

PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT
Harper and Imperial Subdivisions – Sewer Project
Public Information Meeting Notes

MA-1



DATE: Wednesday, November 18, 2009
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: Regional District offices, Dawson Creek, BC

PRESENT: Harper and Imperial Subdivisions residents
Ray and Trudy Lizotte
Steve and Jane Crowell
Jacqueline Kotak
Eunice Remfert
Jim Remfert
Mike Harris
Marilyn Laursen
Dan and Ann Sherk
Ben and Shelly Ermantrout
Arla Simon
Kay Hartnell
Dorothy Ewert
Tammy and Norman Dostal
Carol Hamre
Heather Loiselle
Gary Cooper

Director Wayne Hiebert, Electoral Area 'D', Regional District
Kim Frech, Chief Financial Officer, Regional District
Jaime Adams, Urban Systems
Suzanne Garrett, Corporate Services Coordinator, Regional District

- 1) Call to Order Director Hiebert called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.
- 2) Background: Mrs. Frech advised that the Regional District received notification that the Harper and Imperial Subdivisions – Community Sewer System project has been approved for up to \$1,178,566.00 in federal/provincial funding under the Infrastructure Stimulus fund. This amount represents approximately 2/3 of the project cost, the Regional District share equals \$671,434. Projects approved under this funding must be completed by March 31, 2011.
- 3) Funding Formula estimated costs Mrs. Frech reviewed project costs noting that at the March 2009 meeting figures were based on 60 lots. Since that meeting a number of residents have removed lot lines, reducing the number of lots. Fewer lots will result in an increased cost per parcel. For the purpose of tonight's meeting project costs will be based on 50 lots.

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3) Funding	Project costs based on 50 lots	= \$1,767,000
Formula	Connection to City of Dawson Creek	= \$ 125,000
estimated costs	Fair Share contribution	= (\$125,000)
(continued)	Cost of Feasibility Study / Voting (estimate)	= \$ 45,000
	Contingency (includes SCADA system)	= \$ 38,000
	Total cost of project (for budget purposes)	= \$1,850,000
	Cost per property, if paid up front (based on a 15 year term)	\$ 14,000

Notes:

- these numbers will vary depending on the number of homeowners that pay up front and how many more lot lines are removed
- these costs do not include costs for works on individual properties
- these costs do not include the annual maintenance costs (estimated between \$150 and \$200 per year)
- these costs do not include annual operations costs paid to the City of Dawson Creek (presently at \$110 per year). It was noted that the City is currently reviewing their utility billing fees.

Mrs. Frech noted that costs may vary from year to year. New property owners or properties that are subdivided that wish to tie into the system will be required to pay a "latecomer fee." These new properties will result in reduced costs for the rest of the property owners.

Any property owners thinking of removing lot lines were requested to advise the Regional District as soon as possible. Property owners with two lots will have two services installed.

Mrs. Frech outlined the next step in the process. An information brochure and petition will be forwarded to all property owners. In order for the project to proceed 50% of property owners representing 50% of the assessed land and improvements must sign the petition. Deadline for return of the petition is December 20, 2009.

4) Questions/Comments:

Question: Does the property owner have a say in where the service will be placed on their property?
Response: A survey is currently being conducted, service lines will be placed at the most reasonable location. The majority of the system will be a gravity line which requires a 2% grade. Due to topography, there are a few residences that will require a tank and pumps as the residence is lower than the 2% grade required to gravity feed into the system.

Mrs. Adams advised that residents will need to decommission their sewer lagoons; this will be an additional cost.

Question: What about people who have two residences on one lot?
Response: Charges are based on "per parcel", if they want two services they will be charged for two.

4) Questions/Comments: (continued)

Question: What are the costs for putting the sewer system into each house?
Response: Approximately \$10,000 to \$15,000, it was suggested that residents get together and hire a contractor to put in each individual service, this may reduce individual costs. It may be beneficial for residents to engage the services of the same contractor installing the sewer system; they will have first hand knowledge of where each service is, etc.

Comment: I am thinking about removing my lot lines but have been advised that reinstating them later will be costly. I do not want to spend additional money if this does not go through. So if the project is approved I will be removing my lot lines.

It was noted that majority rules, if the project is approved everyone will be tied into the system. This is a one time deal; if the petition fails funding for the project will have to be returned.

Question: Will our property taxes increase?
Response: Assessments are based on market value, the installation of a sewer system should not increase your property taxes.

Mrs. Adams noted that if the petition is approved tenders for the project will be issued by May 2010. A geotechnical assessment is currently underway.

Comment: We feel that the Regional District should have kept residents in the loop, we did not hear about the project for so long some of us thought the project would not be proceeding.

Response: That is a good point, we should have forwarded information to each landowner regarding the status of the project. The first grant application applied for in April 2009 was denied. A second grant application was forwarded under another government funding program. Due to a number of reasons this application took a long time to be approved.

Question: Can I pay the \$14,000 fee up front?
Response: Yes, homeowners have two options (1) pay up front or (2) pay the annual fee.

Question: You used 50 lots as a base for your figures, what happens if in 5 years someone subdivides their lot into 20 lots?

Response: They would have to pay a "latecomer fee", which will reduce all property owners' payments.

Mrs. Adams noted that the design of the system will factor in for future growth.

Question: Can the City of Dawson Creek include the Harper Subdivision into its boundaries?

Response: The City cannot incorporate any land into the City boundary without each individual property owner's permission.

4) Questions/Comments: (continued)

Question: Is there a time frame within which property owners must tie into the system?

Response: This has not been determined but a previous system was within twelve months of construction completion of the system.

Question: Are there plans to install a water system?

Response: The costs to install water lines at the same time are huge. There must be 3m separation between the water and sewer lines. The grant will not support installation of a water system as this would increase consumption which increases the amount of sewage being produced.

Comment: Upgrading of sewer systems is going to become inevitable, Northern Health has expressed many concerns over the environmental impacts of sewer contaminated soils. In the not to distant future the Ministry of Environment will be forcing communities with sewer problems to fix it, residents will have to pay for upgrades without the benefit of a grant.

Mrs. Adams advised residents to ensure that weeping tile and eavestrough runoff are not hooked into the sanitary sewer system. This puts additional strain on the system and will result in upgrades to the system needing to be done sooner than is required.

Question: How deep are the sewer lines dug?

Response: Two to three metres.

Question: What about construction cost overruns?

Response: We have used maximum numbers factoring in contingency costs. The Regional District will strive to ensure that costs are kept at an acceptable level.

Mrs. Adams asked for a show of hands, how many residents would be in favour of proceeding with the sewer project. A majority of hands were raised in favour.

Director Hiebert thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

5) Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.



Kim Frech,
Chief Financial Officer



S. Garrett
Corporate Services Coordinator