

**TOWN OF GODERICH
CLASS EA FOR ESSEX STREET SANITARY SERVICING**

**NOTES FROM THE
STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION MEETING**

Details: June 23, 2011
Council Chambers, Town Hall
Presentation and Questions: 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

In Attendance: Chip Wilson, Public Works Manager, Town of Goderich
Bruce Potter, B. M. Ross and Associates Limited (BMROSS)
Andrew Garland, BMROSS
Scott Allen, BMROSS

Stakeholders: 11

Notes:

1.0 Presentation

The nature and scope of the project was summarized to the audience via a Powerpoint presentation. The presentation proceeded in the following manner:

- C. Wilson welcomed the audience on behalf of the Town and provided a brief overview of servicing issues in the study area.
- S. Allen outlined the framework for the meeting and provided general background on the study area. The existing sanitary servicing arrangement in this area was also summarized, as noted below:
 - Properties near the southern limit of Essex Street are serviced via private septic systems;
 - Several dwellings on the west side of Essex Street between Cayley and Britannia Streets are connected to a sanitary sewer situated on private lands. This sewer has not been assumed by the Town;

- The balance of the study area is connected to the municipal sanitary sewer collection system. Certain properties on the east side of Essex Street are connected to this system via rear yard services to Wilson Street.
 - Concerns with existing network of servicing facilities were also presented:
 - Major repairs to private sewer facilities may be problematic, given access issues and the potential for extended service disruptions;
 - Problems with rear yard service connections can be difficult to access and repair activities can heavily disturb landscaping;
 - Gravity sewer connections from basement fixtures are not possible for all properties in the study area, due to the shallow depth of the existing collector sewer at certain locations;
 - Private septic systems do not provide the standard of wastewater treatment achieved by municipal sewage treatment facilities. Older or inadequate septic systems are also susceptible to failure.
 - A preliminary (conceptual) sanitary servicing plan was presented for discussion purposes, which incorporated two primary components; (1) the extension of a sanitary sewer throughout the servicing area and (2) the construction of a sewage pumping station (SPS) to convey sewage flows from the study area to the sanitary sewage collection system. It was noted that the SPS component of the servicing plan triggers a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) for the entire project.
 - S. Allen presented a brief overview of the Class EA study framework and outlined the status of the investigation. It was emphasized that the public meeting was being carried out at the outset of the process to promote public involvement in project planning. It was also noted that additional opportunities for public consultation would be provided as the process proceeds.
 - The Powerpoint presentation notes were provided to the public at the outset of the meeting. Comment sheets were also made available.
- B. Potter provided the audience with additional information on the anticipated servicing plan and several matters relating to project implementation. The following highlights were noted:
- Sunset Park is considered a practical location for the SPS, as the site is under municipal ownership. The audience was also advised that the facility should present minimal physical and visual impacts to the park setting, as it would be predominately below grade and landscaping would be employed to help screen above-ground components (e.g., electronic control panel).
 - As part of the Class EA process, recommendations would be prepared regarding how connection policies could be applied to property owners in the study area. These recommendations would build upon established municipal sewer connection by-laws and recent municipal practices. The audience was advised that while the project team had not discussed connection policies with Council to date, the following approach would likely be proposed for its consideration:

- In accordance with the municipal sewer connection by-law, properties at the south end of Essex Street currently serviced by septic systems would be required to connect to the planned sanitary sewer within a specified time frame.
 - Property owners who have an existing connection to the municipal sanitary sewer collection system would not be required to re-connect to the proposed Essex Street sanitary sewer. In this respect, the municipal “must connect” by-law would not apply to properties serviced by either the private sewer or rear-yard services given that these facilities currently discharge to the municipal system. A service lateral would be extended to all residences to permit a future connection. While these landowners would be under no obligation to connect to the lateral, they would be asked to identify a convenient location for the stub. Re-connection costs would be the responsibility of the property owner.
 - The capital costs for constructing the sanitary sewer and SPS would be incorporated into the sewer budget and would not be directly assessed to local landowners. However, in accordance with municipal policies and practices, a sewer connection charge would be applied to those landowners with properties currently serviced via septic systems.
 - During the course of project planning, parties serviced by the private sewer system would be encouraged to abandon the system and connect to the proposed Essex Street sewer as a collective group. This approach would provide homeowners with a modern service connection and would eliminate their liability for any repairs to the private sewer. Additionally, if only a portion of these residents connect to the municipal sewer, there is the potential that the private sewer could be damaged during the installation of new service connections. This could result in service disruptions and additional repair costs for those homeowners who remain connected to the private system.
- As discussed in the meeting notice, there is currently no plan to proceed to the construction phase of this project. The intent of this investigation is to address the Class EA requirements of this project and to complete, at least, the preliminary design work for major project components. It is anticipated that at the conclusion of the process the project would be integrated into the long-term capital works schedule and would be considered “construction ready” for a future infrastructure funding program. The group was also advised that the proposed sanitary sewer system may ultimately be completed in conjunction with the reconstruction of the affected section of Essex Street.

2.0 Question and Answer Session

At the conclusion of the presentation, the audience was given the opportunity to comment on the information provided. The following generalizes the comments received from the public and the corresponding responses from municipal representatives and other parties.

a. Service Connections

Several property owners inquired about the need to re-route their sewer services to facilitate a connection to the new sewer. This is a particular concern for dwellings where the outlet piping discharges from the rear foundation wall. B. Potter and C. Wilson advised that homeowners planning to connect to the new sewer could either re-route the service around the property or re-plumb the basement sewer piping to outlet towards the front yard.

B. Potter advised that one of the key design objectives of the project is to provide all basements with gravity servicing to avoid the need for sewage pumps. A local property owner questioned if property owners would be required to modify their existing basement piping arrangement in order to facilitate gravity connections. B. Potter advised that homeowners would be under no obligation to re-plumb their basement piping to achieve a gravity connection.

b. Project Scope

Several audience members inquired if additional road and servicing improvements would be carried out concurrently with the sanitary servicing project. In particular, a number of landowners questioned whether the existing storm sewers and watermain would be replaced and whether sidewalks and curbs would be provided. B. Potter noted that it is the Town's practice to improve the servicing and road infrastructure in conjunction with road reconstruction projects, however he stressed that this matter has not been considered by Council. In this regard, decisions on specific road and servicing improvements would be made when the Essex Street road reconstruction project is integrated into the roads schedule.

c. Project Timing

Several residents expressed their general support for the proposal, as well as their interest in having the work proceed in a timely manner. B. Potter and C. Wilson cautioned the group that the Class EA process represents the first step in project planning and that the proposed works may not be completed for several years.

d. Future Action

B. Potter advised that a Notice of Commencement would likely be issued for the Class EA in early-July. The notice will be placed in the newspaper and circulated to local stakeholders. He added that a BMROSS survey crew may be on-site in the near future.

3.0 Written Comments

To date, one written comment has been received from a local stakeholder. The respondent provided additional background information on the status of servicing in the project area.

Should there be any errors or omissions to these meeting notes, please notify the undersigned.

Meeting Notes Prepared by
B. M. ROSS AND ASSOCIATES LIMITED

Scott Allen, Planner (July 7, 2011)

SEA:hv

Distribution

Chip Wilson, Town of Goderich
Andrew Garland, BMROSS