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**STAFF REPORT: Infrastructure and Public Works**



**REPORT TO:** Committee of the Whole  
**MEETING DATE:** June 27, 2016  
**REPORT NO.:** CSPW.16.086  
**SUBJECT:** Preparing Clarksburg Servicing for Funding  
**PREPARED BY:** Reg Russwurm, Director of Infrastructure and Public Works

**A. Recommendations**

THAT Council receive Staff Report CSPW.16.086 entitled “Preparing Clarksburg Servicing for Funding”;

AND THAT Council direct Staff to include Clarksburg Servicing Needs Assessment and Conceptual Design within the draft 2017 Capital Plan in an amount of \$600,000 for consideration during the development of the 2017 Capital Budget.

**B. Background**

The Town for many years has looked for opportunities to fund the provision of water and wastewater throughout Clarksburg. Unfortunately, the project has been considered unaffordable without provincial and federal funding. Upper governmental funding however is not readily available without a demonstrated need. Successful projects will need to be, in the latest lingo, “shovel ready” and moreover “shovel worthy”. To achieve that status, the Town needs to prepare Clarksburg for funding.

Clarksburg, home to approximately 650 people, is currently serviced by a mix of private wells and septic systems. A sampling program carried out in 1997 found around 30% of the sampled wells had elevated levels of Total Coliform, E-Coli and/or background counts that exceed the Ontario Drinking Water Standards. To date no specific illness has been identified with the adverse domestic well water quality. However, the Walkerton experience reminded all that the past is no predictor of continued water quality.

It is expected that septic systems throughout Clarksburg will be of varying quality ranging from systems that are at-risk of being in a failure state to those which are functioning well. The at-risk septic systems, in combination with a mix of drilled and dug wells, are a significant threat to the health of the residents of Clarksburg. To frustrate remedial measures, many of the lots in the community do not have sufficient room to accommodate properly sized septic systems with acceptable separation distances from wells and neighbouring properties.

Given the potential health threat in Clarksburg, the Town should consider all means by which to enable a solution to be found. The worst case scenario would be several illnesses within Clarksburg that leads to a provincial order to provide servicing without upper governmental funding being available.

If no action is taken to address the cause of the drinking water quality and environment impacts in Clarksburg, the situation will continue to deteriorate. Even more wells may test adverse and septic systems will continue to be at-risk with little or no option for remediation. In addition, without municipal water and sanitary services, economic development in Clarksburg will continue to be significantly hampered. The community is unable to grow or infill. Clarksburg is ripe for intensification in accordance with provincial policy but is held back by the lack of servicing. Similarly, site plan applications made for restaurants or business expansions in Clarksburg have had to be denied due the lack of adequate water and septic systems. Even the local community centre and player's theatre is unable to host all events wished.

In addition to the human impact, the at-risk septic systems are having a negative impact on the natural environment. Less than fully treated waste is suspected of entering the Beaver River and subsequently, the Georgian Bay.

Servicing Clarksburg is a large and complicated project that will require up to at least five years to complete considering the time and effort it will take for public engagement, preparatory work, final design and construction activities. Given the provincial and federal governments' preference to fund projects that can be completed in shorter timeframes and have a demonstrated need, Staff feel that the Town must invest in a Needs Assessment and Concept Design before provincial and federal funding can be expected to be granted.

The Needs Assessment will quantify as much as possible the impact of septic systems on human health, nearby water wells and the natural environment. The 1997 study of septic systems was voluntary. Staff feel that a mandatory re-inspection program will be essential to a proper Needs Assessment. A mandatory re-inspection program would positively quantify the scale of the problem with at-risk systems to human health and environmental impacts. The Grey-Bruce Health Unit would only undertake such investigations when there is a substantiated immediate risk to human health which is not the case in Clarksburg. In order for the Town to enact a mandatory re-inspection program, the Town would need to pass an enabling by-law and then resource the program through the use of contract employees or a consulting engineering firm. The Town currently doesn't have the in-house resources to undertake such a re-inspection program. Accordingly, an allowance has been made within the project budget to fund resourcing the re-inspection of septic systems within Clarksburg.

With the Needs Assessment in hand, the Town can determine the importance of proceeding with servicing in the near or longer term. To scope the infrastructure required to service Clarksburg, a Conceptual Design will then be prepared that will analyze the means and methodologies that could be used to service Clarksburg, determine the preferred servicing scheme and provide cost confidence. The preparation of the Concept Plan will also include amending the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment completed in 2002 which found that water and wastewater servicing should be provided by extending servicing from Thornbury. The rough capital cost range for the project is in the \$15M to \$20M range. Using 3% of the capital cost as a rule of thumb for this type of project, the cost estimate to undertake the Needs Assessment and Conceptual Design is in the range of \$600,000.

The lack of municipal water and sanitary servicing in Clarksburg has a substantial impact on the personal, environmental, economic and cultural health of the community. Because servicing will not happen without upper governmental funding, and such funding will only be available to the Town when a need and solution is demonstrated, Staff recommend that the Council direct Staff to include Clarksburg Servicing Needs Assessment and Conceptual Design within the draft 2017 Capital Plan for an amount of \$600,000 for consideration during the development of the 2017 Capital Budget

### **C. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan**

The adoption of the recommendation aids in achieving Strategic Goal #5 - Ensure that our infrastructure is sustainable.

### **D. Environmental Impacts**

None

### **E. Financial Impact**

Funding for the Clarksburg Servicing Needs Assessment and Conceptual Design will be determined as Staff compile and present the 2017 Capital Budget.

### **F. In Consultation With**

Troy Speck, CAO

Town Directors

Sam Dinsmore, Manager of Accounting and Budgets

### **G. Attached**

None

Respectfully submitted,

**Reg Russwurm**

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