

Senanus Waterline FACT SHEET

Source documentation for this public information is available online at: www.senanus.net



MNNA
Mount Newton
Neighborhood
Association

2007 Water Line Petition Irregularities

- CSWVA “Q & A” sheet distributed with petition contained misleading and inaccurate statements including promises of fire protection and insurance savings. The proposed water line does not include fire protection, and there will be no insurance savings.
- The District held an information meeting about the project in June 2008 – over three months after it certified the petition. The District would not allow citizens to withdraw their signatures on learning the truth about the project. Numerous individuals have written the District to request their signatures be removed from the petition, and have stated they were misled by petitioners’ claims. Signatures obtained under false pretenses, using false information, are not valid.
- Important appendices to the petition were not included as stated in the petition, and required by the *Community Charter Act* of British Columbia. The Local Service Area Map and “Schedule of Properties” were not included but were listed on the petition as attachments. And, because the District had omitted several properties off the LSA “Schedule of Properties” – several homes in the catchment received no information about the project, and no petition.
- The Municipal Solicitor acknowledged that the petition “does not likely meet the legal requirements, and the process and any future bylaws would be susceptible to challenge on that basis.”

Parcel tax method results = Taxation imbalance: Tax increases average 25.4% for 43 Mount Newton homes, but only 6.8% for 21 Senanus homes

- Costs would be paid by a parcel tax of a minimum of \$900 per year for 15 years.
- Average property value of the 43 properties on Mount Newton Crossroad is \$600,000.
- Average property value of the 21 properties on Senanus Drive is \$2.2 million.
- Unlike all other property taxes which are based on assessed property values, the residents portion for this tax will simply be divided by the number of parcels. The group demanding the waterline would, in effect, be subsidized by the group in the catchment that does not support a waterline.

Costs are open-ended → ALL overruns funded entirely by parcel owners

- Cost overruns are likely. Construction cost estimates, based on 2006 pricing, are probably low.
- 20% cost overruns would lead to further 60% increase in parcel tax.
- The proposed water line would run through known archaeological areas, and the provincial archaeologist suggests completing an archaeological overview assessment. Current cost estimates do not include archaeological assessment. Significant archaeological costs are borne entirely by the property owner if sites are found on parcel owners’ properties during excavation for connection to the line. If archaeological sites are found on municipal land during excavation, catchment parcel owners will bear these costs – not the municipality.
- Costs for an environmental review have not been included, though one is recommended and required by the C-BC-MRIF grant program.

\$1.1M taxpayer-funded grant based on incomplete & incorrect information

- District included in its grant application reports it knew to be flawed, including the 1999 Giles report, which the district admitted is “problematic in its methodology and results,” and a CHR report it earlier noted to be “flawed” and had corrected, but did not include the corrected report.
- District did NOT include the Chief Medical Health Officer’s 2001 report, which was based on the most current data available, and notes there is no health concern

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\$1.1M Grant awarded before required Local Service Area ByLaws enacted: District's share of funds not in place

- The C-BC-MRIF grant program requires Local Service Area bylaws (and therefore the District's share of funds) to be in place before grant can be awarded.
- The District included a memorandum of results for a 2000 petition as its "proof" that LSA Bylaws and therefore its share of the Grant funding was in place. This earlier petition was created under the *Municipal Act* – a law no longer in force in BC, and had different project costs, schedule of homeowners and catchment not representative of the current project or local service area. The District has destroyed the records for this petition from 2000, which it used to apply for this Federal and Provincial Grant.
- Grant was first awarded; THEN the petition was circulated (and the grant used as leverage to garner petition signatures); then May 2008 District Administrator's memorandum recommends the District "not proceed with necessary Bylaws to advance the project"; THEN the District held an information meeting. As of January 2009, the necessary ByLaws have not been created.

Water line contravened Official Community Plan, but District falsely stated it did not. District then REVISED the OCP to fit the project

- Original OCP Regional Context Statement was "The district does not extend urban services ... into the rural or agricultural areas"
- New OCP Regional Context Statement includes "...except to address pressing public health and environmental issues, to provide fire suppression or to service agriculture...." (None of these have been demonstrated for this project.)

Health concern claims for Senanus wells are exaggerated

- Lowen report states: "There are no health concerns indicated for the Senanus Peninsula Aquifer"
- Reports state hard water found on Senanus may be easily treated by in-home systems.
- 2001 Piteau report notes that for the few samples where slightly elevated levels of lead were found, it is easily filtered and likely the result of lead solder in old plumbing.

Workable local solutions exist

- BC Provincial well log data show that the existing wells on Senanus Drive collectively produce as much as 19,000 (nineteen thousand) gallons per hour – more than enough to supply the 21 properties. (Average Canadian usage is 329 litres, or 86 gallons - per person per day).
- A well drilled on Municipal land currently supplies at least one Senanus household with water through a privately-installed pipeline, proving the potential for viable local solutions.
- The only proposed assessment of alternative solutions by the municipality was directly blocked by the Senanus lobby group, so the potential of local solutions has not been developed.

Misinformation in the media	The Reality
"Chief Medical Health Officer deemed the water from the wells on Senanus unsafe for consumption"	"Dr. Stanwick advised that the water did not contain any elements, under the 6th Edition Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines, that would pose a significant risk to health" (CRD Board Minutes) "There is no health concern" Murray Sexton, Regional Public Health Engineer
"water quality on Senanus Drive started to become an issue when neighboring hay farms began digging additional wells"	Woodwynn farm irrigates its hay crops with water from Hagan Creek, not from wells. The water license proving this is available at senanus.net .
"We do not wish to be Walkerton II"	Walkerton's tragedy was because of <u>municipal</u> water.

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