

### **Three Community Groups Join to Fight Town of Mississippi Mills' Septage Plan**

**Ward of Almonte, Mississippi Mills ON - 5 August 2009** - A plan by the Town of Mississippi Mills to apply a new tax or levy to rural residents has run into stiff opposition from three community groups. "The Town is double-dipping," according to Amanda Gorman of the MMRA, "rural residents have already paid to install and maintain septic systems for their homes and will now be forced to use and pay for the septage receiving facility at the Almonte STP." At a public meeting, scheduled for August 19 at 7:00 p.m. in the Pakenham arena, speakers will explain the Town's plan to treat rural septage in a new sewage treatment plant (STP), point out potential problems with the plan and discuss alternative funding options.

Any dwelling or business not on municipal sewer and water services, primarily those outside Almonte, relies on septic tanks. Septage is the solid matter that accumulates in septic tanks and must periodically be pumped out. Instead of spreading it on farmland, as is now the case, the septage will be trucked to the STP for treatment. Rural residents do not object to treating the septage, but they do object to having to pay for construction of the STP.

"At a recent Appleton Community Association meeting, everyone was concerned about the implications to rural residents of the town's septage management proposal." reports Alison Ball, Communication Coordinator for the ACA. All Appleton residents are on septic systems.

The current estimated total cost of the septage component is 10% of the \$28 million total cost, or \$2.8 million, according to town staff. Of this amount, two-thirds is funded by senior governments, bringing the balance to \$933,333.

"We (rural residents) are being gouged in the price of the STP," says CPRC President Bill Duncan. "How can a holding tank, a receiving hydrant and a geo tube be worth 2.8 million? We are being herded like sheep to help offset the cost for Almonte."

"The whole notion of taxing rural residents for a portion of the sewage treatment plant is unfair," according to Shaun McLaughlin, MMRA Treasurer. "We need the new plant to service the new Almonte subdivisions; so the plant should be paid for completely through development charges. Instead, the Town plans to reduce development charges this year. It sounds like we are expected to subsidize the developers."

Most councillors seem to believe that treating septage in a municipal sewage treatment plant is the best option. At last June's Water & Sewer Subcommittee meeting Almonte councillor Alex Gillis said he didn't understand why rural folks are complaining about the STP since they will pay far less than Almonters. The Town of Mississippi Mills is an amalgamation of the semi-urban ward of Almonte and two rural wards, Ramsay and Pakenham.

The August 19 event at the Pakenham arena is sponsored by the Canadian Property Rights Coalition (CPRC), the Mississippi Mills Residents Association (MMRA) and the Appleton Community Association (ACA). For additional information, refer to the organizations' web sites ([www.mmra.ca](http://www.mmra.ca) and [www.canadianpropertyrightscoalition.org](http://www.canadianpropertyrightscoalition.org)).

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