

CIP remediation public meeting aims for fall

By André Dumont

HAWKESBURY — The public could have its say on the future of the CIP (Canadian International Paper Company) wet lagoons some time in October.

“We hope to have a public meeting in October. We will present everything to the public and let people participate,” Hawkesbury Mayor Jeanne Charlebois said in an interview last week.

Town council, Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) project officer Suzanne Lafrance and two neighboring dry lagoon owners are currently contemplating possibilities for the decontamination and rehabilitation of the CIP’s sludge-filled wastewater pond.

Until now, the public and the media have been barred

from meetings. However, The Review was able to publish information on four scenarios, which could range from simply monitoring the site to a full-scale remediation with a \$69-million tab.

Other ideas now include partnering up with the private sector and turning the sludge into fertilizer.

“We are trying to be as transparent as possible, but sometimes transparency takes time,” Charlebois said.

The mayor says she is satisfied with discussions with dry lagoon owners, who also have to find a solution for the hundreds of tonnes of paper mill rejects stockpiled on their land.

“I feel there is movement, compared to where we were last year,” Charlebois said. At least we are going somewhere.”

As of now, there is still no indication of where funds for the remediation will come from. The MNR has committed to planning the remediation, but not to fund it.

“We are trying to get the provincial government to see what kind of funding is available,” Charlebois said. I cannot say they are going to give us anything, but we are working on it.”