

Lake Major Watershed Advisory Board**Meeting Minutes**

October 17, 2019 – 2:00 p.m.

Lake Major Water Treatment Plant Boardroom

Attendees:

Sherry Bernard (SB), Lake Loon/Cherry Brook Development Association.....Community Representative
 Spencer Colley (SC), (*Chair*), East Preston Ratepayers Association.....Community Representative
 Rev. Wayne Desmond (WD), North Preston Ratepayers Association.....Community Representative
 Julie Ernst (JE), Lake Major.....Community Representative
 Andrew Faulkner (AF), Development Officer.....Halifax Regional Municipality
 Barry Geddes (BG), (*Secretary*), Watershed Manager.....Halifax Water
 Jonathan MacDonald (JM), Project Engineer.....Halifax Water
 Dawn MacNeill (DM), Watershed Planner.....Nova Scotia Environment
 Anna McCarron (AM), (*Vice Chair*) Source Water PlannerHalifax Water

Regrets:

Reid Campbell (RC), Director of Water Services.....Halifax Water
 Bernie Matlock (BM), P. Eng.....Nova Scotia Environment
 Jason MacIntosh (JM), Area Manager.....Department of Lands and Forestry
 Matt Nelson (MN), Forest TechnicianDepartment of Lands and Forestry
 Heather O'Keefe (HO), Protected Areas Coordinator.....Nova Scotia Environment
 Derrick Stoddard (DS), Area ManagerDepartment of Lands and Forestry
 Colin Waddell (CW), Lake Major Water Supply Plant Supervisor.....Halifax Water

1. Attendance and Introductions:

- AM distributed copies of:
 - i. Meeting Agenda;
 - ii. DRAFT March 14, 2019 Meeting Minutes;
 - iii. Copy of History of Lake Major Watershed Advisory Board presentation;
 - iv. Google Earth Map of Lake Major Watershed Areas and Communities; and
 - v. Lake Major Newsletter – Summer 2019 (Volume 12 Issue 1).

Meeting called to order by Chairman (SC):

- Regrets/Absentees listed above; [Note: *Derrick Stoddard has been replaced by Jason MacIntosh as the Area Manager representative for NS Department of Lands and Forestry on the Board.*]
- Quorum noted; and
- Lake Major Water Supply Plant (WSP) staff person reviewed (WSP) safety plan;

2. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Moved by BG to approve March 14, 2019 Meeting Minutes as circulated; seconded by JE; all in favour.

3. Old Business:

a. Dams Updates (JM):

i. Lake Major Dam:

- status of construction:
 - structure and all concrete work are complete;
 - all restoration between the old and new dams is complete, except on the banks where the willows will be planted, which must wait until November because they need to be dormant when planted; that will be done in the next 2-3 weeks;
- some of the electrical and control systems for the sluice gates and fish ladder weirs are still being worked on; they can be moved manually, but once the electrical system is installed through the control program these parts will move automatically;
- next steps:
 - conduct commissioning and verification testing to ensure everything works;
 - contractor stamp of completion, whereby the warranty is good for two years;
- a little behind, but only 5% of the project remains after electrical is complete;
- ensure dam functions for its intended purpose.

Q: *What is the projected completion date? (JE)*

A: Another week of conduit work is needed, then hydroseeding, which is the last piece of the project, which will be completed in mid-late November.

Q: *Any more truck traffic or excavation? (JE)*

A: The only excavation work left to do is to remove and hydroseed the temporary road.

Q: *Will the road that used to go up to the neighbours be removed? The other exit to the Lake Major Road from the lower driveway is dangerous because of the incline. (JE)*

A: Yes. The road will be removed. (JM)

A: A hidden driveway sign could be installed to warn oncoming traffic. (BG)

JE agreed that this would be a good solution.

Q: *AF was asked if he could determine who the request would need to go through. (BG)*

A: Yes, he could investigate this. (AF)

Action: AF to determine who could find out about a sign to warn oncoming traffic.

AF

Q: *Is anything else needed for the old dam? (DM)*

A: No. The old dam is gone completely. (JM)

ii. East Lake Dam:

- Two structures; a concrete spillway and an earthen embankment dam;
- in 2018, Halifax Water was asked to do a performance assessment because the earthen dam is leaking through the structure, a sign there is something wrong with it;
- hired a contractor with dam rehabilitation experience to assess the dam this summer;
- waiting for final report to determine the best value for each option before we decide.

Q: *Is one of more concern that the other?* (DM)

A: No. Need to determine whether to replace or rehabilitate it, based on the best value, which will be a high-level decision.

- the dams only give us access to a third of the storage that is under our control. Because the channel up to the dam is so deep, there is still water up to the structure;
- report should be ready by early October;
- the condition of the dam places no risk to public safety or the drinking water supply.

AM to circulate a map to the membership showing the game sanctuary, Wilderness Area and Protected Area boundaries to illustrate where they overlap.

Action

Complete

b. Lake Major Regulations:

i. On-site Sewage Disposal Systems (OSSDS) (AF):

- DM provided some background on the topic:
 - municipalities may be notified of OSSDS approvals or notification from NSE; the question is whether HRM is signed up for these and if not do they want to be;
 - as far as AF knows, yes, HRM is being notified;
 - Halifax Water would like HRM to notify them or share with them the NSE email that an OSSDS is being approved or installed inside the PWA;

Q: *Who owns the information? If NSE has disseminated the information to HRM, is HRM permitted to do circulate it. Is this a FOIPOP issue?* (AF)

A: Halifax Water is, by PWA regulation, supposed to be notified when OSSDS are installed in the PWA. (BG)

Q: *If the notifications are already being generated, can Halifax Water just be added to the list?* (AF)

A: DM will find out whether Halifax Water can be added to the list. It would need to be a generic email address, so the message is still sent to the agency, regardless of who the responsible individual happens to be.

AF will check into whether HRM was aware that they can receive notification of OSSDS notifications and approvals.

Complete

Action: Halifax Water will consider how it will accept notification of OSSDS approvals and notifications via the generic email address.

BG

ii. Swimming in Long Lake:

- BG displayed the location of the swimming hole on Google Maps;
- a request to change the regulations to allow swimming in Long Lake requires a letter to the utility (Halifax Water) from the North Preston Ratepayers Association (NPRA) describing which part of the lake it would like to be accessible to swimming; (BG said he could help with the description);
- parking and landownership also need to be considered;

Q: *Will it be a public swimming hole?*

Discussion:

- How would swimming be policed if only community members may swim there;
- it must be specifically written as such in the regulations;

- the community still perceives that water rights were taken away and given to everyone;

Q: *It's Long Lake that you want to have access to swimming to, correct? (AM)*

A: Yes. (WD)

- A letter from the NPRA needs to say that the community wants to swim in Long Lake and to identify where in the Lake to permit swimming.
- The questions considered would be, how does this impact the public, and/or water quality?
- In order to change the regulations public consultation would be required.

Action: WD will go back to the North Preston Ratepayers Association to discuss writing a letter requesting designating a swimming area in Long Lake. The letter must be addressed to Halifax Water, who would circulate it to the Board members for review and comment.

Action

**WD/Halifax
Water**

WD to discuss access to Long Lake and private property at the next NPRA meeting.

In progress

c. North Preston Recreational Field Update:

- A portion of the property where the water reservoir is, purchased by Halifax Water 3-4 years ago, was given to the community for the purpose of a recreational field;
- the regulations say an approved erosion and sedimentation control plan (ESCP) must be provided along with the plan to conduct landscaping in the watershed area;
- NSE to provide a copy of the ESCP to Halifax Water.

Keep on the agenda until the inspection and compliance issue has been resolved.

Complete
AM

Action: remove from agenda.

d. Municipal (sewer) service extension in Lake Loon/Cherry Brook:

- If a community wants municipal sewage, it is a community initiative, usually initiated through the Councillor – a champion who puts the motion on the floor – who gets the ball rolling and directs staff to do a report and investigate the issues;
- the LMWAB could support this initiative in a letter to HRM and Halifax Water, since it is in the Board's best interest with respect to water quality for there to be a municipal wastewater (sewer) treatment system;
- the notion of extending municipal sewer services to the area was based on consideration to include services to Bundy Lane in its development application and concept plan;
- the community is concerned how much a new sewer system would cost residents;
- an engineering study would determine the range of costs and how to pay for it – from the general taxpayer to the original homeowner;

Q: *Would it be worth asking Halifax Water to do a presentation to the Cherry Brook community to help the community decide whether to ask for a feasibility study? (BG)*

A: The community is not opposed to looking at this, it is just the cost factor. (SB)

Action: Halifax Water to contact SB about a presentation to the Cherry Brook community to provide a better understanding on what is entailed in municipal sewage system development.

**Halifax
Water/SB**

Action: The Board supports sending a letter to HRM and Halifax Water, at the request of

the Cherry Brook Development Association, in support of extending municipal services into the Lake Loon/Cherry Brook area of the watershed, as a means of reducing the risk of contamination to the water supply from On Site Sewage Disposal Systems.

Action
All

4. New Business:

a. Nova Scotia Lands Montague Mines Remediation:

- BG displayed the Montague Road Mines (MM) area on Google Maps;
- landowners consist of Crown Land, HRM and private landowners;
- MM was identified as one of two toxic sites in the province from past gold mining practices– Goldenville Guys. CO is the other;
- BG cited details from the [Conceptual Closure Study for the Historic Montague Mines Tailings Areas, Halifax, Nova Scotia](#)¹ Report on the elevated levels of arsenic and mercury (toxic chemicals) found in uncontained mine tailings areas, as well as physical hazards from open mine workings;
 - this Study Report does not mention the Protected Watershed Area;
 - a plan to remediate the area is detailed in this Study Report and the construction phases are illustrated on Maps on pages 83 and 84 of this Study Report;
 - the toxicity hot spots lie near the border between the Lake Major and Collin’s Park watershed areas;
 - the plan is to remove and dispose of the material;
- the data results from Halifax Water’s sampling program conducted in these areas indicate that arsenic and mercury is present; however, there is not enough runoff into Lake Major to impact the water supply;
 - As a Best Management Practice Halifax Water has advised Nova Scotia Power to not cross the affected watercourses with machinery so as not to disturb the sediment, which contains the toxins;
- Barry’s Run was identified in the Port Wallace area as containing toxic chemicals from mine tailings, and that disturbing these areas could push sediment downstream;
 - the concerns in Port Wallace is not just about the proposed development there, it is also about the potential recreational activities;
 - the province is looking to remediate these sites to mitigate further impact;

BG handed out fact sheets about gold mine tailings.

Q: *Is there arsenic in the groundwater? (SB)*

A: Halifax Water does not test the groundwater. (BG)

A: SB shared stories of concerns of arsenic in groundwater and shafts in the areas where they used to play as children.

- BG showed the provincial arsenic level indicator [map](#)² for naturally occurring arsenic.
- Halifax Water is working with the province to ensure they are included in the provincial remediation efforts.

Action: Send link to Montague Mines Reclamation Report to Board members.

AM

¹ Link to report is: <http://nslands.ca/pdf/projects/NSLands-Montague-Mines-Final-Report-2019-07-24.pdf>

² Arsenic occurrence map website location: https://novascotia.ca/nse/water/images/arsenic_map.gif

5. Landowner Questions/Update

a. Halifax Water's Presentation on History of Lake Major Watershed Advisory Board (BG)

A handout (Item 1.iii) was distributed to the members to follow along with BG's presentation.

- The Lake Major Water Supply Plant (WSP) was built in 1999;

Q: *Why was this area gated off if the plant wasn't built until 1999? (SB)*

A: To limit access to the Lake Major pump station which pumped water to Lake Lemont. (JM)

- Water was pumped to the Lake Lemont plant for treatment and the water pumped from Lake Major was used to compensate the lack of supply in Lake Lemont;
 - Lake Lemont WSP has not been used since December 1998, after the Lake Major WSP was built;
- Long Lake was North Preston's source water supply until 2009 when Lake Major WSP was connected;
- BG explained what a watershed is, the significance of the watershed boundaries and the background on Source Water Protection;
- Lake Major Watershed Development is based on two reports; i.e., Montreal Engineering Ltd., and H.J. Porter and Associates:
 - a new road was proposed between East Preston and North Preston as part of the watershed area plan;
 - Upper Governor Road was built to provide an alternate route to carry vehicles carrying hazardous substances (e.g., oil trucks), avoiding the need to go over Long Lake and to divert traffic outside the watershed area;

Q: *Is the road being used for those reasons (above)? (BG)*

A: No, not for those reasons. The report says that the road was to open up the area for more development of North Preston, which would divert development out of the watershed area; however, no infrastructure was developed along those lands so there was no new development. Other concerns at the time was hog farm effluent being directed into the watercourses and lakes; and homes built with inadequate septic systems. The road is still not paved and there are no lights which has resulted in illegal roadside dumping.

Water and wastewater services are needed in North Preston, Lake Major (Westphal) and Cherry Brook in order to grow, which was the original intention, however that has not happened. The Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law zoning, which took direction from the reports, was fulfilled in 2006 in so far as the hog farms are all gone now. (WD)

Q: *Do you regret that? (AM)*

A: The community had to move forward. The intentions were great, but it's 40 years later and nothing is done. The younger people are moving out because development is limited. Where are they going to build? Farming was what most of the uneducated people did, and that is now gone due to the restrictions. A lot of the consulting is done for the community but we (North Preston Community members) are not involved. For example, Upper Governor Road is still not paved; a road connecting Simmons Rd. to Johnson Rd., which was promised, was never built because of landowner issues. The community mindset for some people is that the government wants to take our land and do what happened in Africville. You try to do things in a proper fashion, but it is not worth the paper it is written on.

The first MPS came in 1981 and then it was readopted and amended in 1992. It is a condensed version of the Porter and Montreal Engineering reports; 9 volumes from sediment control to

chemical descriptions, very in-depth. (WD)

Members asked to review the Lake Major Working Committee Briefing Booklet and provide comment. AM will remind the members in advance of the next meeting to provide questions about what they would like to have information about in a presentation on this topic at the next meeting.

6. Education Update:

a. Arnold D. Johnson Sr. Water Resources Award Update:

- Remaining on agenda to remind community of its availability;

Action: Continue to provide reminders of ADJ Award application deadlines.

b. Lake Major Newsletter Update:

- Topics for next newsletter:
 - SB profile;
 - Water Quality Taste Test (Lake Major came in 3rd Place in an Atlantic Canada);

7. Municipal Update:

- Nothing to report.

8. Election of Officers:

- Next election of officers – Fall 2020.

9. Next Meeting Date/Time:

- Thursday, March 12, 2020 – 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

10. **Adjournment:** 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by AM

Action

Complete

All