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STAFF REPORT: Infrastructure and Public Works



REPORT TO: Committee of the Whole
MEETING DATE: April 25, 2016
REPORT NO.: CSPW.16.036
SUBJECT: Thornbury Wastewater Treatment Plant Environmental Assessment Amendment – Budget Creation
PREPARED BY: John Caswell, Manager of Water & Wastewater Services

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report CSPW.16.036 entitled, “Thornbury Wastewater Treatment Plant Environmental Assessment Amendment – Budget Creation”;

AND THAT Council approve the creation of a 2016 Capital Budget of \$25,000 to retain Engineering Services to amend the existing Schedule “C” Comprehensive Environmental Assessment to enable the application for an extension to the Environmental Compliance Approval for the Thornbury Wastewater Treatment Plant;

AND THAT Council approve funding the \$25,000 from the Wastewater Rate Stabilization Reserve.

B. Background

In 2006, the Town completed a Schedule “C” Comprehensive Environmental Assessment (EA), Phase 4 Environmental Study Report for the Thornbury Wastewater Treatment Plant (TWWTP) expansion. The EA projected the increase in flows and outlined the measures that would have to be taken at the plant to treat the influent.

Subsequent to the completion of the above-mentioned EA and an accompanying Preliminary Design Report, the Town submitted an application for an Environmental Compliance Approval (ECA) to the MOECC in 2009 for the plant expansion. The approval was received with an expiry date of January 29, 2015.

Staff applied for an ECA extension for the permit issued in 2010. The MOECC informed the Town a new ECA would be issued with an expiry date of December 31, 2017 even though ECA’s typically are valid for 5 years. The rationale provided by the MOECC for only a two year extension is to ensure that applications are current with any changes affecting the process or discharge to receiving streams, or to capture any changes in guidelines or effluent loadings that may need to be recognized in new projects. Prior to the MOECC considering a five-year extension to the ECA set to expire in 2017, the Town must amend the existing EA for the TWWTP expansion to confirm/update the findings of the original 2006 EA. Once the amendment is finalized, the Town will be able to submit an ECA extension application.

Although the actual construction timing of an expansion of the plant may be 2026 as reported in the 2014 Year End Report, it is important that the Town maintain a valid ECA for the expansion because it is by this ECA that the Town can continue to reserve capacity for new development.

Given the nature of development and wastewater generation in the Town, the plant is physically underutilised but “on paper” is at capacity with respect to reservation for development. To avoid building unused capacity, the Town had discussions with the Ministry of Environment & Climate Change (MOECC) and Grey County prior to 2009. The result was the Town could continue to reserve capacity for new development with a valid ECA in hand for a plant expansion up until the point the Average Day Flow (ADF) exceeds 80% of the design capacity. Once that happens, the Town would be required to proceed with final design and construction of the expansion. This parameter is reported on annually within the Wastewater Year End Report.

To date, the five year rolling ADF has not approached the 80% criteria. In 2015 the ADF at the TWWTP was 54% of design capacity, which itself is down from 58% in 2014. The observed flows project that the TWWTP will not require expansion until approximately 2026 as reported in the 2014 Year End Report. There are various reasons for this including the economy, reduction in inflow and infiltration and water efficiency initiatives.

The Town’s commitment to future development requires the reservation of water and wastewater treatment capacity. By allowing development to reserve capacity, the Town provides assurance during the planning process that water and wastewater capacities will be available when necessary. If the Town did not provide this long term commitment, development projects may not be able to proceed.

Since there is only a two year extension on the current ECA, Staff recommend that Council approve the creation of a 2016 Capital Budget of \$25,000 from the Wastewater Rate Stabilization Reserve to retain Engineering Services to amend the existing Schedule “C” Comprehensive EA to enable the application of an extension to the existing TWWTP ECA.

C. The Blue Mountains’ Strategic Plan

Extending the current ECA from the end of 2017 for five additional years promotes the Town’s Strategic Goal #5 - Ensure that our infrastructure is sustainable.

D. Environmental Impacts

N/A

E. Financial Impact

Staff are recommending that the \$25,000 be funded from the Wastewater Rate Stabilization Reserve. This reserve is to be used to fund deficits or other operating expenditures that were not budgeted for. For these reasons Staff feel that this is the most appropriate funding for this unplanned expense.

F. In Consultation With

Ruth Prince, Director of Finance & IT Services/Treasurer

Sam Dinsmore, Manager of Accounting & Budgets

G. Attached

None.

Respectfully submitted,

John Caswell

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