

To Frack or Not To Frack



Gerard Lucyshyn, left, addresses the crowd at the curling club in Pugwash on September 13 regarding the positive side of fracking. Lucyshyn said Cumberland County is sitting on millions of dollars in royalties, all they have to do is access it. Michael Bradfield, seated, presented the negative side of fracking, including costs and potential threats. (Submitted)

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gas flows out of the hole when the fluid is pulled out.

According to information from March 2017, Lucyshyn said there are 2.71 trillion cubic feet of natural gas under Cumberland County. About half of that could be recovered.

"We're looking at an asset sitting in the ground. We're looking at an asset that you could exploit. All you have to do is access it," he said, noting the asset could be worth between a \$75 million to \$235 million provincial royalty at the current royalty rate.

But Lucyshyn says people are afraid of perceived threats and avoid what feels dangerous.

"Every industry that we have in this country - renewables, non-renewables, any other historical industries - the same thing. As that industry matures, it becomes safer, it becomes better, it becomes more efficient. That's economics. It is becoming more efficient," he said.

But Bradfield, a retired Dalhousie University professor who sat on the Wheeler Commission, disagrees.

"The basic proposition is you don't just look at the benefits, you look at the costs. We've heard some of the benefits, but I've got a few warnings," he said.

"The costs from fracking are not just environmental. Even be-

fore we talk about the huge methane release from fracking, the economics say it doesn't matter about those things, we shouldn't do it for economic reasons."

He said the government has to create a regulatory regime to make the fracking industry safe, complete with a set of regulations. Information - such as water and air quality, unemployment rates, wage levels, and distribution by income - has to be gathered beforehand to see what type of effect the industry has.

Bradfield questioned why, if the public is being told regulation is being done well in Alberta, that province has 15,000 orphaned wells that will deteriorate over time, which means leaking methane and adding to greenhouse gasses.

"You have to have monitoring once you start...right through to the decommissioning. Who's going to watch those wells after they're shut down? The long-term costs are going to continue, but who is going to do it?"

After the audience had heard from both sides, they had the opportunity for comments, and to ask questions of both panelists.

Barb Harris, with the Environmental Health Association of Nova Scotia, addressed some health issues.

Lucyshyn had initially mentioned the Wheeler Report, released in 2014, noting there was no evidence of catastrophic threats to public health in the short and medium term that would ban fracking outright.

Harris said there were only a handful of studies complete by the time the Wheeler Report was released, however 1,300 peer-reviewed scientific studies have been done since then.

"The evidence is overwhelmingly negative," she said, adding 84 per cent of the studies that discussed health impacts found elevated health hazards, including reduced health of infants born to mothers living within three kilometres of a well site during pregnancy, and increased leukemia and asthma rates.

She also spoke about the radioactive materials that contaminate the fracking wastewater that has come out of Nova Scotia's small fracking industry.

"Naturally-occurring radioactive materials - NORMS. That was one of the biggest challenges in the very few, little bit of fracking that has happened here, was how to dispose of NORMS. It's not just in the wastewater - it contaminates pipes, it contaminates the materials used in fracking."

Kelly Deveau lives in Dartmouth, but has property in Collingwood so wanted to be at the debate. He's spent three decades working in the fracking industry and admits he's passionate about the subject.

"Lots of people here are being scared. They're being fear-factored here," he said. "I'm a living study. Thirty years - I've handled the chemicals, I've pumped the chemicals, I've used the chemicals. I don't have five arms, I can run a 5K right now, I could carry anybody out of here on my back. I'm not dying from anything that

fracking has ever done."

Deveau said he's proud of Nova Scotia, but he watched his now-grown children grow up through electronics because he had to leave the province to work and put them through college.

"Everybody here is worried about certain things, well why don't you worry about everybody in Nova Scotia? I've got 200 friends in Alberta from Nova Scotia that would be back here in a heartbeat. Two hundred people that would buy a house. Two hundred people that would raise kids, buy snowmobiles, boats, groceries, hotels. It goes on and on and on."

Deveau started at the bottom, and is now employed as a frack consultant. Everything he does shows exactly what chemicals are involved, and at what stage.

"Fracking is far less dangerous than the pulp mill spewing stuff in Pictou," he said. "Open your minds, that's all I ask."

Raissa Tetanish is editor, The Light Tatamagouche. We swapped stories. She provided a story on the Fracking debate in Pugwash and the Shoreline provided a story from Colchester Council committee meeting on Tatamagouche issues. The meetings were held at the same time.

Hub Centre Drive Not Paved

By Maurice Rees

Despite a third survey of property owners, Hub Centre Drive will not be paved. Two thirds of the 15 property owners would have voted in favour, but only 9 voted in favour and 6 were recorded against the additional cost.

Hub Centre Drive is a County owned road located in Onslow near Highway 102. In 2016, Council agreed to fund the construction of a sewer line on Hub Centre Drive. The

work was completed in the fall of the same year.

At their meeting of May 9, 2017, Council Committee directed staff to seek feedback from property owners along Hub Centre Drive regarding their willingness to cost share on the paving of the road. The total estimated cost for paving the road at the time was \$230,000 and each owner was asked to pay \$14,375. Only 4 owners were in favour of contributing to the paving of the

road.

In June of 2017, staff was again asked by Council to seek feedback from property owners on their willingness to cost share paving of the road. The cost estimate was adjusted, with each owner having to pay \$7,500. Only 6 properties were in favour of proceeding.

On April 26, 2018, staff were again asked by Council to seek feedback from property owners on their willingness to cost share paving of the road. The cost estimate was updated, with each owner having to pay \$8,750. Petitions were sent to all property owners on July 12, and owners were asked to provide feedback by August 22, 2018.

Excluding the single property owned by the County, there are 15 privately owned properties fronting on Hub Centre Drive. Of these 15, 9 voted in favour of paving and 5 voted against. This translates to 60% being in favour of paving. Should the county

property be included, and should Council elect to fund its share of the paving, then the % in favour based on 16 properties would be 62.5%.

Each year the County spends approximately \$2,500 providing grading and dust control for Hub Centre Drive. During the winter of 2018, additional gravels were added to the road at a cost of \$12,000. Some councillors asked if it might be possible to seek coverage of annual maintenance costs from the existing property owners.

According to council policy and the MGA rules nothing can be done until 2/3 of property owners agree. As result the road will remain dusty.



This photo shows the section of Hub Centre Drive just before the entrance to Green-Diamond. In order to proceed council needs at least 66% voting in favour. It will cost \$7,500 per lot. (Rees Photo)

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