



**SUMMER VILLAGE OF WEST COVE
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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March 25th, 2019

To Property Owners:

Re: West Cove Lagoon – sewage hauler access

Some recent events have triggered some conversations within our Summer Village to which Council feels a response would be beneficial.

The Summer Village of West Cove owns and operates its own sewage lagoon, and the costs associated with operating this lagoon are covered from the tax dollars collected by the Summer Village from each property within the Summer Village. The Summer Village must contract a certified lagoon operator, our lagoon must meet the Provincial requirements for lagoon operation, and our lagoon is inspected by Provincial regulatory authorities as per their regulations. In 2017 the Summer Village expensed \$19,311 in capital and operational costs for our sewage lagoon. In 2018 the Summer Village expensed just under \$229,000 in capital and operational costs. These 2018 costs included:

- \$198,000 on a dredging project
- \$ 30,000 on a fence project
- \$ 600 on signage

The majority of these costs were covered through grant dollars, however we need to recognize the operation of a lagoon comes with significant costs. It is anticipated that the dredging of the lagoon will extend the life of our lagoon by 10+ years as long as the effluent taken in is restricted to just West Cove properties.

Prior practice was that the Summer Village accepted sewage effluent from properties outside of our Summer Village boundaries.

At the March 30th, 2017 Council meeting, Council passed a motion to have sewage haulers charge a disposal fee of \$21.00/load for all effluent coming in from properties outside the Summer Village. The intent of this disposal fee was to assist in offsetting the cost of operating our lagoon. Properties within the Summer Village were NOT to be charged this disposal fee. Shortly after this March 30th, 2017 Council meeting, Administration phoned both our sewage haulers to advise of this change, and then followed up with a letter on April 5th, 2017. This letter served as written confirmation of the direction of Council and also provided the haulers with monthly volume reports to completed and returned with the monthly disposal fee that was collected. Along with this letter and monthly reports, the Summer Village also provided our haulers with a letter that they could distribute to their customers explaining the requirement for a disposal fee for properties outside of West Cove boundaries.

At the April 27th, 2017 Council meeting, after the recommendation of our lagoon operator, Council passed a motion to immediately cease the acceptance of effluent from outside our Summer Village boundaries. The reason for this was because the level of effluent at our lagoon was at the freeboard marker, which placed our lagoon in a critical state and if not addressed immediately could result in the lagoon being closed from accepting any additional effluent. On April 28th, 2017 a letter outlining this urgent matter was forwarded to each hauler and each hauler was invited to a meeting to discuss this situation and consult collaboratively on a plan to address the current and future of our sewage lagoon. This meeting took place on May 1st, 2017. The discussion at this meeting included (but was not limited to): current and future operation of the lagoon, inability to accept outside effluent, speed limit restrictions, vehicle weight restrictions, and general respect when disposing of effluent at the lagoon site to ensure the site is kept clean. The meeting also included a good conversation on gate access, snow removal, grading, gravel, etc. which are Summer Village responsibilities to improve the haulers ability to effectively and efficiently haul within our community. At this meeting discussion also took place with respect to accessing tanks from the back alleys within the Summer Village.

On May 4th, 2017 the Summer Village provided a letter to the two sewage haulers that they could distribute to their customers explaining why the Summer Village can no longer accept outside effluent.

On September 6th, 2017 one of our haulers was given a letter advising that they had been observed hauling outside effluent into the West Cove lagoon, and noting that this letter serves as their final warning on this matter and that Administration has been directed that should a similar occurrence or observation take place that lagoon access will be terminated immediately.

On July 10th, 2018 one of our haulers was given a letter advising that concerns had been raised by Council that their drivers were not adhering to the 75% vehicle weight restriction within the Summer Village.

On March 20th, 2019 one of our haulers was observed hauling a full load of effluent from outside our Summer Village and disposing of this effluent in our lagoon. During this one trip 3 infractions were observed: 1) hauling outside effluent 2) hauling a full load 3) disposing the effluent in a manner that the last part of the load was being dumped onto the ground as opposed to in the dump pad. This incident and the infractions observed were forwarded to Summer Village Council that evening, to which Council directed Administration to terminate access immediately. On March 21st, 2019 in the morning Administration made a phone call to this hauler to advise of this decision, and this message was left on voice mail as no one answered the phone. A letter was drafted by Administration to this hauler confirming in writing of the termination of access effective immediately. This letter was reviewed and approved by Council prior to it being issued. In this letter, the hauler was provided the opportunity to discuss this matter, and future access to the lagoon, with Council at a future Council meeting.

Council, Administration and your Lagoon Operator take very seriously the operation of our sewage lagoon. And it is our responsibility to ensure that best practices are followed and that infractions and/or abuse are addressed. Wastewater effluent is big business, and I can advise that many of the lagoons within the boundaries of Lac Ste. Anne County are at critical or crisis levels. It is because of this that regional discussions are taking place at the political level with respect to a regional sewage line being constructed to take effluent from all the lagoons to a treatment facility. If this actually proceeds the preliminary estimated costs are upwards of \$100 Million dollars to which West Cove, if part of this project, would be responsible for our respective share. It is anticipated that should this project proceed there would be significant provincial funding provided – but would that be a 75/25 split or a 90/10 split or something in between. Even if its only 10% that the respective municipal partners have to cover, 10% of \$100 Million is \$10 Million! That is a significant amount of money that would have to come from the municipalities who are part of this project. At this time this is simply a preliminary conversation, but I would just like to share the reality of where the future of our sewage effluent may take us.

We appreciate that this hauler has reached out to another sewage hauler inviting them to take over their customer base. After learning of this, our Administration has reached out to that same hauler to have a conversation on the operation and expectations around our West Cove lagoon, and advising that should this hauler wish to access our lagoon, this would need to be formally requested.

This is the background and recent history on the operation of West Cove's sewage lagoon, we hope that you can appreciate that some of the decisions that Council makes are not easy, or popular, but that they are made in the best interests of the Summer Village as a whole.

Yours truly,



Larry St. Amand
Mayor
Summer Village of West Cove

c.c. Council
Administration
Lagoon Operator