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Abstract (Summary)

[Richard Stanwick] was asked to provide a report on the extent of the health hazard faced by residents of about 60 homes around **Senanus** Drive who rely on wells for their water. Stanwick notes in his report that while some water samples in the area had sporadically elevated concentrations of metals such as copper, chromium lead and zinc, most were only just above the current drinking-water guideline and could not be found in subsequent sampling.

The former chairman of the Central Saanich Water Advisory Task Force praised Stanwick's report.

"The (second) would be to talk to the Tsartlip (First Nation) and get an arrangement from them. . . . Central Saanich has to work out a five-year services agreement with Tsartlip and it could certainly be part of that agreement.

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Full Text (460 words)

(Copyright Times Colonist (Victoria) 2002)

Central Saanich council opened the tap Monday for discussion on providing water to **Senanus** Drive residents.

Residents in that area have complained for years that the water from their wells is unfit to drink, but others worry municipal water could lead to development in the area. Central Saanich council has been split on the issue.

Capital Health Region Medical Health Officer Dr. Richard Stanwick told councillors the water would be difficult to drink for esthetic reasons, but it isn't unsafe.

Stanwick was asked to provide a report on the extent of the health hazard faced by residents of about 60 homes around **Senanus** Drive who rely on wells for their water. Stanwick notes in his report that while some water samples in the area had sporadically elevated concentrations of metals such as copper, chromium lead and zinc, most were only just above the current drinking-water guideline and could not be found in subsequent sampling.

Stanwick told the council Monday night, "Water-treatment devices could address those concerns."

However, he said, such devices provably would be expensive and would require possibly more water to operate than a number of the individual wells could supply.

Senanus residents say the water rots pipes, tanks and taps and even kills houseplants.

They have studies and health warnings to prove it. They want their area hooked up to the municipal water supply, a project that will cost an estimated \$850,000.

Frank Towler, president of the Central Saanich West Voters Association, said that essentially residents were being told their wells are contaminated with saltwater, and that treatment of saltwater would be more costly than supplying CRD water.

"We'd like the same access to CRD water as all the other residents of Greater Victoria," He said.

But the former chairman of the Central Saanich Water Advisory Task Force praised Stanwick's report.

Michael M'Gonigle said the area's water-quality problems are individual ones and the municipality should leave them behind.

Mayor Wayne Hunter said before the meeting that there are probably three alternatives for the residents who want water.

"One would be paying for the whole line yourself and maybe hope council will give you a five year latecomers agreement. In other words anybody who got hooked up in five years would have to pay.

"The (second) would be to talk to the Tsartlip (First Nation) and get an arrangement from them. . . . Central Saanich has to work out a five-year services agreement with Tsartlip and it could certainly be part of that agreement.

And the third option is a referendum by our whole community, because obviously council is at a log jam on this issue and it's one that no council in the last 15 years has supported."

Council was still discussing the issue at press time.

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