



Otter Lake Community Monitoring

CMC Chair's Briefing – The Landfill's Future Belongs on Your Voter Checklist

An Important Vote for our Community

When HRM District Candidates come calling for your vote in the Oct.19 municipal election, don't forget to canvass their views on the future of the Otter Lake Landfill.

The Community Monitoring Committee (CMC) is aware that the landfill is projected to last 20 more years, until 2044.*

Current HRM population trends, however, could reduce that timespan or change the landfill's operations. The municipality is undergoing unprecedented growth that the current provincial government seems determined to sustain. What will the cumulative effect be on the landfill? Could new waste processing technology eliminate organic waste material being buried there?

Does your candidate envision a reduction in the landfill's current lifespan? If so, do they favour an early start on looking for a new landfill site, or do they lean toward measures to prolong the life of the existing facility, such as changing existing legislative restrictions on the number of cells (waste burial pits) and the height to which they can be filled?***

Citing 2023 Statistics Canada data, CTV reported that Metro Halifax experienced a 3.9 per cent increase in population, last year, amounting to an additional 19,780 individuals. By July 1, 2023, HRM's population had slightly exceeded the .5 million mark.

Halifax Regional Council was advised in a 2024 staff report on a Community Engagement Strategy that Halifax is on track to become a city of one million people by 2050.



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THE OFFICIAL CANDIDATES (As of Sept. 18, 2024)

DISTRICT 12

(Timberlea-Beechville-Clayton Park-Wedgewood)***

- Taqiuddin (Taqi) Hashmi
- Julie Scott
- Janet Steele
- Iona Stoddard (the incumbent)
- Richard Zurawski

***The District 12 Councillor is automatically a CMC member

DISTRICT 13

(Prospect Road-St. Margarets)

- Markus Critchley
- Nancy Hartling
- Robert Holden
- Michael Marriott
- Dustin O'Leary
- Dawn Penny
- John Profit

We have all heard about the pressures on housing, schools, health care and other public services, but it is unclear what the snowballing effect of the rising population will have on the landfill.

Politicians are well known for putting off difficult decisions on controversial subjects. Often they opt to buy time at the last minute by reaching for make-do solutions until they can get to grips with the main problem. The CMC would like to avoid that kind of scenario for the Otter Lake landfill and believes planning for a post Otter Lake reality should start sooner rather than later. New waste processing technologies should also be regularly assessed and implemented when deemed appropriate.

During this municipal election campaign, the CMC hopes HRM's residents, especially those living in close proximity to the Otter Lake landfill, will give some thought to the facility's future and to the representatives they want to steward it.



Reg Rankin
CMC Chair

* "Initially the projected life-expectancy for Otter Lake was 25 years (approximately 2024). Considering the combination of successful source-separation programs, implementation of clear bags for curbside garbage, and a change in policy to allow export of commercial waste to landfills outside [HRM's] municipal boundaries, projections now estimate an additional approximate 20 years before the site reaches capacity."

** "On May 20, 2016, the Otter Lake Landfill Act received Royal Assent. This Act restricts the height of the Otter Lake Landfill and limits the site to nine solid waste residual disposal cells. Site capacity and useful life cannot be expanded through constructing additional cells and/or through the vertical expansion of existing or future cells."

From the HRM staff report, Community Benefit Program for the Otter Lake Waste Processing and Disposal Facility, March 7, 2023.

(Note that while there is Nova Scotia statutory protection today against changing the number of cells and their height at the Otter Lake facility, the safeguard is not fail-safe. All provincial legislation is subject to change by the government of the day.)