

**Notes made at a Meeting of the General Membership of the Harmony Residents Group Inc. (HRG) in the Virgil Arena Mary Snider Room on Wednesday, November 13, 2013.**

Present:

Board Members - D. Hennessey, W. Charnetski, C. James, F. Madsen, (Speaker),  
K. Morrison, R. Payne.  
Members / Other - Karl & Pat Keilhau, Tobe Thalmann, Rosamunde Hennessey, Carlos  
Antunef, Barbara Morrison, Brian & Sharon Roach, Christopher Korte\*,  
Hermann Moehl, Mimi McEwen\*, John & Helen Rakofsky\*,  
Daryl Rutt, Anonymus, Gracia Janes\*, Elizabeth Oliver-Malone,  
Beverly Garret\*. (Names followed by \* paid \$20 membership fee).

This meeting began at 7:02 PM. F. Madsen welcomed attendees, stated that this was one of 2 yearly general membership meetings, apologized for the cancellation by planned speaker Sunil Sharma, Region Project Manager for the new planned Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP), requested by Town Council which wants to hear his presentation before HRG and has set Dec.16 to do so. HRG members are urged to attend. Mr. Sharma will speak to HRG at a later date.

F. Madsen then presented the HRG understanding of the current situation regarding the federal Dept. of National Defense (DND) Lakeshore Road lands, administered by Parks Canada (PC), speaking to a large sketch made for attendees to see, with particular reference to the existing sewage plant lagoons. In brief, he said that the new WWTP is expected to cost about \$43 Million, to be divided equally amongst federal, provincial and regional governments, tenders for construction to be invited early in 2014 with completion in 2015, but suggested by Gracia Janes to be more likely 2017.

He said that PC wants these lagoons removed completely which would require draining, excavation of toxic materials and completely filling the resulting depression with earth. The cost is estimated to be between \$3 and 10 Million, and perhaps \$5 to 12 Million. He stressed that Region taxpayers would bear this cost, which is work HRG considers unnecessary, which could be used more productively such as completely staffing the new hospital in St. Catharines for which money is not available and, further, that sewage lagoons have been successfully reconstituted as natural wetlands, the nearest example being the DND lands in Grimsby.

He defined the HRG purpose which is to have the local DND land between Two Mile Creek and Firelane 1 opened for passive use by the public, and referred to the Region Lakefront Enhancement Strategy (LES) should give this land prior consideration, especially considering this town's expenditure of more than \$1 Million to acquire a very small piece of property on the lakefront near the mouth of the Niagara River. He spoke of HRG efforts to obtain the active support of local MP Nicholson with no substantial result to date, but suggested that his recent transfer from Attorney General to Minister of National Defense should justify his focus on HRG proposals. He prepared a letter to MP Nicholson (copy attached to these notes), copies of which were made available at the reception desk which he asked members to take, sign and send to the MP.

F. Madsen ended his presentation about 7:24 PM after which followed an extensive period of questions and comments.

Mr. Keilhau asked why the WWTP is to be relocated and the reply was that more capacity is needed, which could have been provided on the existing site but primarily because PC wants this land unencumbered so it can use it to increase its revenue to pay for its operations elsewhere. Further the PC Management Plan, which expired in 2007, did not prevent the commercial use of this land but only its "over" commercialization and, in fact, was prepared to allow a major musical facility there which is reason that relocation of the WWTP was even considered by Engineering Consultants, because increasing its capacity on the existing site was, by far, the least expensive solution with the least socio/economic impact to town residents. PC is not scheduled to complete its next Management Plan until 2017, if then, which HRG considers a unreasonable delay in making this land available to the public.

Gracia Janes asked if the Grimsby lagoon reconstitution was detrimental to the fauna and flora and F. Madsen replied that although he had not visited the site he is advised that the local species increased in numbers. He said that some questions asked could have been answered by Mr. Sharma but were beyond his information, such as the cost of keeping the reconstituted lagoons wet and the actual ownership of approximately 57 acres which DND transferred to the Region.

F. Madsen summarized his remarks saying that HRG's purpose is to have a park created on this DND land for passive use by the public and, because of its limited financial resources, to find a partner, individual or organization prepared to finance the park's inception and initial modest operation. It must be made clear to politicians at all levels of government that PC's sole interest in this land is as a source of revenue to pay for its other operations and that its demand that these lagoons be eradicated completely is not only an irresponsible use of taxpayers money but environmentally unnecessary and even potentially harmful and, further, that HRG is not seeking funding by governments but only the opportunity to manage this land to achieve its stated purposes.

F. Madsen again urged members to write to MP Nicholson to express their views, using the letter which he drafted if they wished to do so, and to join HRG and/or support its efforts.

W. Charnetski commented that delays risk the loss of grants which do become available from time to time.

This meeting ended at 7:55 PM when attendees were able to sample the delicious coffee, provided by Mr.& Mrs. Morrison and the fantastic cookies provided by Mr.& Mrs. Hennessey.

Some Board members stayed later to discuss the subject of waste water treatment and the reconstitution of sewage lagoons with Mr. Hermann Moehl, an HRG member, who is very knowledgeable on this subject. in essence, Mr. Moehl's contention is that the public has not been informed of capital costs, the environmental impact, the socio/economic effects of the new WWTP being proposed, nor have public health concerns been addressed adequately and no public

information sessions have been offered, all of which were done by Hatch, Mott, Macdonald and the other Engineering Consultants when an increase in the capacity of the local WWTP was first proposed several years ago. Furthermore, modern technology makes it possible to provide a WWTP radically different from the conventional design which is, apparently, being proposed with superior results, both in the efficiency of treatment of waste water and the effect of the effluent on the environment even to the extent of making it unnecessary to locate such facilities adjacent to bodies of water. This information seems potentially very useful to HRG to its proposal to create a nature park on these DND lands and a more detailed discussion with Mr. Moehl seems advisable.

A Cynic might conclude that the machinations by PC to arrange these DND lands to suit its desire for more revenue has resulted in the unnecessary delay of an increase in the capacity of the local WWTP to serve the growing population of this town, brought about by Town Council's irresponsible approval of building permits and unrealistic development fees, creating an immense increase in costs to local taxpayers and creating a health hazard. Town Council has been instrumental in delaying the dissemination of important information to residents, if not with intent then certainly by its tacit approval and/or its benign neglect.

Lights were turned off at 8:10 PM.

Cliff James, Secretary