

Jack's Recap

May 2nd, 2016: "Here we go again!"

I was fully prepared to write a positive recap after this meeting. I had many doubts with regards to the new SO₂ plant being constructed on Hallnor road; however, after completing much of my own research, I have come to the conclusion that Calabrian Corp has a very strong safety operational record. The presentation that the president of this company made to council further enforced this conclusion. He assured both Council, and by default the public, that emissions of this dangerous gas are well below acceptable federal limits. He also explained that there is no explosive potential in this modern process and that there is very limited fire hazards. All the new operators will be fully trained in their Texas plants. So far, this Council meeting is going well....

Now for the negativity. It seems we have a developing problem once again with our new secondary waste water plant, a problem that the taxpayers of Timmins will have to address. Nothing serious: just add another \$5.7 million to our overflowing debenture. Will this nightmare ever end? Here is an abbreviate summary of the events as presented by both our consultant (WSP) and city engineer Steve Kukulka. This new plant features a 44 year old blending chamber. This important asset is where the chlorine is added to the water to disinfect it. This old chamber is full of cracks and its useful life has come to an end. WSP estimated that a new chamber would cost approximately \$2.5 million. However; after the grant application was submitted, WSP then decided that this new blending chamber would now require UV filters to further disinfect the water to comply with new stringent clean water numbers. This change will double the estimate of this project. WSP publicly admitted to blowing it where the estimate is concerned. This new estimate will add another 4 years to our water debenture payments and of course we missed out on the correct grant application. To add insult to injury, WSP is asking for an additional \$120k for management fees over and above the \$140k already paid to them, to cover this new construction. Who the heck is over seeing these people? Why do we get taken to the cleaners with each project? City Council cannot be looking over our staff's necks which each project. To his credit Mayor Black sent our engineering department packing with a long list of very important and poignant questions that have to be answered prior to the next meeting. Councillor Bamford is ready to forgive everybody involved and wants the public to accept this preventable failure once again. He doesn't want the public to hold our engineering department responsible for these costly mistakes. Who should we hold responsible? I will ask again, "Will this nightmare ever end?" Councillor Campbell was assured that the soil conditions is a known entity and that all the geotechnical work had been completed. Does anyone else remember how this story ends?

That's a rap on this week's recap!