

September 1, 2023

The Wellington Community Association (WCA) thanks Mayor Ferguson and Shire Hall Staff for holding a Public Meeting to discuss the Water Infrastructure Projects that have been proposed for Wellington and Prince Edward County. However, we are disappointed with the continued lack of clarity and information provided by staff. We also wish to express our appreciation to those members of the public who have come forward to provide their insights, expertise and feedback.

The WCA has several concerns around these proposed Projects, and their potential impacts on Water Ratepayers:

- We agree that County infrastructure should be planned and built in advance of future demand, however the scale of the project is predicated on very ambitious population growth projections, a “Best, Best” case scenario, as it were.
 - QUESTION: Has The County prepared a sensitivity analysis of the financial implications of said projections falling short of ambitions? What, exactly, are the implications of falling 20% short? 30% short?
 - Further to this question, we have seen 3 different population projections --- please advise exactly which population projection are being relied upon?
- Toward the end of the public meeting and in response to a question, the CIMA engineer, Mr. Bradley Young, provided, rather piecemeal, the cost estimates for the project.
 - QUESTION: Can The County provide a straightforward breakdown of each component of the project --- NOT just those expenditures approved by Council but the ENTIRE water infrastructure capital project, including timing of expenditures and sources of funds at each stage.
- The Financing plans for the Project are based on estimates and ambitions that, in some cases, are utterly implausible regardless of whether they were prepared by qualified “consultants” or extrapolated from Federal and Provincial policy objectives and immigration aspirations. . For example, Shire Hall has indicated that \$30,000,000 for the project will come from Commercial Development Fees, is this correct? This figure is based on an assumed 900,000+ square feet of commercial development in Wellington (Watson and Associates Report). We are fortunate in this County to have highly qualified individuals with a multiplicity of expertise. We direct you to Wellington resident Jane Marshall’s report submitted to CAO Marcia Wallace which concludes: “...*there is no mathematical or commercial reality to support this amount of footage in the next quarter century and beyond. Further, if the residential growth is delayed or slowed due to the lack of absorption (employment*

opportunities) or even current market forces the Watson estimates are dramatic overstatements of our reality and should not be used for investment purposes”

- There is considerable heralding of the \$4.3 million Irrevocable Letter of Credit posted by Kaitlin that the County can seize “in a worst-case scenario” and use to service debt.
 - QUESTION: Is the Irrevocable Letter of Credit “money in the bank” or are there conditions that could impede its use by the County?
 - QUESTION: How many months/years of debt servicing for the full debt incurred will the \$4.3 million cover? Surely the County has prepared a financial model with such predictions.
- Permanent Loss of Greenspace. The proposed site for the new Regional Water Treatment plant would eliminate an important and much used Greenspace. The 2021 Master Servicing Plan states “Consideration may be given to have the regional WTP on the west side of the new WTP to increase the distance between the facility and neighboring properties, once the existing WTP is decommissioned and demolished”. This potential solution allows for the retention of a full half of the existing green space.
 - QUESTION: Is this alternative being given serious consideration?
- The Water Infrastructure Project(s) has lacked proper public consultation, opportunities for meaningful community engagement and open sharing of information from its earliest planning stages. Residents and water ratepayers should be invited to participate in a meaningful way in all future planning phases of the project.
- In conclusion, it is obvious by the overwhelming positive response from 400 attendees that there is a need for the County to press “pause” and undertake the following:
 1. A Peer Review of the Watson Report by a reputable firm such as J.C Williams.
 2. A Peer Review of the engineering with the objective of determining whether the project can be more efficiently staged with a view toward mitigating costs and the risks to ratepayers.

It is our view that the current Council has a fiduciary responsibility to undertake these reviews, however, in the event that the County refuses then WCA will do so and publish the results.

The WCA will continue to update and inform Wellington Residents on our progress, as we continue to work towards clear and open communication between Council and Residents.

Sincerely,

THE WELLINGTON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION