

LETTER: Reader has concerns with Erin's 'questionable' sewage treatment plant plans

EloraFergusToday Staff Apr 6, 2022 7:00 PM

This letter to the editor was sent to EloraFergusToday.com by David Lewis in regard to a sewage treatment plant.

The Town of Erin is in a huge rush to push through a questionable sewage treatment plant at the expense of its residents and the environment.

It is interesting to note that this plant was originally called a WWTP (Waste Water Treatment Plant) until the Coalition for the West Credit River questioned the design and asked for river monitoring. Now, arbitrarily, Nick Colucci, Director of Infrastructure Services, has changed the name to Resource Recovery Facility. What does this mean? Is it "Greenwashing" so that the plant looks better than it is or does he plan to actually recover all the valuable resources going into that plant? How does he propose to recover and use the heat from the sewage? How does he plan to recover and use the solids? How does he plan to recover and re-use the water?

The original estimate for the plant was roughly \$64 million. The bids that were received are approximately \$115 million and \$119 million plus HST.

The town still has on its website the following information about individual costs for homes and businesses:

- Construction cost: Each existing house, in the urban area, will pay towards the construction of local infrastructure (i.e. the pipe that will run through the road and associated repair work to the road).
- Residents will have the option to pay this to the Town in a lump sum or financed through the Town for up to 15 years.
- Average capital cost: \$15,000-\$18,000 (this amount will be payable after the house has been connected, payments can be spread out over 10 to 15 years).
- Connection cost: Each existing house, in the urban area, will pay to connect their home to the pipeline.
- This cost will fluctuate depending on the distance from the house to the pipe.
- Average connection cost: \$4,000 - \$8,000
- Annual costs: Once the facility is built and the home is connected, user fees will be applied.
- The average costs are based off a review of wastewater rates in nearby municipalities.
- Annual average user cost: \$500 - \$600

If the cost to build the plant have doubled, then the cost to pay for the pipe in the road has doubled to \$30,000 to \$36,000 per home.

In addition, the connection cost probably has also doubled to \$8,000 to \$16,000. Some homes may need a pump to push the sewage to the street and this pump and the cost of a generator in case of a power outage is not included in the town's estimates. Also there is the cost to disconnect and decommission your septic system.

Some people have already gotten estimates for their homes and even the high end price of \$16,000 cost is not close to the quotes they have received.

I strongly suggest that you get a contractor to provide a quote to connect to the future town sewer and to disconnect and decommission your septic tank.

The annual user fees that the town charges will go up each year. With a septic tank, most only need to be pumped every 3 to 4 years.

Ontario average cost for septic tank pumping is \$575. A 3000L (800 Gallon) tank would cost between \$450 - \$500. A 6000L (1500 Gallon) tank would be between \$500 - \$575. July 17, 2021.

The Erin Sewage Treatment Plant and the bylaw amendment are not done deals. Get out and state your objections and then vote out the present Mayor and council.

David Lewis