

Environmental approval for new well

On April 30th, Canada's Environment Minister, the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq announced the approval of the Federal Environmental Assessment of the Town of Shelburne's Long-Term Well Project. The approval comes as welcome news for Shelburne Councillors, who have awaited the approval of the well to support continued new growth in the town.

Having taken into consideration the Comprehensive Study Report and that no public comments were filed, the assessment decision stated, the Minister is of the opinion that: the Project is not likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects, taking into account the implementation of the mitigation measures described in the Comprehensive Study Report; and the mitigation measures and follow-up program.

Along with the report, Minister Aglukkaq considered the comments received from the public, as well as the comments of Aboriginal groups on the report, to reach her decision. The project has now been referred back to Infrastructure Canada for appropriate action. The new water supply production well, referred to as well seven, will provide additional drinking water to Shelburne's rapidly expanding population with the addition of new housing developments in recent years.

Mayor Edward Crewson said, The addition of well seven to our water service will enable us to meet provincial water standards now and into the future. A long time in the making, the project was initiated in 2010 with development and growth playing a factor as well as new drinking water standards set by the Ministry of the Environment. The Town applied for and received a Building Canada Grant from the Federal Government worth \$2,778,000. The grant was contingent on a water conservation component requiring the Town to switch from a flat rate water fee to a metered system completed in 2011. The original estimate on the whole project was \$5,079,345, but Town Treasurer Carol Sweeney says the scope of the project has changed and staff are awaiting decisions from engineers; That figure may not be realistic at this point.

Well seven will be located approximately three kilometres west of Shelburne in the Township of Melancthon. Mayor Crewson thanked the neighbouring Township for the co-operation and support we have received in the past and we hope to receive in the future from the councillors and people of Melancthon Township. The water main route is approximately four kilometres long following the 2nd Line Southwest to Highway 89, proceeding east along the highway to connect with the town's existing water supply system.

In her statement, the Environment Minister requested the responsible authority ensure the implementation of the mitigation measures described in the Comprehensive Study Report and that the responsible authority ensure the implementation of the follow-up program described in the Comprehensive Study Report, in order to determine the effectiveness of the measures taken to mitigate any adverse environmental effects and to verify the accuracy of the environmental assessment of the Project.

In a statement to the Free Press on Monday, the Mayor said, We are very thankful for the financial support we have received from the Governments of Canada and Ontario on this project. The industrial, commercial and institutional growth that the addition of well seven enables in Shelburne, will provide much needed jobs for the people living in central and north Dufferin, as well as enhanced amenities, so that everyone benefits from the EA approval."

By Marni Walsh