

Communiqué - The MMRA's e-letter - Vol 4.3 (October 2009)

Happy Thanksgiving to all our readers. The onset of autumn brings thanks for a bountiful harvest through the labour of our farmers. Mississippi Mills is an unique rural community with an urban heart. Both urban and rural residents have been subscribing to our e-letter lately as there have been many items of interest that affect us all.

Water and Sewer brings questions... in neighbouring Lanark Village!

So it's not just Mississippi Mills Council which is under the spotlight... A letter to the Editor in the Canadian Gazette (October 8, 2009) asks pointed questions about the \$28.5 million Lanark Highlands' proposed water and sewer system. A public meeting on Oct 26 is scheduled for Lanark Highlands residents. Questions raised (including revenues from trucking in sewage, funding for a mandatory capital reserve, increased raw-sewage truck traffic through the village, increased debt for the township, \$900 k non-funded tender package, covering shortfalls) are similar to questions the MMRA, the ACA and the CPRC have been raising in Miss Mills (<http://www.mmra.ca/today.htm>). Cold comfort for MM residents.

To KDM who stole the sign

You really have to be a knuckle-dragging moron (KDM) to vent your bitterness by burning someone's handiwork. Well KDM has been spotted in our vicinity! In fact KDM took the time and trouble this summer to dig out a heavy, hand-painted sign, transport it somewhere and destroy (incinerate?) it. This 3-metre tall sign was crafted by local businessman George Turcotte. It sat proudly on Highway 29 announcing "all things musical" at George's Mississippi Mills Musicworks. So you have to ask yourself... WHO would do something as dishonourable as this? Well KDM, of course! KDM is a deeply disturbed and resentful soul, in desperate need of electroconvulsive therapy. Worse yet, KDM likely has pals who helped in this cowardly act after some beers or lines of coke perhaps. We advise our kids: "tell an adult if something bad has happened." Our advice to KDM and pals... "talk to a priest, then talk to the cops" or move to Mordor!

Speaking of things growing in the gutter...

At the Sept 21/09 Council meeting Councillor Gillis mentioned that there are lots of weeds growing in the road gutters and sidewalks in Almonte... says it doesn't look good particularly when so much effort is being put into making the Town attractive. Councillor Wilkinson echoed this for the sidewalks in Clayton. Council referred the topic to Public Works for discussion. Now as one of those weed-growing residents of Almonte (who gave up on pesticide-use years before the provincial ban on residential pesticides) I head out to my curb twice a year and slice down those pesky weeds with a flat-end shovel. Having done that I note my property taxes have gone

up about 8%! It's a mug's game. Helping to take care of our little corners of the town used to be a private testament to civic pride. These days everything seems to be a public work...

Why are the costs and revenues of MM's water and sewer infrastructure blended?

Does this aid or hinder financial probity?

"...the proceeds from the hydro plant in the Almonte Ward go towards the costs of water and sewer infrastructure in Almonte. The monies were never directed specifically to the STP However, the costs of the STP have now been folded into the water and sewer costs in Almonte. ... the amount received from MRPC since amalgamation has been \$900K." Mayor Al Lunney, Sept 8, 2009. The more this Council tries to bury the real costs to taxpayers by obfuscation and sleight of hand, the more questions taxpayers will have.

A Public Meeting before anything is settled

On the matter of the Sewage Treatment Plant (STP), the Mayor is quoted as having said "Council is committed to having a public meeting before anything is settled." (<http://www.youralmonte.com/article/15960>) Oh, really? First, a rural development charge for the septage component has ALREADY been implemented, effective September 29/09. SETTLED. Second, at the Sept 21/09 Council meeting, several STP related contracts were awarded. One component -System 3 for septage receiving – is estimated to cost about \$120,000. SETTLED. We have also heard that the Finance Committee recently received a verbal report from a Ministry of the Environment rep who said that there is no legislative agenda item for the province to restrict the spreading of septage on fields (as much as we all agree there should be). Meaning, there is no specific requirement for a septage receiving facility to be included in the STP design. So, regardless of the Mayor's tinpot statement that "this is simply unacceptable" the fact is that the STP is being purposefully overbuilt to take septage, and taxpayers are already committed to the costs involved! SETTLED. Public meeting or not.

Inept governance leads to debatable outcomes... Sewage Treatment needs to be re-visited.

The town has given three reasons for the need for the new Almonte Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) facility:

1. Inadequacy of the sewage lagoons: it is true that Almonte's sewage lagoons are old, ongoing maintenance costs can be expected to increase and there's a lack of backup power for the pumping facility. However, all the versions of the Environmental Assessment reports we have seen agreed that there is not much wrong with the lagoons presently - they may stink due to poor aeration, but they do not leak and do not overflow. The Mayor, however, has said that "The lagoon system is old and failing; it cannot meet the level of phosphorus requirements and

provincial orders were placed on the town to conduct an environmental assessment (EA) on how to correct the problem.” (<http://lunneysite.com/?m=200909>). Where’s the evidence for the supposition? As far as we know our sewage Certificate of Approval hasn't changed, thus the phosphorous requirement hasn't either. When the town was arguing for more expansion some 4-5 years ago the phosphorous discharge was "being monitored, within limits, and falling" ... and the town expected it could handle 1000 more houses.

2. The need to reduce phosphates in the effluent: This would be a good thing, but as noted above, where’s the evidence that there’s a problem? At any rate, we question whether it is necessary to have a whole new treatment plant to deal with this one particular problem, if it is so. The STP draft design report showed phosphates removal as one of the final phases of the process. Would a stand-alone facility not handle this?

3. The need to service the expected increased population: population growth in Almonte is predicated primarily on the new subdivisions. The additional population will require increased sewage treatment capacity overtaxing the existing lagoons, hence the need for a new plant. How much should the developers contribute to the cost of the new plant? Council has never explained properly why the urban development charges have just been reduced by a whopping 30% rather than raised: the major reason quoted is to keep charges in line with neighbouring municipalities. This price competition is ridiculous. Housing in the new Almonte subdivisions goes for about \$250,000. A \$2,000 increase in development charges amounts to less than 1% of the purchase price. As home buyers are unlikely to will choose between Carleton Place and Almonte for a 1% price difference, we have to conclude that this \$3 million gift (1000 homes, \$3000 development charge reduction) from taxpayers goes directly to the developers.

Almonte development update

Here are some items that have been brought to our attention:

- Ann St (Almonte Mews): During a summer of constant noise and hammering, the developer (Andrew Cinnamon) proposed changes to the development of land in the Almonte Mews subdivision. This new proposal would use the land from block 9 through block 16 to develop a large three to four storey condominium building of 70 to 80 units. The draft plan approved by Council was for 83 residential units in total. So is this another back-door ploy to increase density? (August 13, 2009: <http://www.mississippimills.ca/Documents/365/PEMIN%2009%2008%2013.pdf>)
- Sadler Estates: Developer Wilson Bassile presented a design proposal to Planning Committee for Phase One of the draft plan. The concept includes single family homes with wrap around porches and trees fronting onto the entrance boulevard, with garages at the rear of the property accessed by lanes. Mr. Bassile said he would be building the homes along Saddler Drive - remaining lots would be available to other builders. The developer suggested regulations that could be adapted to assist in maintaining the look of the subdivision. You know, give credit where credit is due: Mr. Bassile’s structures at the very least generally have a pleasing aesthetic quality, compared to the eye-irritating trash that other major developers continue to throw

up in this town.

(<http://www.mississippimills.ca/Documents/385/DOC090917.pdf>). The draft plan of subdivision consisted of 541 dwelling units, distributed as 169 single detached dwellings, 118 semi-detached dwellings, 98 townhouse dwelling units and 156 apartment dwelling units.

- **Spring St (Riverfront Estates):** Application for exemption for part lot control for 6 freehold townhouses.
(<http://www.mississippimills.ca/Documents/385/DOC090917.pdf>)
- **Shoppers Drug Mart** at 376 Ottawa Street is almost up and running. Sign permit.
(<http://www.mississippimills.ca/Documents/385/DOC090917.pdf>)
- **Milano Pizza Take-out** is planning on moving to Martin St and Ottawa St, beside the Macs, according to an application to build by developer W. Bassile.
(<http://www.mississippimills.ca/Documents/385/DOC090917.pdf>)

The fall in Lanark County is a beautiful time. Enjoy the days of raging winds, piercing rays of sun and moody clouds in nature's canvas. And remember to support the many outstanding events in our community, including:

- Crown & Pumpkin Tour: Oct 10-12
- MVFM Lecture Oct 15, 7:30 pm Almonte United Church Social Hall: Algonquin to Adirondacks Conservation Connection, Justin Peter.
- Almonte Lecture Series: Cot 16, 7:30 pm Almonte United Church Social Hall: Social Impacts of the Web, Dave Coll.

We welcome your feedback. Visit our website, post a comment on our discussion board, give your opinion on our Facebook page or send an email to info@mmra.ca.

The Board of the MMRA

Mississippi Mills Residents' Association (MMRA)

"Striving to promote a shared vision for Mississippi Mills"

Website: www.mmra.ca

Yahoo Discussion Board: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MissMillsResidents/>

Facebook Group:

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=86444027774&ref=mf#/group.php?gid=86444027774&ref=mf>

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