

KFL&A Public Health
Medical officer of Health, Dr. Ian Gemmill
221 Portsmouth Ave.,
Kingston, Ontario K7M 1V5

Nov 10, 2009

Dear Dr. Gemmill:

We are writing to question a decision that we know is presently under discussion by KFL&A Public Health. We understand you may withdraw from the mandate described on your website as follows:

Sewage Treatment System Consultation

KFL&A Public Health works with eight municipalities in the KFL&A area to provide permits and enforce the provisions of Division B Part 8 of the Ontario Building Code 350/06. A permit to install or construct a sewage system is required in order for municipalities to issue a building permit. An application, including the design and layout of the proposed system and components (lot lines; existing, proposed, or neighbouring wells; the building footprint; driveways; and roadways) must be submitted.

Public health inspectors review each application and will inspect the site to assess the soil conditions and review the requirements of the Building Code. A fee is charged for this service. Please contact the Environmental Health Program for more information.

- The Frontenac News, in two articles related to Addington Highlands Council minutes, October 22 and November 5, 2009 identify that KFL&A Public Health will no longer review applications nor conduct site inspections to determine the viability of a new sewage disposal installation prior to the issuance of a building permit.
- Our Association wishes to protest the abandonment of such a program as we are concerned that our under-funded and ill-equipped Township, who do not have personnel with the appropriate knowledge and training, will be unable to properly assume this critical public health function. From our perspective, this appears to be a further example of cost-downloading to a rural Township with limited economic and human resources to execute the task that has been resident elsewhere for decades.
- At a time when the Walkerton water issues are still uppermost in the minds of communities and when so much effort has been directed to make certain that we are assured of clean water and safe wells, we are shocked to hear that Public Health is considering pulling out of one of their primary obligations in this community with what seems to be ***slight notice and less discussion.***

- By reading Council notes it seems that KFL&A Public Health were invited to attend the last Addington Highlands Council meeting, but failed to attend: reasons not provided.
- Environmental Health and Drinking Water Systems have always formed significant portions of the KFL&A budget, described in the annual report. ***What agency will now be responsible for these expenditures and related oversight if the final decision is to pull out?***
- What are community members to think when government agencies vested with tasks that protect the ***well-being of the population*** announce summarily that they will no longer be executing these functions? We, the SDRA, representing some 200 property owners on the shores of Lakes Skootamatta, Sheldrake and Pringle wish to lodge a request that this decision be ***reconsidered***.
- We ask for a public meeting with community stakeholders to discuss the issue of who will be inspecting and approving septic systems and their placement relative to wells and waterways if KFL&A Public Health will not. Without proper oversight and a system of checks and balances in place there are bound to be leaching and contamination issues of larger proportion. There was a time in this Township when Moira Conservation Authority (now the Quinte Conservation) the KFL&A Public Health and the Township all had to be involved in approving a septic site and leaching bed.

It is important to have the authority responsible for granting the permit for any new septic installation 'at arm's length' from the rest of the issues involved in (new) dwelling construction.

- Issues of environmental concern relative to septic tanks and systems ***have not diminished but have grown***. (See the Clean Water Act under the Ministry of the Environment). To find out that we may have no agency with trained and skilled personnel to assess something with as much environmental impact as a septic system is shocking and unacceptable.

We look forward to a prompt and complete explanation of these proposed actions by KFL&A by Nov 17, 2009

R Teed, Lake Steward, Skootamatta District Ratepayers Association

cc. Ministry of Environment, Randy Hillier MPP, Scott Reid, MP, Terry Murphy, Quinte Conservation, Henry Hogg, Reeve, Addington Highlands Township, S Smart Mazinaw Property Owners Association, M Larson, Kashwakamak Lake Assoc. , K Waller Sharbot Lake Assoc., E Gardner, Manager Environmental Health