

Retson Drive Drainage to be Tendered

By Maurice Rees

During its recent meeting the Flood advisory committee the following updates were made to the project list:

Portapique Cemetery: Committee has agreed to ongoing monitoring of this site until the cemetery group secures funding to have the work done. No significant change since the project has been on the list. Options include: Could send a letter and remove from list and they can reapply once funds are secured; lower the cost estimate; leave on the list. Consensus is Project to remain on list and

project status to change from pending to 'monitoring'

Ed Franklin: Rod working on NSE application; previously met with NSE and no foreseeable issues with obtaining approval. New cost estimate - \$65,000/. To be completed under low flow conditions before end of September.

Retson Drive Drainage: At the last meeting, the Committee decided that they would not proceed with a stormwater study of the Retson Drive area and instead look at replacing the tee-connection piping at the intersection of Retson and Meadowland and increase

the size of the ditch inlet. The project is estimated to cost \$25,000. A tender can be issued, and work completed before Fall.

Moved by: Mayor Blair, seconded by: Councillor Patton, "That a cost estimate of \$25,000 be approved for the Retson Drive Drainage Project and that staff be authorized to issue a tender for the work." Motion carried.

A draft letter to area residents was included in the package. One minor change was suggested to not only include copying the Area Councillor but also this Committee.

The letter will be sent out once the tender has been awarded.

New Business: Standard practice this time of year is to have the Committee's approval to issue a Request for Quotes for Heavy Equipment and Rock for the current year's projects. Moved by: Councillor Patton, Seconded by: Hank Kolstee: "That the standard tendering process be used to obtain quotes for Heavy Equipment and Rock for the 2022/23 flood projects." Motion carried.

The next meeting will be held in Council Chambers on Tuesday, August 9, 2022 at 9am.

Authority to Award, Debert STP2 Elimination Tender

By Maurice Rees

Council approved to grant August Council Committee the authority to award the tender for the elimination of an old sewage treatment plant (STP2) in Debert.

When the County took over Debert lands in 2008, it also inherited 3 sewage treatment plants. One was eliminated in 2010, and two others remain. The treatment plant located near the Debert airport has reached the end of its useful life.

There are only a small number of connections to the old plant including the Debert Aviation Centre, the Airport, the former Kent Homes facility

and a 4-unit apartment building on Masstown Road. The plant will be decommissioned and the connected properties will be serviced with individual pumping stations which will direct sewage to the main plant near Highway 104.

The work was originally scheduled to take place in 2021 however, archaeological clearance

requirements caused delays. The lands associated with the project have now been cleared

archaeologically. Drawings for the replacement project are being generated in house and a tender will be advertised in July.

Solar & Cozy Colchester Paused

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Cozy Colchester PACE programs. These changes are within the scope of the Solar Colchester PACE By-Law and Policy and therefore do not require amendments.

SUMMARY / BACKGROUND

Solar Colchester relaunched and Cozy Colchester launched for the first time on October 1, 2021, after the Municipality was awarded funding by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Community Efficiency Financing program to expand its PACE programs. The programs have been highly successful in the last 8 months and uptake has exceeded expectations, to the point that staff have been required to re-evaluate the programs and timelines.

Council last received a program update from staff and PACE Atlantic, the programs' third-party administrator, in December 2021 regarding the launch of the programs, the success of the programs in the first two months, and projections for program growth.

Staff initially projected about 350 projects over 3-4 years and had predicted that an extensive marketing campaign would be needed to recruit participants to the programs; however, interest from homeowners has been considerably higher than anticipated, even with very minimal marketing.

A number of factors contribute to this, including:

- Significant increases in oil prices and motivation for homeowners to reduce energy costs;
- Strong advertising campaigns from local solar contractors featuring 0% financing;
- Keen interest in taking advantage of 0% financing, particularly within the context of an unstable economy and rising Prime lending rates; and
- The 0% financing program announced by the federal government did not launch in 2021 as expected, which would have directed some homeowners away from municipal programs.

To date, over 500 homeowners have enrolled in the Solar and Cozy programs, 110 agreements have been signed with homeowners, and 54 projects have been completed. The Municipality of Colchester has been approved for a loan in the amount of \$5,565,400 and a grant of \$2,782,700 from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities; however, due to delays at FCM and the NS Municipal Finance Corporation, the Municipality has not yet received its first loan disbursement. Only \$500,000 in grant funding has been received to date.

ANALYSIS

Staff made the decision in early June to pause both programs until further notice, in order to:

- Slow down payments to contractors until more FCM funding has been received;

- Give staff time to determine how to maximize the benefit to low-income and equity-seeking homeowners with the remaining funding;
- Ensure that program objectives are achieved; and
- Give staff time to develop a plan for sustaining Solar Colchester and Cozy Colchester beyond the FCM funding.

The following data shows the funds already committed and the number of projects at each stage of the program (not including homeowners without quotes submitted), as of June 10.

Total approved by Municipality \$2,228,012.52 for 110 projects; Total with signed agreements \$867,851.42 for 35 projects; Total with quotes submitted \$1,398,341.48 totaling 78 projects.

Total committed (includes paid) \$4,494,205.42 covering 223 projects. % of FCM funding 81%;

% of total capital budget 60% and about \$1,215,000 has been paid to contractors to date for completed projects.

Since the Municipality has not yet received capital funding from FCM, these invoices have been paid from the FCM grant received in May and the general operating bank account. The first FCM loan disbursement (\$1,391,350) is scheduled on August 1, with the second actively being lined up for the Fall.

Homeowners that are farther along in the process will

still receive 0% financing. Staff have set a cut-off date of June 10 - all homeowners that submitted quotes to the program for their projects prior to that date will be eligible for 0% financing.

In total, 223 homeowners will receive 0% financing for their projects, including the projects that have already been completed.

New applicants and existing participants without quotes submitted will be required to wait until the programs restart, likely in late 2022 or early 2023, once two loan disbursements have been received from FCM. Homeowners who do not want to wait or who have time-sensitive projects will be encouraged to explore other financing options. The program will continue to offer free Home Energy Assessments to homeowners as well as advice about their efficiency projects.

While the success and rapid uptake of the programs are good, staff acknowledge that the decision to pause the programs may negatively

impact participating contractors and homeowners.


Program changes and estimated timelines were communicated to all existing participants and contractors on June 15, and staff have been fielding questions and concerns since that date.

While many participants

are disappointed, staff are hopeful that most understand that the programs have helped dozens of homeowners to date and that this pause is a necessary result of overwhelming interest from the community.

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