



## **R.C. Harris Public Advisory Committee Meeting #1/2016**

R.C. Harris Water Treatment Plant, Service Building Meeting Room  
2701 Queen Street East (at Victoria Park Avenue), Toronto

Tuesday January 12, 2016, 7:00 pm

### **Attendance**

#### **Public Advisory Committee:**

Julie McNeill (Chair)  
Alan Demb  
Henry Spencer

#### **City of Toronto Staff:**

Gord Mitchell – R.C. Harris Water Treatment Plant Manager  
Wayne Reeves – Chief Curator, Cultural Services  
Mae Lee – Public Consultation Unit

#### **Regrets:**

Michel Joly De Lotbiniere  
David Lewis  
Paul Dowsett  
Nicholas Discenza

### **1. Introductions**

Everyone present at the meeting introduced themselves.

### **2. Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved.

### **3. Approval of September 29, 2015 Meeting Minutes**

**Julie McNeill** approved the meeting minutes from September 29, 2015.

### **4. Interpretive Signage – Update**

**Gord Mitchell** shared some images of interpretive signage that he received from Taylor Hazel Architects. The images depicted a few options for the signage along the retaining wall at the front

entrance. This location is no longer being considered, since there has been a consensus that a better location would be where the road splits in the southwest portion of the plant. He added that another good location would be along the path from the lower part of Nursewood Road that cuts through the berm. This is an area that is heavily traveled by visitors and provides a good view of all the buildings.

**Julie McNeill** asked Wayne Reeves if he had any suggestions or comments pertaining to the location for signage. **Wayne Reeves** said that it is important to have signage in an area with a high amount of pedestrian traffic and not necessarily somewhere people drive their vehicles. **Gord Mitchell** pointed out that a lot of people drive onto the site and get out of their cars to walk around and explore.

**Henry Spencer** added that anyone who is specifically coming to visit the plant would probably come in through the front gate – whether they drive in with their cars to the parking lot or walk in after getting off the streetcar. The other route from which people can access the site is along the beach. **Julie McNeill** wondered if there would be any benefit to having the same sign in more than one place. **Henry Spencer** suggested placing one sign at the head of the western stairs for people coming down from Queen Street, and a second sign down at the beach for people coming in from that direction.

**Alan Demb** suggested putting a sign near the southwest corner of the parking lot, that would be easily visible to those who park in the lot as well as those who come up from beach. Even though this area is often a bit muddy, **Gord Mitchell** said that some landscaping would be done to decrease the muddiness.

**Wayne Reeves** explained that another important interpretive signage principle to consider is what can be seen from where one would be looking at the sign. At the front gates, not much of the plant can really be seen; however, the area where the road splits provides a much better view of the entire site and is therefore a really good interpretive point. He added that the “you are here” component of the sign would be slightly different for a sign down at the beach. It is important to orient the reader and show them where they are in relation to the rest of the site.

**Gord Mitchell** asked if there were any suggestions about the desired size of the sign. **Wayne Reeves** said that he had recently worked on two signage projects: one at Fort York and one at Todmorden Mills, that used vista boards, which are slanted signs about 6-7 feet long and 1.5 feet wide with two posts at either end. The signs have been well received and look really good. **Julie McNeill** asked what the signs were made of. **Wayne Reeves** replied that the posts were made of metal sunk into concrete, and the signs were made of MDF, similar to particleboard but treated for rugged weather and outdoor conditions.

**Julie McNeill** asked if photographic information could be used on this type of sign and **Wayne Reeves** replied that it absolutely could. He added that he would send an email package to PAC members to show them examples of how this type of sign is used and how they use photographs instead of maps to orient the reader to the site.

**Gord Mitchell** inquired as to who did the design for these signs. **Wayne Reeves** said that the design was contracted out, but he could probably get names of the designers and pass it on to Gord Mitchell.

**Gord Mitchell** said that he was hoping Wayne Reeves would be able to help out with the content and wording of the signage. The content should focus on the cultural, social and historical significance of the plant rather than focusing too much on the details of the water treatment.

**Wayne Reeves** said he would be happy to help out and that it would be useful to have a little bit of information about how the plant treats water – for example which buildings the water goes through for treatment and filtering. **Alan Demb** added that the sign should also have a reference to the website for people to get more information. Everyone agreed with this.

**Alan Demb** asked if there are any problems with graffiti on the other signs referred to by Wayne Reeves. **Wayne Reeves** replied that the signs are treated and easily cleaned, so graffiti is not really a problem.

**Julie McNeill** suggested making the signs in a colour to match the buildings on site. **Wayne Reeves** said that this could easily be done by giving instructions to the designer to use colours that fit with the rest of the plant structures.

**Gord Mitchell** requested that Wayne Reeves forward some examples of successful signage ideas as well as the names of people who were involved with the work on the other signs. **Wayne Reeves** agreed to do this.

## 5. Construction Project – Update

**Gord Mitchell** reported that the north gate has been removed and put into storage for now. The south gate is still functional but the sheer pin is vulnerable to damage. In order to make the gates work properly, a third sensing loop needs to be added. There is a contract out for this with some control upgrades.

The traffic on site has been very low, perhaps due to the fact that the construction acts as a deterrent for many people. There also have not been any recent problems with graffiti. However, the east side of the beach shows signs of traffic because the chain link fence keeps getting torn down. **Gord Mitchell** said that he is considering putting stairs down to the beach, making it easier for everyone to get down there, including police and emergency services. **Julie McNeill** asked if having stairs there would affect the private properties. **Gord Mitchell** said the beach is owned by the TRCA, but he would check with the residents on the east side of the plant first before considering any changes.

**Gord Mitchell** reported that the work on the settling basins is now underway; settling basins 1 and 2 are being worked on and are currently out of service. The work has been going rather quickly and in spite of the increased truck traffic over the past 2 weeks there have been no problems, and the dust and dirt have not been an issue.

There are 6 settling basins being rehabilitated. The two basins on the west side closest to the plant (Basins 1 and 2) are having all of their sluice gates replaced, for a total of 8 gates. Basin 3 is still in service.

Three of the cone valves from the pumping building are now in the factory getting rehabilitated. There are 5 more cone valves to go; once the first 3 are reinstalled in a couple of months, another 3 will be removed. The last 2 will then be done one at a time because of where they are located.

The filter drain gates on the 20 old west filters are also being rehabilitated. The 20 east filter drain gates were done about 10 years ago and are still very tight. The same company will be doing the rehabilitation work on the west filters. The first 8 are currently being removed and the progress has been really good so far.

In terms of community impact, there have only been two minor complaints: One was a concern with trucks driving along Victoria Park, however a follow up regarding this complaint showed that it was not a vehicle doing work at the plant. The other complaint was from a gentleman concerned about work over Christmas. No work was done over the holidays, so this was not a problem either.

Some nearby residents along Nursewood Road had concerns about the preconstruction home inspections and requested copies of their reports. **Gord Mitchell** said that he now has all of these reports and asked Mae Lee to advise the best way to get the reports to the residents. **Mae Lee** replied that he could either send them by courier or registered mail, or just drop them off. **Gord Mitchell** said that it would probably be easy to drop them off since they are across the street.

Overall, the work has been going very well and ahead of schedule. Work on the next two basins will probably start in May 2016. **Gord Mitchell** said that he would update the website soon, since it has not been done since the New Year.

**Julie McNeill** asked about whether the pile of soil in the southwest corner would be moved back once the section that is currently being worked on is completed. **Gord Mitchell** replied that that is not exactly how it will work: once the work on basins 1 and 2 is complete, the contractor will take soil from the next part to be worked on to cover what is now uncovered at basins 1 and 2. It will be about a year before the soil in the pile is moved somewhere, however it will be to a different location than where it came from originally.

**Julie McNeill** asked if dust control would be addressed if it becomes a problem. **Gord Mitchell** said that yes, the contractor is responsible for controlling the dust. He added that the soil pile was initially too high so he asked the contractor to keep it lower.

**Wayne Reeves** asked whether a decision had been made regarding the rehabilitation of the two different styles of valve operators. **Gord Mitchell** said the valve operators will be rehabilitated and the hand wheels will be restored. Some of the gears will be replaced and they will work very much as originally envisioned. **Wayne Reeves** was pleased to hear this. **Gord Mitchell** added that he could bring some drawings of these valves to the next PAC meeting.

**Gord Mitchell** provided an update on the hoarding and said that fifteen old photographs of the original plant construction would be ready in about a month to be used to decorate the hoarding. Some of the hoarding didn't survive the strong winds a few weeks ago and some boards blew out, but they have since been repaired.

The terrace fountain is working nicely but it has been turned off for the winter.

The HVAC design is underway and the first conceptual approach was presented, which looked very good because it took a minimalist approach, not adding too much and working with what is already there. The plan will incorporate hot water heating and natural gas as was originally

intended. The only electrical heating that will be left is in the pump room where not much heat is required. More information on this project will be provided at the next PAC meeting.

CH2M Hill will do the upgrades to the chemical storage tanks. This upgrade will include the addition of a scrubber to the ammonia tanks because they off-gas quite a bit.

The design for the screen door repair is ready and it will be done under the RFQ. The contractor for this job will have to be prequalified because the work for this job is quite specialized.

The drinking water fountain near the soil stockpile was originally going to be removed and restored, however it is now going to be left where it is and protected by barriers. This is a better approach since there would probably be more damage if were removed and put back. If the contractor damages the fountain during the construction project, they are responsible for repairing and restoring it.

## 6. New Business

**Mae Lee** asked if the plant would be open for Doors Open. **Gord Mitchell** replied that it probably would be because the new director of Water Treatment and Supply really supports the plant's involvement in Doors Open. **Julie McNeill** asked who the new director is and **Gord Mitchell** replied that it has been William Fernandez since May 2015. **Gord Mitchell** added that Doors Open is a great public outreach event for the plant and the staff really enjoys doing it. Even though the hoarding will still be in place, the site will still be accessible. Having construction going on on-site during Doors Open gives another topic for discussion: that the plant has been a work in progress since it opened and it is always evolving.

**Mae Lee** asked about whether the construction on the TTC loop will have any impact on the plant. **Gord Mitchell** said that TTC would be rebuilding the streetcar tracks in the loop, which is currently under the design phase. **Julie McNeill** asked how this would change the current design. **Mae Lee** clarified that they are just rehabilitating the tracks to try to decrease the squealing. **Gord Mitchell** said that he would be going to the design meeting later this week where he would find out more information. The work is planned for the late summer/early fall.

**Gord Mitchell** said that the Easter Parade will be in March and he will proactively contact the organizers to find out if they want to use the grounds so that he can plan accordingly. Last year he was surprised when they started to set up on the site, since nobody from the parade had communicated their plans with the plant.

## 7. Next Meeting Date and Agenda Items

The next meeting was set for Wednesday April 20, 2016.