
MINUTES

LIQUID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN MONITORING COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, February 28, 2022 @ 2:00 PM - Via Zoom platform

RECORD OF MEETING

This Record of Meeting is considered to be complete and correct. Please advise the writer within one week of any errors or omissions, otherwise this Record of Meeting will be considered to be an accurate record of the discussions.

PRESENT: Rob Dickinson, Chair, City of Port Alberni
Tom Robinson, Associated Engineering
Members of the Plan Monitoring Committee as outlined below

Action by Discussion:

A INTRODUCTION

Info The City of Port Alberni has received conditional approval of their Liquid Waste Management Plan and a draft Operating Certificate for their Wastewater Treatment Facility. This meeting is the first since the City has re-initiated their Plan Monitoring Committee. Roundtable introductions of all attendees was made and an open invitation extended to other interested parties. Members that participated in the meeting include:

- Rick Avis, Somass Estuary Management Plan Committee
- Mike Carter, VP of Operations, Port Alberni Port Authority
- Phil Edgell, Alberni Valley Enhancement Association (joined meeting at 2:36pm)
- Paolo Eichelberger, Solid Waste Manager, Alberni Clayoquot Regional District
- Brandy Lauder, Chief Councillor, Natural Resource Manager, Hupacasath First Nation
- Melanie Mamoser, Sr. Environmental Protection Officer, Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy
- Jason Seabrook, Manager Environment, Catalyst Paper

B BACKGROUND

Info Tom Robinson from Associated Engineering gave a presentation regarding the project history and next steps. Tom has been involved with this project since 2011. Tom's presentation began with a map showing the location of the City's prior Wastewater Treatment system. He pointed out the vegetated ditch that used to go from the City's old wastewater treatment lagoon to the Somass River where the effluent discharged for many years. The Catalyst lagoon became surplus to the mill and in 2012 the City acquired the Catalyst lagoon.

Wastewater Advisory Committee key issues included:

- Protection of fish - when Dissolved Oxygen (DO) levels in the upper Alberni Inlet are low, which can occur in late summer, the returning salmon are vulnerable. Priority was given to adult salmon. Smolts and juveniles were found to be not as affected by DO levels.
- Protection of human health such as fishers, kayakers
- Climate Change considerations
- Environmental Monitoring needed
- Habitat Restoration

Info Outfall and Diffuser System - designed for a minimum of 10m below low water level. A substitution to the design was requested to install shallower discharge which was better in this environment. They didn't want to impact the area where the adult salmon congregate. 5 outfall ports were installed with 11m spacing between them at a depth of 3m (at low tide).

Effluent Pump Station - required to pump treated effluent through the UV system and discharge into the Alberni Inlet

Treatment Lagoon -

- Screening system (fine screening) where large solids are removed, washed and de-watered.
- 3 large Blowers feed air into the lagoon and rows of diffusers provide diffused air/oxygen that is needed for bacteria to break down organic material.
- UV Disinfection System using reactors (look like fluorescent tubes) doesn't kill pathogens – it disrupts RNA in pathogens making them unable to replicate.
- Back-up power system - GenSet

The LWMP will continue to focus on:

- Source Control (discharge legally) and Volume Reduction
- Combined Sewer Overflows – City is committed to sewer separation system – currently have 4 CSO's (\$1.3m/year for 50 years)
- Inflow and Infiltration – minimize cause of flows, reduce flows

Lagoon Restoration - The City's original lagoon will be decommissioned by the City during the summer of 2022 and restored to its natural environment after that. In October 2021 the Ministry provided a Draft Operating Certificate and the new lagoon was commissioned.

City's Stormwater Management Plan

- Rainwater harvesting program
- Low impact developments
- Green roofing
- Permeable pavement

The PMC will now focus on the last 3 items of the Implementation Plan:

1. Data Collected (weekly/monthly and quarterly)
2. Performance of WWT plant and environmental impact
3. Collection System and the WWTF itself

Receiving Environment Monitoring

- Operational Quarterly Sampling – 7 monitoring sites within the Alberni Inlet (5 downstream and 2 reference sites)
- City to resource-share with Catalyst and DFO Programs. There are many benefits to working together.
- City to regularly report to MoE and PMC.

Collection System Monitoring

- CSO Monitoring – PMC to receive reports

Wastewater Treatment

- WWTF Influent Flow Data
- Final Effluent quantity and quality (as required by regulatory agencies)
- Daily treatment plant operational monitoring to evaluate effectiveness

Post-Discharge Monitoring through the PMC

PMC had two meetings in 2020 so this meeting is actually PMC Meeting #3. Meetings 4, 5, 6, 7 will happen a few times per year over the next two years and then the Committee will settle into annual meetings.

Info

Question1:

Mike Carter: The Port Alberni smell in the summer months, is this part of that?

Answer1:

Rob Dickinson: With the summer heat, there is an odor off the old lagoon due to the amount of solids and poor mixing. There will be a massive improvement in the new lagoon with the aeration system. As the old lagoon dries out this summer however, it may be worse until it dries completely by the fall.

Question2:

Mike: Where does the solid residue go?

Answer2:

Rob: We landfill it.

Info

Background information available:

- Receiving Environment Monitoring Plan
- CSO's during rainfall events – Report to Council
- CSO first 10-20 years should show massive improvement. Multi-year process.
- Since January 14, 2022 the new lagoon has been operational and treating effluent

C NEW BUSINESS

1. Reviewed Draft Terms of Reference for this Plan Monitoring Committee – Discussed what the goals and expectations of the Committee are:

- Info
1. Member Agency Representatives – DFO and MOE River Forecast Centre declined to have a representative on this Committee
 2. Background – City Council has the final sign off on the Terms of Reference. It is the Committee’s job to make recommendations which will be presented to City Council.
 3. Scope – recommendations from Committee eg. Effluent can be held for 12 hours (or up to 2 weeks) and then released depending on tides etc.
Melanie added that any changes to the Operating Certificate need to be discussed with the PMC
 4. PMC Membership – to include two First Nations representatives: one traditional knowledge representative and one expertise (technical) representative.
Terms of Appointment for members will be three (3) years
 5. Goals and Objectives of the PMC – key goals are transparency and accountability (Minutes keep us accountable) and knowledge of other agencies etc. sea level rise – project and monitor (keep ahead of it by 5 years).
Communication – public and updates to Council and media if applicable.
Expectation of Committee – there is a regulatory requirement to meet as a PMC
 6. Limitations – a member may go beyond the Committee with any concerns – they may take concerns to City Council or Ministry
 7. Meetings – two (2) hours every three (3) months
 8. Deliverables – Minutes to Committee and City Council
Presentations by others and recommendations by consensus
 9. Issue Management and Dispute Resolution – PMC to strive for consensus. Minutes will document issues and opinions, views and conclusions of PMC members.
Minutes will be presented to Council.
There is an appeal mechanism available to all members through the Environmental Appeal Board.
 10. Limits of These Terms of Reference
 11. Amendment – consensus of all committee members must be obtained on any amendment to the TOR

12. Support – The City of Port Alberni will consult with the First Nations on a funding mechanism for the participation of the First Nations representatives on the Committee

Info **Question1:**

Jason Seabrook: Are there going to be sub-groups? What is the timing on the monitoring program?

Answer1:

Rob Dickinson: Following January 14th – we are obtaining data and working with Associated Engineering. We will meet in the spring prior to fish migration. At the annual meeting PMC will make recommendations and give an update on action items. PMC will meet four times per year for one to two years. After 2 years we can discuss meeting frequency and amend the TOR accordingly.

Question2:

Info Brandy Lauder: The fish are to hit the Somass mid April.

Answer2:

Tom Robinson: Late summer is the critical time period. We are aware there are many fish runs. We need to know where the fishers are fishing.

RD **Question3:**

Paulo Eichelberger: Does the City have a dumping site for all related documents?

Answer3:

Rob: Yes. The City has a file transfer site on the Cloud called “Box”.

RD/BL/TR **Question4:**

Brandy: Can we have a side meeting to discuss the date of the next PMC meeting? Perhaps an April meeting with myself, Rob and someone from Associated Engineering? The main fishing run is the first week of June. The biggest run is Father’s Day weekend.

Answer4:

Rob: We should hold the next meeting in early May then? Maybe the 2nd week of May? from a public health and environment perspective. Please feel free to contact me with ideas as to meeting days and best days of the week.

Info Paulo: Monday work best for me – quieter day of the week.

RD Rob: We will be sending out the minutes of this meeting. The minutes will stay as a DRAFT for 1 week. If no one has any changes, they will then be complete.

Info **Question5:**

Tom: Do fishers have an up-to-date understanding of outfall system, and diffusers? Most fishers have an eye and ear on how our environment is doing. They can provide feedback.

Answer5:

Brandy: Yes, I handed out the map and layout of the sewage pipe. However, there are a couple of new fishers. Most fishers avoid that area however the spring season is an exception.

For one day of the week both Bands are fishing in that area. The fishers don't want to hook an anchor or nets. It is more likely that the anchor would catch on the cages.

2. Reviewed Receiving Environment Monitoring Plan - Discussed plan and relevant monitoring by other parties

RD The Receiving Environment Monitoring Plan will be provided in the minutes – by link to “Box”

Having one database would be ideal. We can include any other monitoring data by others or add another monitoring station.

TR Associated Engineering to give a 20 minute presentation at our next meeting:

- Why and where we're testing
- Testing more and higher quality
- Nature will slowly repair

Info Tom added that there was care and consideration taken into account when choosing the monitoring sites. It is fully expected, considering years 4/5/6, the PMC may change the monitoring sites.

Rob added that we would like to share data if available/possible.

Question1:

Rob: Do DFO still do monitoring, or are they looking at starting again?

Answer1:

Brandy: DFO contracts with the Hupacasath to monitor two sites at the river and canal.

Info Rob: DO monitoring site – some monitoring is done by hand so perhaps we can use a DO control site

Jason:

Info

- DO data available every month
- Catalyst has 20 years of data that we can add to our data
- Lower reach of the Somass and Estuary

Phil Edgell:

Info

- Aerial photo of Estuary from years ago
- Flood channel being constructed to connect Shoemaker Bay through to the mouth of the Somass
- Construction in the next few weeks
- Bridge put in a couple years ago
- Shoemaker Bay – smolts – easier access point

3. Discussed best forms to engage members on topics and studies

- Info
- Share reports prior to meetings
 - Author of report to summarize 5-10 minutes in next meeting
 - Question period
 - Email or written correspondence

D DISCUSSION PERIOD

Members were invited to introduce topics to be considered as agenda items for the next meeting.

- Info Tom:
- Need common understanding of what numbers might be showing
 - People have different perspectives of what numbers may mean
 - Complex environment
 - PMC needs to work together as a team

- Info Rob:
- Public Health
 - Different species = different levels of DO
 - Ammonia, zinc
 - DO numbers meet regulations? Concerns? Mitigate by controlled release of effluent discharge

- Info Jason:
- Benefit from contact information of all agencies that are out monitoring
 - Receiving environment – don't need overlap – need coordination with other agencies
 - Sub-community of boats testing in the canal
 - What mechanism does the WWTF have to manage impacts to receiving environment?

- Info Tom:
- Lagoon system – large surface area and long treatment time
 - Key operating mechanism = when and how we discharge
 - Should be very little need for lagoon operating adjustments
 - Lagoons are affected by wind but are very stable operations compared to mechanical treatment systems

- Info Jason:
- Lagoon has lots of capacity

E ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.

F PROPOSED NEXT MEETING DATE

- RD 2nd week of May on a Monday? (Proposed) Mon., May 9th at 2:00 p.m.
To enable planned management of the Lagoon effluent for the salmon runs

PROPOSED TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING

- RD Receiving Environment Plan will be sent to PMC members

- RD 1. Rehabilitation of “old” lagoon
- Remove sludge this summer
 - Decommission
 - Summer to start public engagement for rehabilitation with interested parties ie birdwatchers etc.
 - Cost estimate assumed to include removing south and east berms
- RD 2. Controlled discharge release with Fisheries
- DFO often provides short notice – be ready!
- RD 3. Introduce CSO’s – Rob D to send info to PMC
- What are they?
 - Have 4 (got rid of 1)
 - Where are outfalls?
- PE 4. Quick Presentation by Phil Edgell re: the Estuary connection
- Ducks Unlimited will have valuable information
 - Phil to provide a local contact for Ducks Unlimited