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R.C. Harris Public Advisory Committee

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Meeting #04/10

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June 15, 2010

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R.C. Harris Public Advisory Committee  
Meeting # 4/10  
R.C. Harris Filtration Plant, Construction Trailer

2701 Queen Street East, Toronto  
Tuesday, June 15, 2010  
7:00 p.m.

**ATTENDANCE**

***Public Advisory Committee:***

Julie McNeill (co-chair)  
David Lewis  
Lorraine Mask  
Paul Dowsett  
Henry Spencer  
Jim Tulk  
Allan Demb  
Wayne Reeves

***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:***

None

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m.

**1. Introductions**

All present at the meeting introduced themselves.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

**Ron Brilliant** requested that an update on how the G20 will be affecting the plant be added to the agenda.

**Wayne Reeves** requested that the R.C. Harris Centennial Project be discussed under New Business.

**Ron Brilliant** suggested that the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the R.C. Harris Plant in 2011 should also be discussed under New Business.

The agenda was approved with the addition of these 3 items.

### **3. Approval of April 6, 2010 Summary Notes**

**Julie McNeill** read the minutes from the April 6<sup>th</sup> meeting prior to today's meeting and had suggested that some changes be made. **Josie Franch** said that she had made the changes to the minutes.

The April 6, 2010 summary notes were approved.

### **4. Plant Updates**

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

**Ron Brilliant** reported that the BER is for the most part, on schedule. There have been some problems getting bricks due to the fact that every face of the building has a different size and colour of brick. Although it is not very noticeable at first glance, when you compare the bricks side by side, they are significantly different.

This has somewhat slowed down the work; however, while waiting for the proper bricks, the contractor has been expanding the work areas to keep his resources fully employed. The contractor is doing as much as possible by expanding and preparing other areas while waiting for the new brick.

They plan on completing the stairs, the wall, the front entrance and the security upgrade this year.

There is now concrete being poured on the east side of the pump house as a test for the wall – to ensure that it meets the criteria that they are looking for. The contractors will also produce a set of stairs near the front of the entrance to demonstrate how the concrete will look before doing the permanent installation. These will not be the stairs that will stay there.

**Ron Brilliant** informed the committee that he is still working with Heritage Preservation Services on the terrace building. There are no concerns about this project and they have been working very well together; the goal is to preserve as much of the terrace building as possible.

**Ron Brilliant** explained that there are two plans for the terrace building, both of which will involve the removal of the east section added in the 1960s. One of the possible plans is to tear the entire building down to base level and then rebuild it. The other possible plan is to leave some of the existing structure, tear the rest down, and then build around what is left. He added that it appears that the limestone columns and the area where the fountain is currently sitting can be left up. The brick in the middle and the limestone at the top will most likely have to come down. The final plan for this is still being worked out; some things must be removed to ensure that it is structurally secure for the future.

**Ron Brilliant** said that depending on how things are progressing across the plant, they may do some work on the seawall. This will be dependent on where things are at with the budgets, which must be followed and cannot be exceeded each year.

**Jim Tulk** inquired about the map of the site depicting the rehabilitation plan with the 4 phases, which was discussed at the last meeting. **Ron Brilliant** said that at the last meeting there was a brief review of the phases and how they might be changed. He added that if there were any further questions about it, he would be happy to address them.

**Ron Brilliant** reported that the staff is looking into changing some of the information contained on the plant's website. This is mainly because some local residents have approached the contractor on site to tell him that he should have been off the site a year ago. **Ron Brilliant** explained that the contractor fulfilled his original commitment a year ago. The same contractor was then awarded the next contract, which means that he will be on the site for another three years. The website should be updated to explain to people that the RMF is now finished; Phase 1 of the building rehabilitation was completed on time and under the expected budget. After a competitive bid, the contractor from the first phase was successful and Phase 2 has now begun.

**David Lewis** asked if there was a projected date for the completion of the wall. **Ron Brilliant** said that the only completion dates he currently has are for the end of October.

## **b) G20 Update**

**Ron Brilliant** said that there will not be very much impact from the G20 Summit Meeting on this facility.

- The staff has practiced their emergency drills.
- They will be limiting truck traffic to the plant for the next 2 weeks.
- There will probably be extra security around the clock during the event.

## **5. Heritage Inventory Update**

**Wayne Reeves** said that the small group working on the Heritage Inventory Update had an exterior tour of the site last week. The interior tour took place in the fall of 2009.

**Wayne Reeves** provided some background information on the project. He explained that the Heritage Inventory of the R.C. Harris Treatment Plant is being updated to take into account all the changes that have taken place since 1997. The project also involves some archival research. Since 1941, 83 changes to the plant have been documented. The following questions are now being asked:

- How many of these changes have affected the heritage character of the building?
- How many need to be changed to restore the character?
- What changes are feasible?

**Wayne Reeves** has collected all the base information and there are a few more questions that he will address with Ron Brilliant over the next little while; for example, they still need to look at some window openings. He said that they hope to have the project completed by the end of 2010.

**David Lewis** asked how many of the 83 changes to the plant identified in 1997 have been “fixed.” **Wayne Reeves** replied that many of these things have been fixed or are currently in the process of being fixed. **Ron Brilliant** gave an example of simple things that have been changed or added. He said that there are at least 3 underground openings that have been put into the ground with cover plates that weren’t there before, as part of the RMF. **Wayne Reeves** added that the 3 access hatches are flush to ground level, which is a substantial accomplishment for such a huge project. **Ron Brilliant** added that another change that took place as part of the RMF was the addition of more screens to one of the garage doors.

**Wayne Reeves** pointed out that all the changes have been sympathetic to the plant’s character. **Ron Brilliant** expressed that he thought even these small changes should be documented; the committee agreed with this.

**Allan Demb** asked if ephemeral changes such as the construction trailer would be documented in the Heritage Inventory. **Wayne Reeves** said that no, the temporary changes such as scaffolding and construction related materials on the site would not be included. **Ron Brilliant** added that the construction trailer is being used for a specific project dealing with electrical upgrades inside the plant. He anticipates that it will be gone by September 2010. If there is a need for new construction trailers, they will look into putting them at the other end of the pump house area.

**David Lewis** asked if the paint would be documented. **Wayne Reeves** replied that the paint job would be documented because it is considered a deliberate change to restore character of the site.

## 6. New Business

### a) R.C. Harris Centennial Project

**Wayne Reeves** explained that 2012 is the centennial anniversary of R.C. Harris ascending to the position of Commissioner of Works for the City of Toronto. R.C. Harris had one of the longest tenures with Public Works in any Canadian municipality and set a record for the City of Toronto.

**Wayne Reeves** said that he has met with John Lorinc, who has written a number of articles on R.C. Harris's life. They have been discussing ideas for what to do to commemorate Harris in 2012. He added that they have been in contact with some of Harris' grandchildren in Los Angeles who have a collection of artifacts and family photographs. **Wayne Reeves** also discovered that R.C. Harris had a passion for photography and was responsible for hiring the City of Toronto's first photographer.

**Wayne Reeves** reported that they have booked the Market Gallery (which is run by Toronto Culture), from September to December of 2012 to run an exhibit about R.C. Harris's life. They would like to include documentation of Harris's life and a display of his work, to celebrate his accomplishments. He suggested having exterior tours, lectures or panels about Harris' life, and/or walking tours of the neighbourhood. **David Lewis** suggested that Gene Domagala would be a good resource for tours of the area.

**Wayne Reeves** suggested that the PAC could discuss doing something for the centennial anniversary of R.C. Harris.

**Allen Demb** pointed out that the period that R.C. Harris was working with the City of Toronto, was a great period of civic works in North America; he suggested that this could somehow be a part of the exhibit. **Wayne Reeves** agreed. He added that as commissioner, R.C. Harris was in charge of transportation as well as water supply and sewage treatment. All of these things will be incorporated, including all the great bridges that he worked on. **Ron Brilliant** pointed out that Steve Mannell also has a lot of information about R.C. Harris and the City of Toronto.

**Wayne Reeves** said that he is working on a partnership with Ken Mains. **Ron Brilliant** explained that Ken Mains would probably be interested in being involved with the project.

**Wayne Reeves** explained that a pen and watercolour drawing of the plant in 1929 was thought to be lost for many years, but was recently found by Ken Mains. Steve Mannell recently published an article with the drawing in a

technical journal. He added that this would be an iconic artifact to have in the Market Gallery exhibit.

**Julie McNeill** asked about the dates for the Market Gallery exhibit. **Wayne Reeves** said that it would be September 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012.

#### **b) The 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the R.C. Harris Plant**

**Wayne Reeves** said that the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the R.C. Harris Treatment Plant will be in 2011.

**David Lewis** asked when the actual date for the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary was. **Wayne Reeves** said that it was November 1<sup>st</sup> 1941. **Ron Brilliant** said that a logbook was found in the basement of the plant a few years ago with the first entries made on this date.

**Ron Brilliant** said he would like to look into doing something next year to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the plant and the PAC should consider some options.

#### **c) Other**

**Henry Spencer** shared with the committee that his wife attended an event a few weeks ago where she was given a Toronto Water plastic water bottle. This surprised the group. **Ron Brilliant** said that the City also has some stainless steel bottles. **Henry Spencer** said that he would bring the bottle to next meeting to show the other committee members.

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

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday September 14, 2010 at 7:00 pm.

#### **8. Adjournment**

**Julie McNeill** adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.