

# **Comments From Gary Wade**

## **Comment #1**

I attended the Halton Wastewater Treatment Plant Information Meeting on November 14, 2002 and also the Information Meeting on January 29, 2003.

At the initial meeting in November, I submitted a question with respect to the approval process, past notices, community impact, etc. I did not receive any sort of a reply or even an acknowledgment that I had submitted a question, contrary to my understanding of the process that was outlined at that meeting.

During the presentation on January 29, 2003, Region personnel indicated via their “Progress Report”, that one of their “accomplishments” since the previous meeting was that they had dealt with the “questions/comments” that were raised or submitted at the previous meeting.

When directly questioned about this by several people including myself, we were told that the resolution of these comments was done “internally” and that the course they had elected to pursue was to compile the questions and the responses, and then to make these issues public at a later date in some sort of a booklet format. This appears to be a significant change from the process as outlined at the November meeting.

As it appears, this new process will only publicly reveal the “Communities” questions or concerns after the decision has been made to proceed, and most importantly after the comment & question period is concluded under the arbitrary deadline of February 07. If the Community finds that the responses from the Region are not sufficient or not comprehensive, it would appear that the current procedure, which has been unilaterally imposed by the Region, does not permit any recourse or the time to request further clarifications. This type of process does not afford interested parties the ability to assess the Region’s responses and to further question whether the Region has suitably addressed the concerns of the community. It would seem that after Feb 07 members of the Community are excluded from the process!!

As I understand the procedures, the purpose of incorporating a public comment period into the assessment and decision process is to enable the people who are going to be directly affected by the expansion to feel satisfied that their concerns are at least being considered, if not directly addressed, and also to clarify misunderstandings. It should also permit members of the community to assess questions raised by other interested community members and consider these in the context of their own concerns. If the structure of the process excludes this type of exchange then it would appear to be flawed.

**Accordingly, I believe that the process that is currently scheduled to end on February 07 should be extended to permit the Community to properly review the Region’s**

**responses and questions. As well, all questions and responses should be publicly disclosed by the Region prior to any decision to proceed is approved. If the process is not extended, my request would be to make whatever decisions that are approved “conditional” upon a proper resolution of expressed concerns and also full disclosure of Community comments.**

## **Question #2**

It is my understanding that the Region believes that there should not be a further extension to the comment period and that the public and the “Community” should not expect to have the comment period extended beyond Feb 07. No compelling reason was given during the January 29 meeting as to why the comment period was so restricted other than the deadline was in accordance with a long range plan that was agreed upon some time ago. This was all the more questionable when it was revealed that the odor study, odor suppression technology, and the actual plant “operations technology” studies & recommendations have yet to be completed. How can the region cut off comments when the “Community” does not have the information to assess what the Region’s recommended technology is to be other than “we assure you that it will be good and will meet minimum standards”?

**Please outline why the arbitrary deadline of February 07 was set and why there is not sufficient room in the schedule to extend this deadline for 90 or 120 days, or**

**until such time as a technology recommendation is more fully developed so as to consider the impact of these serious decisions.**

### **Question #3**

The Region proposes that several of the primary reasons or benefits of the proposed location are as follows; “gravity”- (!/!?! flows downhill so it makes sense to process Milton’s sewage here), the previous investment in the current plant – (ie sunk costs), the fact that the decision to pick this site for expansion was made 15 years ago, and therefore we should honor this history, and finally the proximity to the lake for dumping the treated water.

Apparently, to my deep concern, I find that my community will be processing all of Milton’s waste water as well as the residential & industrial waste water from the 401 Corridor.

I have lived in Glen Abbey since 1988 and I had no idea that this was the “Plan” until I attended the November meeting. I have never received any sort of personalized notice of future sewage plant expansion plans despite being an immediate neighbor to the plant. I find this strange as I believe the Town of Oakville bylaws require notice if a neighbor wants to alter his property with a building addition even from some distance away, and this type of notice is done on a personalized basis. Why would I not be notified personally about such a significant development in

my community, especially when it has such far reaching implications? Something seems to be wrong here with the process. I feel like someone has tried to “smoke something by me”, which is not a good way to feel about your government.

At the meeting on January 29 we heard that there were numerous cases of waste treatment plants being built in North America where these types of “benefits” (ie “close to the lake” as outlined above) are not a factor, and that technology is such that communities that are not near a lake or are even not affected by gravity can efficiently and economically process their own waste.

I believe that the momentum relating to previous decisions, or reliance on “sunk costs”, or that the assertion that “streams cannot handle the process” are both insufficient and “old reasons” that this decision should be made without further study. I also heard at the meeting that advanced technology being marketed by Zenon Environmental and other companies can give Milton the benefit of processing their own wastewater and also the benefit of utilizing this in their own community for irrigation etc etc.

It would appear that the Region is conferring a great benefit on the communities of North Halton & they are accepting the benefits of locating the plant in my community & having my family & community deal with all of the downsides. How is this fair? It has yet to be explained to

me except in terms such as “this was the way it was decided long ago & we have to follow the plan”.

**I propose that any decision that is made should be considered conditional upon a more extensive study of how North Halton can deal with its own sewage treatment via a complete review of current technology options available.**

### **Question #4**

At the most recent meeting, I learned that the plant expansion may dramatically increase the amount of truck traffic in my community as the waste sludge is hauled away from the expanded site. I also learned that the technology recommended for the processing of the waste sludge was not the most optimal as it encompassed mixing the sludge with cement dust at the site. In order to accomplish this, trucks will have to transport the dust in to the site and carry the toxins out of the site. Apparently this presents a significant increase in the health hazards of living in the vicinity of the plant as well as dramatically increasing the potential for toxic spills on the roads of the community (which is first & primarily a residential community).

**I propose that any decision with respect to this expansion be conditional upon a sophisticated review of the potential traffic patterns to result from the expansion and also an environmental review of the implications of utilizing this technology.**

## **Question 5**

During the meeting I also learned that the waste water is to be treated with chlorine technology. The expansion will also require that significantly more quantities of this dangerous chemical will be entering my community, primarily by tanker truck rather than railcar (since there is no rail spur going into the proposed plant). I also learned that should there indeed be a “leak” or an accident, that the whole community may have to be evacuated due to the nature of this chemical. I also learned that the bigger the plant, the more likely there would be a leak, as there would be far greater quantities of this toxic chemical coming into the community and greater odds for a traffic accident and a dangerous spill.

**I propose that any decision with respect to the plant expansion be made conditional upon a thorough and updated environmental and “traffic”/evacuation study by the Region, or the Town, or the Province in order to ensure that the Glen Abbey residential community is not put under undue risk of chemical toxins.**

## **Question #6**

When I attended the November meeting there was an odor study presented. Upon questioning, it was revealed that the odor study was completed for a very limited period of time, primarily in September or October. Residents were concerned that this odor study was not comprehensive

enough to determine the implications of the plant expansion on the community's air quality throughout the year, especially in the warm & humid summer months.

**I propose that any decision made be considered conditional upon the completion of a more comprehensive odor study and that also the Region present technology options and specific line item budget approvals to deal with odor control issues.**

### **Question # 7**

It does not appear that any information has been presented on the significant effect that the expansion will have on the levels of phosphorous in the lake. At the meeting I learned that the lake is experiencing greatly increased levels of algae growth that is likely attributable to the levels of phosphorous in the lake. Although the existing plant seems to be operating at acceptable levels now there is concerns about the expansion and what this will mean for the future. It did not seem that the recent development in algae growth was taken into account in the "Plans" recommendations.

**I propose that any decisions that are taken are conditional on a full scale environmental study of the impact on the Oakville lakefront situation.**



## **Question #8**

During the course of the meeting there was significant discussion about the eventual size of the plant and how it would rank on a relative basis with other such plants in southwestern Ontario, and elsewhere. This is a concern as the impression was given that the decisions made in the next few months would shape the building decisions for the next 15 years. We learned that the eventual size of this plant would be considered “significant” in terms of the Metro area. This is of a concern when the proposal is to expand a plant in a local community to such a significant size that is considered a major installation, with far reaching effects, (even into Coronation Park or Downtown Oakville, or even East Oakville if the wind is right) without more serious debate about alternative technologies or alternative sites. Especially when the proposal is to process waste from areas that could explore alternate technology that may be able to eliminate the requirement for such a massive installation.

**I propose that any decisions are deemed to be conditional subject to a more thorough current technology review with respect to the eventual size of the plant.**