
CIP clean-up socio-economic study contract awarded

Town refuses access to information request,
saying documents should be available within 90 days

HAWKESBURY – The town of Hawkesbury has awarded a \$49,550-contract to Fotenn Urban Planners & Designers to conduct a socio-economic benefits study related to the remediation of the CIP wet lagoon.

The newly-hired Ottawa firm will look at what social and economic impacts on Hawkesbury population and businesses the cleaning-up of the CIP's industrial wastewater pond could have.

When it left town and closed its paper mill back in 1982, the Canadian International Paper (CIP) company also left behind a stinking pond of industrial sludge. The land now belongs to the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), but until it is decontaminated, not much can be done with the property, which is in a prime location close to downtown and to the Ottawa River.

According to Mayor Jeanne Charlebois, Fotenn's study will complete that of Conestoga-Rovers and Associates, which outlined four closure scenarios.

The town has already received a \$35,000-grant towards the study. According to municipal staff, the balance will be paid by the MNR.

Public consultations about the rehabilitation of the property are supposed to take place in the fall, according to Charlebois. However MNR project officer Suzanne Lafrance told The Review recently that public consultations are not likely to begin in 2007.

An August 1, 2007 access to information request made by The Review to the Town of Hawkesbury has been turned down. The Review requested reports, recommendations, documents or power point presentations related to professional work engaged by the town and related to the proposed clean-up, remediation or rehabilitation of the former CIP wet lagoon site.

Conestoga-Rovers and Associates has recently completed a study that puts forward preliminary suggestions for the site. Partners considering the future of the site include the MNR, the Ontario Ministry of Environment, the Town of Hawkesbury and the two owners of the dry lagoons west of the wet lagoons.

In a letter dated September 11 from Hawkesbury Clerk Christine Groulx, the town is refusing to release documents to The Review, citing the following reasons: the disclosure of these documents would result in the premature disclosure of a pending policy decision and second, the town says it "has reasonable grounds that these documents will be available to the public within ninety days from the date of your request." The date of The Review's request was August 1, 2007.