

**R.C. Harris Public Advisory Committee
Meeting # 2/11**

R.C. Harris Filtration Plant, Service Building (Meeting Room)

2701 Queen Street East, Toronto

Thursday March 24, 2011

7:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Public Advisory Committee:

Julie McNeill (Co-Chair)

David Lewis

Alan Demb

Henry Spencer

Paul Dowsett

Wayne Reeves

City of Toronto Staff:

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

Facilitator:

Mae Lee – Public Consultation Unit

Jacie Kuker – Note-taking

Regrets:

Lorraine Mask

Jim Tulk

Julie McNeill called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

1. Introductions

All present at the meeting introduced themselves.

2. Approval of Agenda

Ron Brilliant requested that an update on the BER be added to the agenda.

3. Approval of January 13, 2011 Summary Notes

The summary notes for the meetings on November 16, 2010 and January 13, 2011 were approved.

4. Heritage Inventory

Julie McNeill gave Wayne Reeves a file containing copies of minutes from past PAC meetings.

Wayne Reeves gave an update on his work with the Heritage Inventory. He explained that the goal of the project is to update the Heritage Book, which was compiled in 1997. The new version will have a new name: Waterworks Legacy: The Heritage of the R.C. Harris Water Treatment Plant. He distributed copies of the revised table of contents and the new text for chapter 8 (Heritage Conservation Work since 1997) and chapter 9 (Extending the Waterworks Legacy: Next Steps).

Wayne Reeves reported that the rewriting of the text is about 95% complete. The additional text focuses on the work that has been completed at the plant since 1997 with an emphasis on many of the success stories, as well as future plans for the site. The scope of the work completed and the restoration that has been achieved since 1998/1999 is very impressive. He said that he would recommend adding the "Guidelines for the Cultural Heritage Resources Management for the R.C. Harris Plant," to the Heritage document, since this was part of the RMF project. He explained that these guidelines are put into every tender that goes out, so that anyone doing capital work at the plant is cognizant of the principles regarding heritage preservation.

Wayne Reeves explained that section 8 is structured around the major projects at the plant; such as the security upgrades, the RMF and the BER. The chapter outlines the benefits of each project. Page 2 of the document Wayne Reeves provided shows a list of 29 items that have been accomplished at the plant.

Alan Demb asked if the list of projects and upgrades was going to be chronological. **Wayne Reeves** said that it was not; the list was organized by specific parts of the plant rather than a timeline, presented as a list of the work done on each individual area. **Allan Demb** suggested adding subheadings for each item on the list by building or location. **Wayne Reeves** welcomed this suggestion and said that he would try to work it into the document.

Ron Brilliant explained that the original heritage document was made in 1997 and provided a chronological list of what had been done at the plant. The added sections to the document will be incorporated into the original format.

Alan Demb requested an electronic copy of the document in larger print. **Mae Lee** agreed to forward this to him.

Wayne Reeves reminded the group that in 1997, the work ahead looked daunting, however most of it is now completed. He credited Ron Brilliant for incorporating a lot of the heritage work with the various capital projects.

Wayne Reeves suggested putting before and after photos at the end of section 8. On the top of page 4, he listed some of the more significant projects that changed the plant significantly and had the greatest impact on the plant. These areas would be good to use for before and after comparisons.

Alan Demb asked if the new security wall would be on the list. **Wayne Reeves** said that it is currently not, but it should be. By the time the Heritage document is ready, the staircase up to the front lawn should be completed; items will be added as they are completed.

Wayne Reeves explained that Section 9 describes the next steps for the plant. The first 7 points on the list are things that will continue to make the plant successful. The second part of the list describes the things that will be done to maintain the heritage features of the plant as part of the BER, many of which will happen over the next couple of years. He pointed out that some of the things done at the plant strive to be better than what is currently there. For example the alternatives to the fluorescent lights are not intended to replicate the original design, but to create a contemporary but sympathetic design.

Ron Brilliant briefly discussed the sash work on the windows on the south side of the administration part of the building. He explained that the architects discovered that any replacement windows in that area would end up reducing the area of glass, making them look worse. Therefore it was decided to leave the windows alone and upgrade them when a different design might be possible during a future upgrade to the plant.

Alan Demb asked if being under the Canadian Heritage Act would negatively affect any of the upgrades to the plant. **Wayne Reeves** said that the plant has

been under the Canadian Heritage Act since 1998 and that everything done to the plant is reviewed through the Heritage groups. **Ron Brilliant** added that the plant follows the heritage principles whenever possible, and fortunately, everybody working on the restoration of the plant wants what's best for the building. The plant works closely with the Heritage Preservation Group.

Wayne Reeves informed the committee that the plant would be pursuing designation as a National Historic Site with the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. He would like to have this coincide with the 100th anniversary of R.C. Harris being appointed commissioner, which will be in 2012.

Alan Demb asked if the process of receiving designation would require a motion or resolution by City Council. **Wayne Reeves** replied that it would only require involvement of the building owner, which is Toronto Water. Unlike the Ontario Heritage Act, the Historic Sites and Monuments designation does not have any regulations and is considered only a commemorative recognition. He added that it takes 18 to 24 months to get this designation from the federal government.

Wayne Reeves said that the Heritage Inventory document would contain a section with photographs and drawings comparing the original conditions to the current facility. **Mae Lee** informed Wayne Reeves that PAC member *Jim Tulk* expressed interested in being involved with the photographic component of the project.

Alan Demb asked about the completion date for the Heritage Inventory update. **Wayne Reeves** said that he expects to have the text and the photo list done by mid-April, 2011. **Ron Brilliant** added that they aim to have the document completed and in the hands of Toronto Water by the end of 2011.

Alan Demb asked if there are any budget constraints on the project. **Ron Brilliant** assured PAC that there were no budgeting issues involved in this project. He added that most of the work is done by volunteers.

There was a brief discussion about when the document would be completed and how would be made available to the public. There were various suggestions about having the document released at the same time as other important events related to the H.C. Harris Treatment Plant.

5. BER Update

Ron Brilliant gave an update on the BER.

- The front entrance and the beach access stairs: The subcontractor will be remobilizing in late April or early May. All threat of frost must pass before work on either of these areas can be resumed.

- The seawall: To begin in early to mid May.
- The filter building:
 - The southwest elevation is scheduled for completion in early to mid May.
 - The west elevation is scheduled for completion in late May to early June. This does not include the door and the window.
 - The north elevation needs more work done on mobile scaffolding until early to mid June.
 - The administration towers are currently fenced in for the winter. The work in this area will resume in May to early June.
- The service building: The drainage and restoration of the landscaping is scheduled for completion in mid May.
- The alum tower: Scaffold erection will probably be in late June or early July.
- Building restoration: Will begin in late summer and carry on until late fall.

Alan Demb asked if anything has been done about the runoff along the north side of filter building. **Ron Brilliant** replied that runoff was not a significant issue, however he explained that there is strip of gravel about 18 inches wide along the north side of the building to help with drainage close to the walls.

David Lewis asked if the shrubs were taken out. **Ron Brilliant** said that yes, they have been removed.

Wayne Reeves asked if some of the water separated from the residue is used for irrigation purposes. **Ron Brilliant** said the plant uses “harvested water” for irrigation, which is a combination of rainwater and processed water.

6. 12th Anniversary of Toronto Doors Open 2011 Update

Ron Brilliant reported that the plant would be participating in Doors Open in May 2011, as previously discussed. Areas of the plant that will be open to the public for this event include the main floor of the pump house and the main filter gallery. All the other areas will be secured.

The plant staff has decided to prohibit vehicles from parking on the property during the event, since this would create too much traffic and crowding.

The pamphlet for the event is currently being worked on.

There will be marked areas for visitors to follow and there will hopefully be some easels set up with descriptions of the site. The only area that will be wheelchair accessible will be the pump house; the filter building will not be.

The site will still be under major construction but the contractor has agreed to fence off the construction areas during the event. There will be an area that will allow the public to walk between the two designated visiting areas, away from the construction. There will be three doors open to help break up the crowd and prevent congestion: 2 doors in the pump house and 1 door in the gallery.

David Lewis asked whether the PAC members would be required for assistance during this event. **Ron Brilliant** said that there would be enough staff on site for crowd management, security and information resources. Staff will be available on site to talk mainly about the process, but will also be talking about the building itself. He added that if the members of PAC would like to set up a table or information booth, they would be welcome to do so.

7. New Business

- **Ron Brilliant** reported that the Canadian Government would soon be making a collection of commemorative stamps recognizing art deco in Canada. Five Canadian locations have been selected and the R.C. Harris Treatment Plant is one of them. The City of Toronto staff was not involved in the design or image selection for the stamp. The stamp will be issued on June 24th 2011.

Paul Dowsett asked about whether the stamp could be mentioned in the Heritage Inventory document. **Ron Brilliant** said that permission has been obtained to use an image of the stamp in the document.

- **Ron Brilliant** showed the PAC members some aerial photographs of the R.C. Harris Treatment Plant taken during the residue management construction in 2007.

Alan Demb asked about whether the City Archives stores this kind of information and records for Toronto Water. **Wayne Reeves** said that some information is stored in the City Archives, but not all. This information is accessible to the public.

- **David Lewis** expressed some concern about the width of the stairs leading down to the beach. He said that they look very narrow (about 3 feet wide), whereas the stairs along the side of the grounds are about 6 feet wide. **Julie McNeill** agreed with this observation and asked why these stairs would be different from the other ones on the site. **Ron Brilliant** said that the intention for building the stairs is to create a barrier.

The area with the stairs leading down to the beach is on the parks property.

- **David Lewis** explained that after checking the blueprints for the construction plans, he was unable to find out what the width of the stairs was expected to be, according to the original designs. **Paul Dowsett** agreed that the measurements were not easily found on the plans. **Ron Brilliant** (emailed this information after the meeting) that the existing flights of stairs south of the Filter Building are approx 1.8m (6 feet) wide, the new Stair No. 5 (to access the beach) will be the same. The new Stair No. 1 (at the Plant's entrance) is slightly narrower at 1.2m (4 feet) and is consistent with the existing pathway leading to the chlorine room.
- **Julie McNeill** asked about whether anything has been done with respect to developing signage for the future front area between the gates and among the tiered plantings. As she recalls, there was some discussion about having a sign in this area to provide an introduction to the plant. **Ron Brilliant** replied that some funds have been set aside for this part of the project, however it has not yet been looked into very carefully and is still open. He will bring this information to PAC once work on the signage begins.
- **Julie McNeill** asked about the newsletter/handout for doors open. **Ron Brilliant** replied that the pamphlet is 80% complete; the pictures still need to be added. Ron explained that it is basically the same concept as was used at the last Doors Open, but there will be better quality images and printing, and the text will be updated. He added that some info on the pamphlets would be mounted on posters, which will be put up at Doors Open.

8. Next Meeting and Agenda Items

The next meeting was set for Thursday June 23rd 2011 at 7:00 pm.

Paul Dowsett suggested that the text for the Heritage Inventory Update be sent out to the PAC members to review before it is finalized and before the next PAC meeting.

9. Adjournment

Julie McNeill adjourned the meeting at 8:25 pm