



---

Summary Notes

---

R.C. Harris Public Advisory Committee

---

Meeting #03/10

---

April 6, 2010

---

**R.C. Harris Public Advisory Committee**  
Meeting # 3/10  
R.C. Harris Filtration Plant, Construction Trailer  
2701 Queen Street East, Toronto  
Tuesday, April 6, 2010  
7:00 p.m.

**SUMMARY NOTES**

**ATTENDANCE**

***Public Advisory Committee (PAC)***

Julie McNeill (co-chair)  
David Lewis  
Lorraine Mask  
Wayne Reeves  
Steve Mannell  
Rob Sharples  
Paul Dowsett  
Wayne Reeves

Others  
Ken Mains

***City of Toronto Staff***

Ron Brilliant – Toronto Water: R.C. Harris Water Treatment Plant Manager

***Facilitator***

Josie Franch – Public Consultation Unit

***Minute Taker***

Jacie Kuker

***Regrets***

Henry Spencer

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m.

**1. Introductions**

All present at the meeting introduced themselves.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved.

**3. Approval of March 2, 2010 Summary Notes**

The March 2, 2010 summary notes were approved.

**4. Plant Updates**

**a) Building Envelope Rehab (BER)**

- Security up-grade west side
- Schedule

**Ron Brilliant** distributed a diagram of the site to all the members, which featured a schedule for the building updates. The schedule included all the work to be done up to the fall of 2012. He explained that they would be doing the work in phases so that the site is not all under construction at the same time. The administration building will soon have scaffolding so that work can begin on this building.

**Ron Brilliant** said that they would be starting the security upgrades in the spring. The Waste Water group has postponed the work that was being done along the shore because some other work has taken priority.

**Ron Brilliant** said that in the spring, they would be working on the gates in the northwest corner and the concrete wall along the west side. They will also be putting in some steps that will be going down to the beach. He explained that there would be some test patterns of concrete built in the front area of the site, so that they can assess the concrete finishing and make sure that it meets requirements. To make sure that everything is done correctly and that the heritage considerations are being met, there are many models being built. There have been about 15 mock-ups done to date; most of these have to do with the bricks and mortar because matching the new with the old has proved to be challenging. **Ron Brilliant** informed the committee that there will be some walls and steps built on the north side of the property as mockups, just to see how the concrete will look. They will be removed after a couple of months.

**Editor's note: These mock-ups may be located on other areas of the facility**

**Julie McNeill** asked about the significance of the arrows in the gray areas of the diagram near the filter building. **Ron Brilliant** explained that the gray areas are staging areas where the contractors will work right up to the building. The arrows indicate where they will use the roadways. The drawing contains details and construction access points that are not necessarily pertinent to PAC, but are important for the contractors working on the site.

**Rob Sharples** asked what phase 1C in the parking lot indicates. **Ron Brilliant** explained that this is the area where they will be doing the staging work he had previously explained.

**Wayne Reeves** inquired about the east end of the pumping station and the Scarborough Pumping Station penthouse. **Ron Brilliant** said that the penthouse will be removed and there will be an access hatch put in at ground level. He added that other smaller projects will be taken care of as well, such as removing the vent duct structure and fixing the air conditioners that currently stick out of the building. Wayne Reeves asked if this was all part of Phase 3 of the work and **Ron Brilliant** responded that it might be done before Phase 3.

- **Terrace building**

**Ron Brilliant** said that they are working with Heritage Preservation Services and the terrace building has not yet been officially approved; they are still waiting for some permits. He explained that there still may be a few months of analysis, but in general, everyone involved has the same goals for the site. Some of the stone and brick have been removed from the terrace building where an analysis is being done to determine how much of the existing structure needs to be removed. The stones on the top are much bigger than originally thought; they are about 6 to 8 feet long, 5 feet wide and 2 feet high. It appears that some very weak bricks are supporting them; this will be addressed later in the phase. The heritage preservation group agrees with everything the plant wants to do, including removing the extra section. The only thing they have requested is that they would like to leave as much stone up as possible and only rebuild what needs to be rebuilt, which **Ron Brilliant** agrees with.

#### 4 b) North Retaining Wall

**Ron Brilliant** said that the black fence at the front has been installed. There are a few minor things that still need to be done to the stair area at the entrance to the plant and around the gate on the north side of the plant. There are a couple of stones where the new black iron fence has been put in. Eventually there will be three stones here and this is expected to be finished over the summer.

**Ron Brilliant** explained that the main entrance from Queen Street (in the middle) has some railings that are in bad condition. They are still fine from a safety perspective; however they will be replaced sometime this summer, or possibly next summer.

#### 5. Heritage Inventory Update

**Wayne Reeves** explained that he, Julie McNeill and Paul Dowsett took an interior tour of the facility last November with Ron Brilliant, and documented the changes that have taken place within the plant. After the tour, **Wayne Reeves** said that he managed to obtain electronic and hard copies of the PAC meeting minutes since 1995 to help trace the changes over time. He explained that he is now working on updating the 1997 file and making any necessary changes to the references. An exterior walk about the plant still needs to be done with the subcommittee. The section in the heritage inventory that will provide an update on changes since 1997 will involve a description of any work that has been completed as well as any outstanding projects. This will be an important part of documenting all the changes done to the plant since 1941.

**Steve Mannell** inquired about the role of the PAC with the heritage history of the building. **Wayne Reeves** said that the PAC has worked closely with the changes that have taken place since 1997.

**Ron Brilliant** said that with the new technology that exists, there is an opportunity to include digital photographs of the facility in the heritage inventory.

**Julie McNeill** asked whether the heritage inventory would ultimately be an online resource or a book. **Ron Brilliant** said that once the information is compiled, the City would likely be able to turn it into an online resource as well as a book. He added that he would like to see the project more fully developed and near completion before looking into the options for putting the project on the web.

**Steve Mannell** commented that although an online resource would be good, it might be better to have a temporary specific document. For example, a PDF file that is made accessible online would be a specific edition of the document, whereas a website would come with the expectation of being updated regularly. **Ron Brilliant** agreed that he foresees the project as a PDF file that is accessible online. **Steve Mannell** added that a website "front end" to the PDF file explaining the project might be useful and interesting. This could include information about the role of the PAC, the ongoing maintenance of the building and some information on the overall process. He highlighted that the way things are done at the plant are unique, and this would be a good opportunity to share this with the rest of the world. Every few years, the heritage inventory PDF file could be updated after being reviewed and discussed.

**Wayne Reeves** said that considering how much research has been done since 1997, there is a lot of information to be added to the heritage inventory. He shared with the group that there is a blog posted on the Spacing Toronto website about the R.C. Harris Treatment Plant Building and a biographical sketch about T.C. Pomphrey, the architect who designed it. **Ron Brilliant** said that some of T.C. Pomphrey's relatives from England contacted him and came to visit the plant last year.

**Wayne Reeves** said that he expects to have a draft of the heritage inventory document ready for

the next PAC meeting.

## 6. New Business

**Julie McNeill** asked if there was any new business.

**Ken Mains** noticed that there are large stone chips above the garage doors and wondered if they were put there recently. **Ron Brilliant** replied that the stone chips ended up there when the contractors were putting in the top rail. There was a rebar in the top stone that was corroded and loose, so they removed it. The rehab that is going on now will take care of these stone chips.

**Ken Mains** asked about the lighting upgrades scheduled for the plant. **Ron Brilliant** said that, as part of the security upgrades, there are two lights being installed: one at the front entrance and one at the foot of the stairs. **Ken Mains** asked about the lights on the south side of the filter building. **Steve Mannell** added that one of the ideas was to have many little sparkling lights; this idea was rejected. **Ron Brilliant** said that they have eliminated the small lights with the design project. The detailed design now has the lights pointing up onto the buildings, which is the design they will be proceeding with.

**Ken Mains** asked whether anything was going to be done with the glass wall in the chlorine room, which is currently covered with drywall and stucco. **Steve Mannell** explained where the wall is located: as you come into the concourse, straight ahead there is a pylon; when you are looking due north, behind this pylon, under the arch is where the wall is currently covered by a solid panel. He added that he has seen old photos of this glass wall.

**David Lewis** asked when the wall was plastered. **Steve Mannell** said that they have not been able to determine this, but it may have been when the chlorinators were decommissioned. **Ken Mains** suggested that it was probably around the same time as some of the windows were covered in drywall, which may have been in the mid 1970s. **Ron Brilliant** explained that on the floor of the room with the chlorine feeders, it is obvious that room was expanded at some point. It looks like some walls had been removed at some point. He added that the vestibule was installed because of the chlorine gas around 1995 or 1996. There are currently no plans to revert the wall to glass.

**Ken Mains** asked if there was any plan to bring back public tourism to the facility. **Ron Brilliant** said that opening the plant up to the public is not in the plans. **Ken Mains** shared that some plants are designed to accommodate tours, and it is too bad that the R.C. Harris plant is not open for tours because it is a unique building. **Steve Mannell** said that originally the plant was designed for tours. There was a brief discussion on when tours had been available. **Ron Brilliant** shared that tours of the plant stopped after September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. Before this, there were tours for the public as well as formal tours for school groups. In the past, the plant also participated as part of the Doors Open program.

**Ken Mains** pointed out that Ron Brilliant has done an excellent job at obtaining funding for upgrading and maintaining the heritage features of the facility. **Ron Brilliant** explained that the restorations have been done to the plant under the basis that upgrading and maintenance work must be done – not just restoration work alone. There is very little difference in cost to make any repairs while simultaneously restoring the original heritage features of the site. He added that a lot of the work that has recently been done on the facility has been because it is designated a heritage facility, which means that it must meet certain standards.

**Wayne Reeves** explained that he has been looking into getting a national historic site designation for the plant. **Steve Mannell** said that this is a significant task, but not impossible. He explained that the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada designate national historic sites, which is a part of Parks Canada. This designation is not necessarily related to the designation that the site currently has, which is a heritage site. **Wayne Reeves** explained that most provincial

heritage designations are only for buildings. **Steve Mannell** said that for a historic site designation, it would be helpful to use several criteria that are not only the physical fabric of the plant; for example, the civil engineering designation considers the plant's position relative to the development of civil engineering and its role in the history of civil engineering in Canada.

**Julie McNeill** asked if the heritage inventory would help in getting the site designated as a national historic site. **Wayne Reeves** replied that yes it would. **Steve Mannell** said that the heritage inventory is part of the justification for obtaining the designation, and is also part of the expectation to maintain historic identity of the site. **Wayne Reeves** added that a commemorative integrity statement must be prepared to explain how the local operator will maintain the integrity of the site.

Referring back to the ground-mounted lights, **David Lewis** asked when the new lights would be tried out. **Ron Brilliant** said that the plant's senior engineer has been transferred; therefore the lights will probably not be tried until there is a replacement for him.

Referring to the wire mesh over the fence on top of the garages, **Julie McNeill** asked whether it would be painted black. **Ron Brilliant** replied that they would all be painted black. He added that the garage doors must be repainted every 2 years.

**Julie McNeill** inquired about the broken stone along the path and **Ron Brilliant** explained that this is probably due to the construction vehicles going through the area to work. It seems to have happened recently and something will be done about it.

**Josie Franch** said that she received an email from someone at the Parkdale Horticultural Society doing a map of rooftop gardens in Toronto, asking whether there was a roof top garden at the plant. **Ron Brilliant** said that there is not a rooftop garden; however **Steve Mannell** added that there may have been some ornamental plantings on top of the terrace, but these would only have been shrubs.

**Josie Franch** told the committee that she received an email from a member of the public who is concerned about an area where sod had been laid last year, because the contractor's trucks appear to be damaging it. **Ron Brilliant** clarified that sod was laid around the entire plant last year. When the construction is completed, part of each contractor's agreement is that all damaged sod will be replaced. It is difficult to maintain the sod during construction. **David Lewis** pointed out that the area the email is probably referring to is the top east side of the site. **Ron Brilliant** agreed that this area was very muddy, as well as the north side of the service building, the east side of the service building and the south side of the east filter. He referred to the map of the site he had distributed to the committee earlier in the meeting and explained that all the staging areas on the plan will be under construction, and will therefore be muddy until the upgrades are completed.

**Ron Brilliant** explained that the plant has been considering putting in a protective plastic or stone structure to protect the areas where it is necessary for vehicles to drive on the grass. He said that the area he was referring to would be made into a permanent roadway that would be a "turf-road" after the construction is completed; the road will stop at the loading dock.

## **7. Next Meeting and Agenda Items**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday June 15, 2010 at 7:00 pm.

## **8. Adjournment**

**Julie McNeill** adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:38 p.m.