

ISLANDS TRUST

Rainbow residents look for closure

Metal recycling application riles neighbours

BY SEAN MCINTYRE
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Opposition to a contentious metal recycling business on Rainbow Road dominated the town hall portion of Tuesday's regular business meeting of the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee.

"If you think it's bad now, it's only going to get worse," Heather Howard told LTC members. "By your own lack of action, you have supported this illegal business."

Howard suggested the

Salt Spring LTC's handling of John Quesnel's six years worth of attempts to rezone a property at 440 Rainbow Rd. would be worthy of a full-scale investigation into "backroom dealings and kickbacks" in many other jurisdictions.

Quesnel's rezoning application seeks to permit industrial uses on his split-zoned rural residential property that would permit continued operation of his metal recycling operation.

LTC members voted in a January meeting to have staff examine possible noise remediation efforts that could be implemented as a possible solution to neighbours' complaints. LTC members had also

requested assistance from the island's chamber of commerce to help identify suitable areas for Quesnel's business.

The Islands Trust has supported efforts to assist Quesnel during the application process based on information from people who say the company provides an invaluable community service. The debate has fuelled a discussion about the need to offer more industrial land on the island and foster local business.

Other speakers at Tuesday's town hall said the operation threatens the neighbourhood's "pastoral" nature and the safety of pedestrians along Rainbow

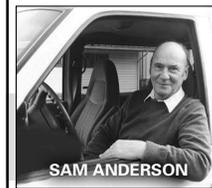
Road. One person called approval of the application a "recipe for tragedy."

LTC members anticipate a new staff report in time for the Trust's next public business meeting.

"We're not that far behind the eight ball," said Peter Grove, one of Salt Spring's three LTC members. "March 21 is only a few weeks away and we will be making a decision of some kind or another at that time."

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LIQUID WASTE

Reed beds option for water treatment

Report from chair of island's liquid waste commission

BY PETER LAKE

Previous articles from the Salt Spring Island Liquid Waste Disposal Local Service Commission (April 4 and Sept. 12, 2012 issues of the Driftwood) have explained the history of the Burgoyne septage treatment facility and the reasons for shipping off island at the present time. The facility has to be replaced and this article examines one of four technical options for treating waste water, which the commission can consider.

1. Continue shipping off island.

2. Pursue the partially completed design by consultants Opus Dayton Knight.

3. Use anaerobic digestion technology.

4. Employ constructed wetlands biotechnology including reed beds.

Later articles will examine the possible capital and operating costs of each and the probable tax implications. This article will examine reed beds and constructed wetlands first.

Constructed wetlands including reed beds use natural processes. Septage has first to be treated either aerobically or anaerobically to reduce volatile organic compounds like ammonia to control odour and reduce attractiveness to flies and rodents. The partially stabilized septage is then pumped to a series of reed beds. These consist of sealed excavations with drainage lines at the bottom having a graduated gravel and sand bed above.

Particular types of non-invasive reeds are planted that use the septage as nutrients for growth. They also transport oxygen to the root systems allowing

the colonization of organisms that break down the components of the septage to water, minerals and carbon dioxide.

Metals are transformed into their insoluble sulphides. Other harmful materials like hormones, personal care products and other chemicals are metabolized by microbes in the area next to plant roots. Reeds are harvested annually and taken off the bed. Solids accumulate and decompose. This reduces solids over a number of years, usually eight to 12. Long-term holding of the solids eliminates pathogens.

The advantages of a passive natural system would be that the capital cost could well be significantly lower.

The composted solids would be excavated and removed, then the process would begin again as the root systems regenerate. The annual crop of reeds might provide some raw material for crafts, but most might be spread onto an area growing trees to compost naturally and provide nutrient for the trees.

The drainage from the reed beds is fed to a series of sealed, shallow, open-water ponds with aquatic plants that further absorb remaining nutrients and break down remaining contaminants. The last pond releases water biochemically indistinguishable from that of natural wetlands to the ground. That area of moist ground might also be suitable for willows.

The advantages of a passive natural system would be that the capital cost could well be significantly lower. The receiving-station air blowers and gravity-assisted pumps are the only mechanical parts required. Thus power use would be low.

No polymer additions, no membrane filter maintenance and low mechanical maintenance would result in lower operating costs. Holding solids on site would allow comprehensive analysis of what is in it before having to decide the final disposition of the compost. Meanwhile, not shipping sludge off island would save islanders almost \$100,000 per year.

The disadvantage is that we would be pioneering a system locally which could be a risk, even though there are many instances of successful reed-bed operations in similar and more severe climates such as Ontario and northern Europe. It is a natural process that while requiring minimal attention does proceed slowly.

Initially, care has to be taken not to overload the beds. Thus it might be necessary to continue shipping part of the septage off island for a year or more. The management skills are different from those for a mechanical/chemical system but nevertheless care and attention is essential to maintain a properly functioning facility.

The aim of the commission is to keep capital, operating, and overhead costs to a minimum while protecting the environment. Informed comment is welcome, as we continue examining the options. Questions? Email them to Ralf Waters, manager of engineering for Salt Spring Island (rwaters@crd.bc.ca) with your telephone number.

The writer chairs the Salt Spring Island Liquid Waste Disposal Local Service Commission.

Keep Smiling...



THOUGHTS & NEWS

from Dr. Richard Hayden

Tax time.

We are all looking for a bit of relief.

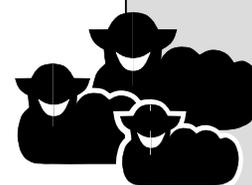
Many people lament that they don't have any dental benefits and only a small portion of their dental care is tax deductible. There may be a CRA approved plan that can help you get relief from dental issues as well as the tax man.

As I understand things, if you are self employed or incorporated you can have a Private Health Services Plan. These plans seem easy to set up and are tax efficient.

I am a dentist not an accountant. I can give you great advice and create solid comprehensive treatment plans for your dental and oral health. Tax info is NOT my bag so talk to your financial advisor and see if these plans might benefit you.

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