

# Fracking Waste Water

## Concerns Addressed at Community Meeting

Over 130 people attended an information meeting at the Debert Fire Hall on Jan. 17th. The topic of concern was the disposal of fracking wastewater.

Colchester County Council is reviewing an application by Atlantic Industrial Services to treat and then dispose of the wastewater in the Municipal Sewer system. (Harrington Photos)



Over 130 people attended the Debert meeting.

By Linda Harrington

With "No Shale Gas Drilling, No Fracking Signs" clearly visible next to the podium Don Wilson opened a community information session at the Debert Fire Hall saying he was, "delighted to see so many taking an interest in your community."

Wilson is from the North Shore area, a Mechanical Engineer by trade and a member of the Energy Future Coalition of N.S. The EFC of NS webpage states, "We are especially against the gas well drilling and fracking industry, and most against doing that within our communities as our Provincial government is foisting upon us."

Wilson stated a year ago transport trucks delivered 11 million liters of radioactive wastewater to Atlantic Industrial Services in Debert from Kennetcook. He says exploratory wells were drilled in Kennetcook in 2007/2008 using pressurized water and the wells encountered a uranium deposit. He reports water tests have shown this waste water to contain radioactive elements. This water, close to 20 million liters, is stored in two ponds.

Wilson claims the ponds located in Kennetcook contain Radium 228 and are full to the limit and leaking from a crack at the water level. He fears if a leak were to occur in the Debert ponds, where some of this waste water is stored, it would get into the ground water (because of the sandy soil) and contaminate local wells.

The podium was then turned over to Roger Hunka, director of intergovernmental affairs for the Maritime Aboriginal Peoples Council.



District 9 Councillor Doug MacInnes (left) and District 10 Councillor Tom Taggart (right) hadn't planned to speak at the community meeting in Debert lead by Don Wilson (center) but felt they needed to present information about where County Council currently stands.

Mr. Hunka described NS as a "uranium hotbed" and explained some of the dangers associated with this element. He provided several handouts listing such information as the shelf life of a lengthy list of radioactive materials.

Hunka felt Colchester County Council had a "misconception" about the fracking wastewater because it is said to contain NORMs (Natural Occurring Radioactive Materials), which he feels are just as dangerous as any radioactive material.

Wilson and Hunka made a presentation to County Council on Sept. 27th. Hunka feels Article 333 of the Municipal Bylaws clearly states this wastewater containing NORMS can not be dumped into the Municipal Sewer System.

AIS made an application in December to release treated fracking wastewater into the Municipal sewer system and Council's decision has yet to be announced.

Hunka is unwavering on what he feels should be done with the material, "AIS took a risk. They brought in fracking materials, they are stuck with it." He feels dumping the water into the sewer system will create a major concern as the water would end up into the Cobequid Bay and the larger Bay of Fundy region where there could be side effects on the whole eco-system.

With references to Hiroshima, Chernobyl and Fukushima, Mr. Hunka gave examples of worst case scenarios.

A question from the audience raised the concern "what happens to the material if the County does not permit it in the sewer system?" and Mr. Hunka's response was clear, "Order AIS to make a plan for permanent storage or transfer it somewhere else."



District 10 Councillor Tom Taggart answers a question from the audience as Roger Hunka (right) looks on.



Jim Doane made a presentation to Colchester County Council on Jan 17th asking for the Council to vote "No" on an application by AIS to dispose of fracking wastewaters in the Municipal Sewer.

## AIS Presents Its Side At Fracking Meeting



Andre Lachevrotiere (center), General Manager for Atlantic Industrial Services, speaks to the crowd while Don Wilson (left) and Roger Hunka (right) look on.

By Linda Harrington

It took guts, but Andre Lachevrotiere knew it was time to step forward. The General Manager of Atlantic Industrial Services (AIS) had been listening to attacks on his company from his seat at the back of the room, letting presenters and councillors have their say, and now it was time to present his side.

"I cannot allow any of you to go home tonight with only half of the information and to think that all the local employees that we hire and that run our facility are in danger ...," he began, clearly disappointed by the preceding's, "...or are doing anything that put your community in any kind of bad situation."

He quickly supported Councillor MacInnes' suggestion to form a community liaison group saying his company is "absolutely interested" especially with "so much misinformation and so much public concern".

Lachevrotiere continued emphasizing the need for factual information saying, "All of you should have the facts so that you can make your own proper decision and our company is completely prepared to live with and work with any decision the community comes up with but we only want the decision based on facts."

The audience listened intently, without interruption, as Lachevrotiere expressed his disappointment in the misinformation in newspapers saying "I came here tonight not knowing if there were 3 people or 130 people but I am glad there are so many interested in their community. I think going forward we have to get to the facts, to get to the resolution of what has dragged on for a year."

The floor was opened up for questions. Residents want-

ed to know why the fracking wastewater had been transported to the facility in unmarked trucks, without any radioactive signage. Lachevrotiere explained the levels in the water are so low it does not require signage. "It is on the fringe of drinking water quality," he said, noting it could legally be discharged into the environment. "What has stopped everything is when the project got started Nova Scotia did not have regulations for this product and did not know how to deal with it and that is why it was stopped midway through the project and has been stalled for a year while the NS Environment tries to figure out what to do with it."

There is a document called the Canadian Guidelines for the Management of Naturally Occurring Radioactive Materials (NORM's), which includes a table for Unconditional Derived Release Limits that lists standards for "aqueous" disposal. Nova Scotia Dept. of Environment has asked AIS to meet these guidelines when dealing with the wastewater and Lachevrotiere referred to these standards as he replied, "This we have accepted, knowing this product will be discharged into a sewer, not going anywhere near potable water sources."

Further concerns resulted in questions about the strong odor often coming from the AIS facility. Lachevrotiere explained the wastewater stench is caused when bacteria in the water give off hydrogen sulphide gas (which is responsible for the rotten egg smell). "We apologize for that, it is one of the matters of wastewater treatment," he said mentioning it happens at every treatment facility but assuring everyone it is not harmful at these levels.

## FRACKING... Some Background Information

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on the process to be used to solve the issue.

Colchester County Council held their regular Committee Meeting on Jan. 17th. Mr. James Doane, a resident from along the Cobequid Bay shore, gave his personal perspective to Council, reporting his concerns the processing of waste materials at AIS is not being properly monitored. He asked Council not to allow fracking wastewater

material in the Municipal Sewer system.

Mr. Ramesh Ummat, an engineer and Director of Public Works, will present his final decision at the next Council meeting, on Jan. 31st.

**Hydraulic fracturing or fracking, is the process of extracting natural gas from shale rock layers deep within the earth by injecting highly pressurized fluids into the shale area. Nova Scotia is currently reviewing the process.**

The Deadline for the March issue of  
**Shoreline**  
Journal is February 19

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