

Enbridge wants band council support in Line 9B project

By Donna Duric
Writer

Enbridge Pipelines Inc. is seeking band council's support in its controversial Line 9B reversal project, which crosses unceded Six Nations lands near Cambridge.

Enbridge representatives insist the oil-carrying pipeline will be safe as it awaits approval from the National Energy Board on the controversial reversal from Sarnia to Montreal.

Representatives from the company's aboriginal affairs division have been meeting quietly with staff from Lands and Resources since last summer and have since appealed to council that the project is safe during a presentation to Council's Committee of the Whole on Feb. 4.

It was the first time Enbridge reps met with councillors.

Before Enbridge reps could begin their presentation at the meeting, however, Councillor Carl Hill warned them the dis-

cussion was not to be considered consultation.

"Just for the record, I don't consider this consultation here," he said.

Enbridge is proposing to reverse a section of the aging Line 9 pipeline between North Westover, Ontario and Montreal, Quebec to accommodate demand for access to western Canadian crude to supply the Quebec refining market.

Currently, the pipeline transports crude oil from overseas in a westbound direction. Enbridge says increasing the supply of lower-priced Canadian oil to Canadian refineries benefits the refining industry and the Canadian economy overall.

Council said it was concerned with Enbridge's shaky safety record. In 2010, one of Enbridge's pipelines in Michigan burst, spilling about one million gallons of crude oil into the Kalamazoo River, according to the U.S. Environmental Pro-

tection Agency. Enbridge was subsequently criticized for its handling of the spill.

Danielle Birtch, an advisor with the company's aboriginal affairs division, said Enbridge has been doing inspections on the 40-year-old pipe in the last few months and plans to do more in preparation for the reversal project.

"They ran some inspection tools in the last few months and based on the data, the analysis identified specific points on the pipeline that need to be dug up and inspected and if it requires repair or replacement, they'll do that at that time," she said.

Jamie Honda-McNeil, Enbridge's manager of aboriginal affairs, said the company does integrity checks and monitors their lines 24/7 through a control centre that detects anomalies in the pressure of the pipes.

"Any changes at all are inspected immediately," he said. "There are also

physical inspections on a weekly basis. There's a significant degree of rigour in maintaining the lines. Our first concern with this line is safety, and the environment, secondly."

He said they have a program that gives \$10,000 to first responders should there be an emergency oil spill on Grand River territory.

Councillor Ava Hill balked at the figure.

"You can't even buy the gas," it takes to respond with that amount of money, she said.

Birtch admitted Line 9 has leaked about one barrel of oil since the pipeline was built in the 1970s.

Councillor Ross Johnson wanted to know if Six Nations has ever benefitted financially from the existing Line 9A pipeline.

Honda-McNeil said he wasn't aware of any agreements ever made with Six Nations.

"Certainly none that I'm

aware of," he said.

Councillor Dave Hill said Enbridge owes Six Nations millions for operating on its land since the 70s, without compensation.

"We're going to have to sit down and do some talking there," he said. "I think you owe us big bucks, in my books."

In addition to meeting with band council, Honda-McNeil said Enbridge has also reached out to the Haudenosaunee Development Institute, an arm of the Confederacy, as part of its duty to consult with aboriginals.

"We've sent information to the HDI and we haven't heard back," he said. "We met with one individual there and had a general discussion but there was no follow-up from that individual."

At that point, Councillor Carl Hill piped up, "Just for the record, we don't recognize the HDI. I want you to know that."

Honda-McNeil replied that the Ontario Energy Ministry "seems to recognize the duty to consult and contact that group" and that's why Enbridge is meeting with reps from both the elected council and Confederacy Council.

Elected Chief Bill Montour asked for a map of all the Enbridge pipelines in Ontario after reps told council an already-existing Enbridge pipeline crosses underneath the Grand River in Caledonia.

Enbridge representatives said they'll continue to meet with band council's consultation team, which includes lands and resources director Lonny Bomberry, lands consultant Phil Monture, and Joanne Thomas, Six Nations council's land use consultation first point of contact person.

"We have a lot of concerns," said Montour. "We want to make sure we understand what you're doing and how it's going to be maintained."