

Critics call for options for spreading sludge

COBOURG CHRONICLE DEC. 11/08

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Trent Hills resident Wendy Deavitt outlined the medical and financial costs she said her family has incurred since sludge was spread near her home in Trent Hills in 2006.

She intends to seek legal action against those involved in the spreading of sludge near her home in 2006. She said the health of her family and pets has been impinged.

Ms. Deavitt requested a meeting with Ontario Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs Minister Leona Dombrowsky, was refused, and a letter was sent Nov. 27 which stated, "The government is confident that using biosolids in agriculture, if current regulations are followed, do not endanger public health and safety."

Mike Clark, president of the Lone Pine Marsh Sanctuary created by Muriel Braham-Wells, spoke of his concern for health effects on animals in the marsh after the surrounding farmland was coated with sludge.

Organic farmer Bob Garthson pointed to studies showing absorption of more than 20 chemicals by earthworms.

Prince Edward County does not spread its sludge. The county is storing the de-watered material and searching for alternative disposal methods, including fuel digesters.

Durham Region is now operating a digester which serves York as well, producing heat energy. Valleyfield, Que., is experimenting with a \$6-million plasma arc process.

It was the opinion of Prince Edward County Councillor Sandy Latchford that government can no longer end its arguments with the statement, "There is nothing else we can do."

Following the meeting, Cramahe Township Councillor Pat Westrope said, "It has opened up my eyes to the negative aspects of sludge spreading."

Ms. Westrope added she is looking forward to taking this new information to a seminar in Barrie Dec. 10 sponsored by the Biosolids Utilization Committee and the Water Environment Association

of Ontario. Several of the seminar speakers will be from the Ministry of Environment.

Cramahe Councillor Ed Van Egmond was somewhat more reticent about the impact of the meeting. He believed the experts didn't have answers. His understanding of the sources of the higher cadmium levels in this area conflict with the generalizations made by presenters.

Mr. Van Egmond also wonders about contentions made about using the sludge for biomass: If it is inconsistent in composition when it is spread on the fields, how is it suddenly consistent when it is used for biomass fuel?

Currently, some farmers use biosolids on fields where grain is grown. The sludge-fertilized grain is not separated from other grain when it is taken to the mill and used for flour for bread products.

"I will go to the Barrie meeting with my eyes wide open and my mind not made up," Mr. Van Egmond said.

Public teachers contract impasse

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Calls by this newspaper to ETFO president David Clegg were not returned by deadline.

However, in an address made on ETFO's website, Mr. Clegg stated information getting out on the talks is incorrect.

"You should know that OPSBA is a voluntary association of school boards without any legal responsibilities for collective bargaining," Mr. Clegg stated in the video.

"Our original intent had been to completely eliminate the gap in teacher working conditions. Given the current economic climate, we modified both our goal and our timeline. The offer we presented to the boards met the approval of the government and provided a number of substantial benefits for elementary education in Ontario," he stated.

Mr. Clegg stated the EFTO has asked for a 4% yearly pay raise, but asked for none in the fourth year of the agreement so 1,500 new teachers could be hired in Ontario.

Under the last collective agreement, which expired Aug 31, 2008, the starting salary of an elementary teacher within the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board with baseline qualifications was \$38,096 and the maximum was \$84,095.

Mr. Clegg stated the assertion that the ETFO's plan would create a \$260-million shortfall is "simply not true."

English public elementary teachers remain the only unionized employees in Ontario schools not covered by a framework agreement. The public high school and Catholic and French-language teachers have all agreed to the same four-year agreement.

Mr. Johnson said some of the items the ETFO would agree to were mandatory staff meetings, and "on occasion, at prep time to meet with parents."

The offer that was rejected was a 3% annual raise, funding to improve benefits and working conditions, funding to enhance professional development for teachers, money to reduce instruction workloads by 40 minutes (to about 21 hours per

week), and \$53-million to hire more teachers for Grades 4 to 8.

"All the extras have been taken off the table, which is too bad, because there are a lot of good things that could have been done," Mr. Johnson said.

Although he said the OPSBA is always willing to continue talks, "the minister was pretty clear on the deadline" and the time for getting board grants is coming up soon.

Cramahe second only to Cobourg which has a current fee of \$1,800. Planning fees would also rise if the Tunnoek report were adopted, but only marginally from \$1,100 to \$1,200. Other fee changes vary but the cost of an application for subdivision would skyrocket from \$2,000 to \$10,375. Costs of minor variances and site plan controls would also see a major hike. The proposed increases reflect the estimated cost to the township to provide the services. It is not mandatory for the municipality to set the fees at a break even point, but it may not make a profit on them. They can be phased in if the municipality wishes or they can be set below cost recovery. Cramahe council is expected to look at a proposed bylaw to govern new building charges on Dec. 16.

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Development fees may rise in 2009

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By Bob Owen
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Cramahe builders may face higher fees if Cramahe Township council adopts the recommendations made by Tunnoek Consulting Nov. 18 at a public meeting. Currently, Cramahe builders pay some of the lowest fees in the county. Cramahe's current development charge for urban homes is \$2,800. Only Trent Hills is lower at \$750. Hamilton Township is the closest to Cramahe at \$3,379. The \$1,000 development charge in Cramahe for rural residences is less than half of any other municipality. Under the proposal laid out by Glenn Tunnoek, urban homebuilders would pay \$8,620 and rural builders \$1,438. Development charges in Cramahe are used to fund increased transportation demands, wastewater treatment costs, recreation, and capital studies. The biggest cost is the projected share of the wastewater expansion. Using projections made based on Cramahe home building in the past 17 years, Mr. Tunnoek shared the projected \$6-million cost to the township of sewage treatment expansion among the 870 units expected to use the new capacity. The result of his calculations was the \$6,896 wastewater treatment portion of

