



**R.C. Harris Public Advisory Committee
Meeting #3/2016**

R.C. Harris Water Treatment Plant, Service Building Meeting Room
2701 Queen Street East (at Victoria Park Avenue), Toronto
Wednesday September 21, 2016 @ 7:00 pm

Attendance

Public Advisory Committee:

Julie McNeill (Chair)
Paul Dowsett
Henry Spencer
Michel Joly De Lotbiniere

City of Toronto Staff:

Gord Mitchell – R.C. Harris Water Treatment Plant Manager
Mae Lee – Public Consultation Unit

Regrets: David Lewis

1. Introductions

Everyone present at the meeting introduced themselves.

2. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved.

3. Approval of April 20, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Julie McNeill approved the meeting minutes from April 20, 2016. **Gord Mitchell** said that even though he was not in attendance for most of the last meeting, he felt that the minutes did an excellent job at conveying the discussions that took place.

4. Construction Project Update

Gord Mitchell provided an update on the construction project and said that overall things have been going quite well.

The hoarding has been modified since the last PAC meeting. The south road and most of the lakefront are open again, which is better for the community in terms of being able to enjoy the site. There haven't been any recent reports of anyone trying to climb over the hoarding.

Basin #1 is essentially waterproofed, except for one small area on the west end of it. There were almost no noticeable odours associated with the waterproofing. **Julie McNeill** asked where basin #1 was located. **Gord Mitchell** said that it was on the west side, closest to the west filter building and is now nearly covered again with dirt from basin #3, which is now out of service and in the process of being uncovered.

It now looks like most of the sluice gates are going to have to be replaced instead of just rehabilitated because some of them were actually crumbling. This has thrown a bit of a crunch into the schedule of the project, so all the basins on the west side are now out of service, however basin #3 will be back in January. Work is still being done on the west side.

Six of the 20 west filter drain sluice gates have been returned after rehabilitation and will be tested over the next couple of weeks. The ones that have been returned look great. Three of the gates that had been removed were considered damaged and partially beyond repair and at least one new gate will need to be purchased.

Gord Mitchell handed out copies of the weekly construction reports with photographs to help describe the work being done on the basins. He will forward electronic copies of these reports to Mae Lee to distribute with the minutes. The decks over the basins were in really good shape and did not need many repairs. The only area that needed repairs was in the center ring road where there had been some damage from the salt off the road.

A new cleaning system has been installed inside basins #1 and #2. The installation will be completely done once the hydraulic operators are installed.

Julie McNeill asked if the same company doing the gate refurbishment work would be doing the replacement gates as well. **Gord**

Mitchell replied that the company to supply the replacement gates would be one of the plant's approved suppliers. The other company, Quality Valve does rehabilitation but not manufacturing, so they will be doing the restoration work on the gates that don't need to be replaced. The replacement gates will be made by Hydro Gate, which makes top of the line cast iron gates. These gates are specialized gates known as self-contained gates where the gate itself takes its own load. A little more work will be required on the gates than originally thought, but the project is still on track to be completed by mid 2018.

The pedestals have been taken apart and a visual inspection showed no signs of damage and the castings are all in good shape. The gearing systems have stayed in great shape because they are always covered in grease. **Gord Mitchell** passed around a copy of the shop report with photographs of the pedestals.

There are now a few murals on the hoarding that were painted by students from local schools. The plant supplied the plywood and paint, as well as the labour to put them up. The murals will be given back to the schools when the hoarding comes down. A few other schools have expressed interest and they may be working on more murals this fall or in the spring of 2017.

The ring road is now half done and the other half will be completed when work is being done on basins #4, 5 and 6.

There have not been any dust problems, thanks to the vegetation growing on the dirt pile, which has been incredibly effective at keeping the dust down.

There have been no issues or impacts on the houses along Nursewood Road, or any major complaints about construction from local residents since the last PAC meeting in April 2016. The only complaint/concern received was regarding a VAC truck that was on site for one day, when a resident called to ask how long it would be there. Other than that, there has been very little disruption.

Nuisance activity has been very low this summer. There haven't been many problems in terms of damage or graffiti, and there have been very few disruptive activities. A lot of people are using site though, which is good.

There have been a few updates to the website to show how the project is going with slides and updates to the schedule, and there will be more soon.

Doors Open was in May and the plant had another successful turnout this year. The weather was good and about 6600 came through; not quite as many people as last year, perhaps because there were more places and facilities open around the city this year, which meant there was more competition than before.

Julie McNeill asked about the HVAC project. **Gord Mitchell** replied that it is still in the design phase and about 70% of the

predesign has been completed. The design was supposed to be done by now but there were a few obstacles with the contractors, however it should be completed within the next month. PAC will have a chance to review anything in the design that may be of significance. For example, the louvers in the filter gallery used to open and close the skylight structure have about 40 hand wheels, which are quite rusted. Restoring those areas is required and there has been some consideration to motorize them so that they can be used for natural ventilation.

The design for the chemical storage tanks upgrade is going well. The tanks will be stainless steel and some control system changes will be made as well. This project is in the residue management part of the building and there shouldn't be any impact on the plant's architecture or appearance. One of the driving forces for this project was to have tanks more suited to storing ammonia so that the fumes aren't too intense. This has been an ongoing problem and with the new tanks, there should no longer be any smells outside. The new tanks will have a scrubber and will be much safer for the staff. This is expected to be done in the summer of 2017.

A design for the screen door repair had been done by Taylor Hazel, but in the end, one of the plant's staff supervisors Dennis Vibert (who is a very creative and skilled machinist and millwright) figured out how to fix it. He discovered that there was binding at the bottom of the threshold, so they ground it down and replaced the tiles. It now moves incredibly smoothly. There are a few small metal repairs to do in the doorframe, but it is almost as good as new. The plant saved a lot of money by having someone from in-house do the work and they did a great job.

Michel Joly De Lotbiniere asked whether the plant kept a catalogue of all the special skills the plant's staff members have. This would be useful to help decide what jobs could be done internally, which could save a bit of money. **Gord Mitchell** said that yes, the plant keeps track of the various skills of the staff members (such as millwrights, machinists, welders and bricklayers). There is a lot of wear and tear on the building so things are often being repaired and rehabilitated by the staff.

Some of the limestone stairs need to be replaced. The newer stone was damaged last winter, however the old stone is still fine (including the stone in front of the fountain). The newer stone is called Indiana limestone and it does not hold up very well during the winter. The replacement stone will be a better product so it should be able to withstand many winters.

The operator for the front gate has been replaced and yellow lines have been painted on the ground to encourage people to stop before the gate swing area. The north gate has been removed during construction.

A second traffic control loop has been added to the front main gate and it has been working for the last 3 weeks. The gate opens at 5am and closes around 8pm. When someone is leaving the site, the gate sensor senses the vehicle in the first loop then closes when the vehicle is sensed in the second loop. Another stop sign might be put up to make sure everyone stops where they should and one car at a time goes through the gate. **Gord Mitchell** added that he believes the new actuator has a safety feature where if it touches something, it will reopen. The reason for the gate is to maintain a minimal level of security at night, with consideration

for the safety of the plant staff when they are on site alone at night.

There has not been very much work done on the interpretive signage since the last PAC meeting. **Gord Mitchell** said that he was considering applying to Heritage Toronto's plaque and interpretive signage program, which costs money but could streamline the process. Heritage Toronto would supply the design and materials for the sign, and their prices seem reasonable.

There was a brief discussion about the ideal location for the sign, given that the view is an important feature of the site. There were ideas about having a couple of smaller signs at entrance points to the site that would not block the spectacular view on the way in: one at top of the stairs and another at the foot of Nursewood Road. **Julie McNeill** and **Paul Dowsett** pointed out that the content of the sign would determine the size and style. Once the content and size have been figured out, the location and angle of the sign will have to be carefully considered to fit into the site. The PAC members agreed with Gord Mitchell that the sign should not obstruct the view of the lake and if it were to be placed at the curve of the road on the way in, it would need to be angled in a way that would fit into the landscape. **Gord Mitchell** will discuss the content for the sign with Wayne Reeves and proposals provided to the members of PAC.

Before any landscaping changes are made to the old path area near Nursewood Road, a topographical survey needs to be done. A surveyor will be hired for this and it should be done within the next couple of weeks.

Julie McNeill asked why this path is there and suggested it might not even need to be there. **Gord Mitchell** replied that the path was added in the 1960's because people were walking there and wearing down the grass. It is not the most common way to access the site, but people still occasionally use it. **Julie McNeill** added that over the years the tree roots in the area have been exposed so perhaps it would be good for the health of the trees to cover the area over with soil and no longer have a path here. **Gord Mitchell** said this could also be considered. He would get the design concept from the architects and allow PAC to review it.

Two new trees have been planted on site along Nursewood. **Julie McNeill** asked what kind of trees they were and **Gord Mitchell** replied that they were probably maple or oak tree, and they were planted in areas where there was a gap. Toronto Water has a program wherein a tree is planted to honour people who have retired, however the R.C. Harris grounds are a treeless savannah and the heritage facility was designed around this. This means that there is limited space on the site where trees can be planted

The Easter parade was successful this year. The coordination of the event and the security measures were communicated well to the plant staff, and there were no problems.

The TTC loop construction will start in early October and is expected to last six weeks. **Gord Mitchell** has a drawing showing the scope of the work they will be doing and he will forward it to Mae Lee so that she can attach it to the PAC minutes. There will be some impact on the community and a portion of Queen Street will be down to one lane for a couple of weeks, which will affect

deliveries to the plant. It will be challenging for trucks coming into the plant, so there will need to be some coordination and discussion with the TTC's contractor. Notification about the TTC work should be issued to residents in the next few days.

5. Harris PAC Terms of Reference

Mae Lee asked the members of PAC to review the Terms of Reference and email her any comments regarding the modifications. **Gord Mitchell** said that the changes were very minor to reflect relevant updates. Some of the names that are no longer relevant were removed.

Mae Lee explained that Toronto City Council passed a motion that requires local advisory groups to update their mandates. **Gord Mitchell** added that he went over the Terms of Reference with his director William Fernandes and he had no problems with it.

6. New Business

Gord Mitchell said that the 75th anniversary of the plant is on November 2nd 2016. There will be an event on site from noon until 2:00pm to which Toronto Water staff, the public advisory committee, various consultants who have worked on the site and some of the retirees who have worked at the plant will all be invited. There will be some refreshments and snacks, and Michael Ondaatje will hopefully come and do a reading from *In the Skin of the Lion*.

The exact location for the event has not yet been decided. **Gord Mitchell** is considering having it in the old control room or perhaps the pump room where the 60th anniversary celebration was held.

Mae Lee suggested inviting John Lorinc, the freelance writer who has written several pieces about the site. **Mae Lee** will email the members of PAC an invitation to the event.

Gord Mitchell reported that a resident recently complained about dogs on the little beach by the outfall, which had been closed off for many decades but has been open for the past few years since people were accessing it anyway by jumping over fences. There is a sign in this area referring to a city bylaw saying that no dogs are allowed between April and October. This bylaw is extremely difficult to enforce and dogs that are not leashed are a difficult problem throughout the area including Kew Beach and Balmy Beach. **Gord Mitchell** said that he consulted with Animal Services and ended up taking the sign down, with the intention of putting up a different sign saying that dogs should be on leash. Ultimately, the plant can't totally restrict dogs from accessing the beach.

Gord Mitchell distributed copies of an article about the R.C. Harris Treatment Plant written by Abhay Tadwalkar for the September 2016 issue of the AWWA monthly journal. He pointed out that a local resident took the photograph of the sunrise on

the second page, however the journal forgot to give him credit in the publication. **Michel Joly De Lotbiniere** suggested getting in touch with the journal to let them know who took the beautiful sunrise photograph so that they could publish a correction to add credit for the photo.

Michel Joly De Lotbiniere noted that the photo really illustrates how any signage being considered for that area needs to be carefully integrated into the landscape so that it does not disrupt the vista. He also pointed out that in the photo, the security cameras on the roof of the building are really quite noticeable. Eventually, it would be a good idea to get security cameras that don't stick out of the building. **Gord Mitchell** agreed with this observation. He added that security cameras no longer need the large lenses like the ones that are currently mounted on the roof. This is something to keep in mind for the future.

Gord Mitchell gave a brief update on the filter rehabilitation project and said that it was still in the design phase. None of the filters have ever been replaced and are mostly from the 1930s or 1950s. Two new filters were added in the 1980s (#19 on the west and #24 on the east). These were among the first rapid sand filters and they are quite shallow. The drains are not in terrible shape now, but they are deteriorating and probably won't last more than another 20 years. The filters would work better with more media. They are now looking into rebuilding the two filters from the 1980s to see how they work, and will eventually rebuild all forty filters. This is a big project that would be ongoing.

Gord Mitchell said that the fountain would soon be shut down for the winter. It worked well all summer and the drain did not back up or cause any problems.

Gord Mitchell asked the members of PAC to email him their comments about the terms of reference.

7. Next Meeting Date and Agenda Items

The next meeting was set for Wednesday, April 19, 2017

Please see last page of TTC construction map appended.

