

DWPI moving at ?increased rate?

A report from the Town Engineer, Stephen Burnett & Associates (SBA), reviewed by Council on Monday, September 8th, states that directional drilling for Dufferin Wind Power Inc.'s (DWPI) underground transmission power lines appears to be moving at an increased rate. The subcontractor for DWPI, Somerville, was observed by SBA drilling the line from Victoria Street to the south side of 30th Sideroad at an ?increased rate then had been completed previously.? SBA suggested this was due to ?somewhat better soil conditions and a more aggressive drilling program.?

In late August, Jennifer Willoughby Deputy Clerk of Shelburne said the company was about eight weeks behind schedule. ?After reviewing engineering submissions from S. Burnett & Associates, it appears the original construction timeline through Shelburne was four weeks with construction commencing June 9th. At that time, the company was in their 12th week of work within Shelburne limits.

However, SBA reports that ?this more aggressive progress also resulted in a significant increase in the number of frac-outs experienced through this portion of the drilling operation.? As SBA was only on part time inspection as of August 11th, as directed by Council, monitoring and recording all incidents of frac-outs was ?somewhat more difficult? for the engineering firm, but they did record 11 additional frac-outs bringing the total incidents to approximately 34 for the entire drilling operation through Shelburne. SBA was not on the site at the time, but reports, that it is their understanding, that the subcontractor Somerville was charged by the MOE Officer investigating the project and site conditions for the frac-out incidents.

Stephen Burnett & Associates (SBA) have been engaged by the Town as municipal engineers specifically to review and inspect the Dufferin Wind Power Project as it relates to the transmission line within Shelburne. Earlier reports from SBA to Shelburne staff and Council, contained several safety, wetland and infrastructure concerns; these were met with demands from Council for better communication from DWP. At the August 25th Council meeting, Councillor Tom Egan noted that ?frac-outs? had been a major concern for Council during DWPI's construction through Shelburne and that there had been extensive documentation done by SBA. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), John Telfer reported that Steve Burnett outlined these concerns again at September 8th Council. The CAO ?feels the matter will be addressed by the Ministry of Environment with potential fines assessed to the sub-contractor.? ?Our future liability to these fracs,? he said, ?is to report them and let the MOE address it through their authority.? SBA commenced onsite full time inspections June 10th to August 12th, at which time inspection was revised to part time. SBA has now stopped onsite monitoring of DWPI construction activities for the Town of Shelburne all together. On Friday, August 29th SBA was directed by Town staff to stop even part time inspection due to funding constraints.

In its sixth review summary to Council Sept. 8th, SBA noted, ?it would appear that all drilling operations are at or nearing completion within the Town of Shelburne limits,? but that clarification had not been received on the minimum required setback from the residential home on Highway 89, where damage was done to the basement resulting from a DWPI directional drilling incident. Still to complete are the construction of four concrete junction stations which form the splicing locations for electrical cable and where trenching and drilling conduits meet. Electrical cable will still have to be pulled through the conduits that are installed and connected to the poles outside of Town limits. SBA has been informed that clean up by subcontractors will take two to three weeks after the completion of the junction stations.

By Marni Walsh