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**Sent:** June 3, 2009 8:08 AM  
**To:** MissMillsResidents@yahoogroups.com  
**Subject:** [MMRA] Report on septage public meeting

I'd rate last night's public meeting on septage treatment at the Almonte arena as good. The consultants and Tom K. did a fine job of explaining the sewage treatment plant (STP) technology and made a reasonable case (I believe) for choosing the STP as the best option for treating septage. Decisions dismissing other septage treatment option were based largely on a detailed study carried out by Renfrew. It makes fiscal sense to me to use someone else's good analysis than to pay for your own study that achieves the same result.

The STP brings several needed upgrades and technologies to sewage treatment in Almonte. The Gemmel pumping station will be given a bigger capacity and will have backup power. That means less effluent goes into the river during storms or power failures. If the effluent flow is higher than the STP is designed to handle, it will shunt the excess into one of the old lagoons and process it when capacity becomes available.

What we don't know yet is how much rural residents will pay for the septage portion of the STP and how the money will be collected. About 10% of the cost of the STP will be related to septage, or about \$2.8 million. Two-thirds is covered by senior governments; so, that leaves about \$900,000 for us. Diane Smithson said she estimates each rural household will have to pay about \$300 for the capital costs. This may be collected by a levy (which may be spread over three years) or it may be paid by a tax increase. Rural residents will also have to pay a portion of the STP's operating cost. No decision has been made on how to collect this; though, a tipping fee is one option. The mayor promised a second public meeting to discuss the costing options.

Note: The STP work will be put out to tender this summer; so, we don't know the final cost. The current STP budget is just over \$28 million. Tom K. said the tender could be lower or higher.

I am still not convinced that the best way to pay for the STP is through taxes. Tom K. said the lagoons could stand just another 200 residents before they reach capacity. Obviously, the STP is being built to handle urban growth. I believe the major source of STP funding should be from levies on new homes: existing residents have already paid for their sewage infrastructure.

Cheers

Shaun McLaughlin