

NEWS

A sewage plant on McNab's would stink

BY CHRIS LAMBIE

The Halifax Harbour Clean Up Commission wants to build their new sewage treatment plant on the northern tip of McNab's island.

In May of this year the Halifax Harbour Clean-up Incorporated selected Ive's Cove on McNab's Island as the site for their treatment plant. They are now doing an environmental assessment on that area.

Right now, Halifax pumps over 40 million gallons of raw, untreated sewage into the harbour every day. "That's the same volume as the entire MT&T building," says Lois Corbett of the Ecology Action Centre.

David Suzuki called McNab's one of the most valuable pieces of real estate in all North America. "There are no other cities where you can find such a magically undeveloped island located in the middle of an urban core," he says.

An assessment panel was jointly appointed by the provincial and federal Departments of the Environment. The panel consists of four people with experience in relevant fields. The chair of this panel is Shirley Conover, a professor at Dal's School for Resource and Environmental Studies.

Allan Ruffman, a local environmentalist, is satisfied with the level of professionalism in the panel. He is also extremely opposed to a sewage plant on McNab's. He hopes this panel will be a truly independent body, able to assess the site with open minds and see its obvious inferiority.

"The plant would utilize a portion of Ive's Point after digging a trench to separate the island from the Point. This is a rather pointless exercise for HHCI to go through; it's more for semantic arguments than any environmental reasons," he says.

"They just want to be able to say they aren't building directly on the island," he says.

Ruffman calls McNab's a green jewel in the middle of the harbour which has resisted modern attempts at development that go back to 1964. He says there are a number of industrial sites in the city more suited to a sewage plant.

It could be an invitation for more intense industrialization

Parks Canada estimates that over 15,000 people have visited the miraculously unspoiled island every year to picnic, explore, camp and taste nature at its unadulterated best.

There have been attempts by the provincial government to put massive shipyards on the island. Some of these were sponsored by Dome Petroleum and the Arctic Pilot Project.

There have also been suggestions of everything from building

legalized gambling casinos on the island to transforming it into a flash and glitz amusement park.

"None of that development ever happened," says Ruffman. "People who make those wild suggestions are ignorant of the island's true nature and history."

A sewage treatment plant could be seen as the thin edge of the wedge in the McNab's case. After permitting one industrial facility on to a portion of the island, it could be an invitation for even more intensive industrialization of the area.

It will be a blemish on the north end of the island, he says. It will clearly be an industrial facility. He thinks that's inappropriate on land which has been designated as regional park since 1965.

As this is not going to be a covered facility, it could ruin the Osprey nesting areas on the island. It may change the nature of the entire bird population.

A draft plan in 1985 put forward an idea of how the island could be developed as a park. Not as a shipyard, not as a sewage treatment plant, but as a park. A place where people could experience cultural, educational and historical recreation in a natural facility.

In that plan, Parks Canada called Fort Ives "the oldest extant fortification on McNab's and in several respects its most interesting."

They went on to say that the park requires an authentic environment to maintain its authority as a military fortification. This includes intangibles such as feelings

and associations, which should be strongly linked to the atmosphere which once pervaded the site. This new sewage plant would violate the site's integrity from a historical perspective.

The plan emphasized low level recreation related activities so the island could remain a wildlife refuge. There are presently five or six

deer living on the island, one young bear, osprey, a plethora of other assorted birds and various small wild creatures such as porcupines and muskrats.

Ruffman thinks there's something fantastic to be said for an undeveloped wildlife sanctuary right in the middle of Halifax harbour.

OPINION

Mardi Gras follies

Well, somebody was calling them at 3:30 Sunday morning — thought I'd help. Street parties seem to be the place where lots of people go to lose lots of people. Let me explain. About 8:30 last night my neighbor wafted through the door. She needed to make alternate Mardi-Gras plans. She has a phone but her pad had just been crashed by unloved family members. I guess, maybe she felt it inappropriate to discuss getting rid of them in front of them. The plan: "I'll have to go downtown with them... They'll meet a bunch of people and start talking to them, then I can get away."

Sunday morning's news tells me it was calm and quiet downtown last night — I suppose it must have been hard to raise a ruckus and hide from half the people at the same time. I live on what I call a "major drunk corridor" which leaves me in a fairly (?) good position for judging the success of any one weekend. I heard (as did the rest of the block) only one complaint about a specific #%^ cop, one medium grade fight, the case of the aforementioned three missing people, and the sexual preferences/problems of several anonymous persons.

You might ask what is a medium grade fight. Here's what separates it from something worse: Participants recognize that it is more effective to curse at a shorter (as opposed to trans-parking lot) range. It does not sound convincingly like a rape in progress. Unlike

two weeks ago, at 2:30 a.m., a female's screaming raised the hair on the back of my neck and sent me sprinting out of my apartment in my pj's. Participants recognize that calling so and so a ????????????? loses some effectiveness after, say twenty repetitions. The Halifax Police don't show up until half an hour after it's over.

Anyway, I'm pleased to conclude that people had fun this past weekend — no group incidents and only 125 arrests.

Matthew Wulfman



Students snuggle in bursary blanket

BY SCOTT HUGHES

Each year, hundreds of students at Dalhousie receive bursaries from the university to help pay the bills. Now, the system of determining who will get these bursaries has changed.

In previous years, the bursaries were packaged out on a deadline system, where students applied for money by the first of December and the first of February.

The system was fair and easy to administer because the needs of all applicants were assessed at the same times in December and February.

Eric McKee, Vice-President of Student Services at Dalhousie believes the system put in place this year is better because it allows students to apply for money whenever they need it throughout the academic year and hear back from Student Services within two to three weeks.

This method of allocating the money is called a rolling bursary system, and this year the money

available has been raised from approximately \$250,000 to \$650,000 because of the Dalhousie tuition increases.

During the first set of allocations, Student Services has given out approximately \$125,000. The large amount, McKee believes, is due to early year costs, such as books and he predicts there will be another large surge of allocations before Christmas.

The rolling system of bursaries has only been implemented for undergraduate students, but extra money has also been allocated for the regular bursary programs in professional studies.

Though this system is more complicated, the hope is that students that need money will get it when they need it, instead of tailoring their financial requirements to fit a deadline.

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