in the development area with sewers. Miller said at that time that it was very responsible to protect the Lake Huron shoreline.

Nothing was accomplished then and now the present council has introduced yet a new player . . . a septic inspection.

Does this put the intent for a full sewage system for Sauble Beach on the back burner?

"Absolutely no" says Mayor John Close. "We will be tendering for new plans with specialty engineering firms with particular disciplines and in August we will be prepared to make some decisions. We want to be able to tell the naysayers that this will work."

Figuring that the senior governments put much funding into the stimulus programs of 2008, I wondered if there was cash here in 2011. I asked Bill Murdoch about just that.

"There's an election in October and one never knows how much the government will be prepared to generate votes. Get the application in early . . . you can't tell."

Just maybe the intent for a decision this fall could be too late to hope for funding.

The sewer was a controversial subject during the October elections. One candidate, Craig Gammie, who was defeated, had the septic inspection in his plans should he have been successful.

So it seems he won the attention of those who were successful.

As the mayor declared earlier the oldest septic systems will be done first, farms, cottages and homes. "We will pay attention to the source water protection of our wellheads in the Sauble-Amabel area"

This will be a long-range program and, according to the town's chief building official, Wayne McFadden, those systems that are 25 years or older would be "high risk."

He said to council that the inspection must be complete, which would mean sampling, digging and visually looking into the runs.

The cost would be \$120,000 in the first year, but most for this would be replacement permits of \$500 for a complete new system and \$200 for a partial. According to his figures, this would mean just \$30,000 for the general tax levy. Let's wait a second. This means that some properties are told that they must replace their systems while others are told to upgrade their septic systems.

At a replacement cost of some \$7,500 per system it means that those properties that are told to upgrade will be spending a bunch of cash that could be useless when sewers are put into the Sauble Beach area.

When I put this question of duplication and generally a waste of money for the property owners to the mayor, he allowed that "I couldn't agree with you more."

Hmmm. I just have to hope that my system will pass the inspection. And other peoples as well.

*Article ID# unknown*