

B. M. ROSS AND ASSOCIATES LIMITED
Engineers and Planners
2695 Hamilton Road, PO Box 400
Brights Grove, ON N0N 1C0
p. (519) 908-9564
www.bmross.net

Memo

From: Matt Pearson
mpearson@bmross.net

To: Matt Farrell, Building and Planning Manager/CBO

Re: Septic System Re-inspection Program, Part 8 Program

File #: 04026, 11187

Date: June 14, 2022

This memo is further to discussions we have had concerning the upcoming expiration of the Memorandums of Agreement covering the Septic System Re-Inspection Program and the Sewage System Management program (Part 8) which BMROSS undertakes on behalf of the Township. Both Agreements expire on December 31st, 2022.

Septic System Re-Inspection Program

This Program has been undertaken by the Township since 2007. Initially BMROSS designed and managed the program while site inspection was carried out by the Grey Bruce County Health Unit. In 2011 BMROSS took over site inspection as well. By the end of 2022 the Program will have completed two 8-year cycles of inspections, with approximately 3,000 inspections completed in Cycle 1 and 3,250 in Cycle 2.

This Program has been quite successful over its timeline. The first cycle (2007-2015) established the location, ages, and relative condition of almost 3,000 systems across the Township. It moved the Township's understanding of these systems considerably farther than before the re-inspections. It also initiated timely pump-outs, understanding of the need for repairs and maintenance, and identified future issues such as the aging of the systems, need to manage tertiary systems, and the requirements of Source Water Protection. The second cycle (2016-2022) continued to reinforce the results, encouraging system replacements by aware owners, managing the tertiary systems which had almost doubled in number, conducting over 70 inspections in Source Water Protection areas as required by the Clean Water Act every 5 years, and assisting property owners with maintenance tips to improve the effectiveness and longevity of their systems. Time marches on and the systems age and deteriorate. A system that was 25 years old when the Program began is now over 40 years old and reaching (or has reached) its effective lifespan.

We recommend that the program be continued into Cycle 3. We believe that beyond the local benefits to property owners that the following large-scale benefits are realized by the Township through this Program:

- When continued development along the shoreline is questioned from a wastewater servicing perspective, there is a significant amount of information already collected and available. There are more properties/people along the lakeshore than in Ripley and Lucknow combined. We have the data to show septic systems are being managed and are an appropriate servicing method for the lakeshore. This will be important going forward as there is increasing momentum to allow more development near the Lake Huron shoreline.
- Demonstrates stewardship on a Township-wide level – septic systems are not being installed and forgotten. As the approval authority for septic systems the Township has a responsibility for managing them over the long term.
- From an environmental perspective there are over 3,250 individual wastewater systems in a 440 sq. km area. When systems don't work there is usually a linkage to a water resource, either ground or surface, that causes pollution and loss of use of the recreational resource.
- From an asset management perspective there are 3,250 systems that would have an average replacement cost of \$25,000. This has a value of over \$80 million. The cost of the HKCSI program, with two pump-outs over the eight-year cycle, equates to an annual cost of about 0.6 of one percent of the value of the asset. The HKCSI program represents good value for property owners and good due diligence by the Township.

BMROSS delivers the program based on an annual cost per property each year. For that we provide staff, educational materials, mailing and printing expenses and contribute to the cost of a summer employee at the Township to answer Program related calls and bookings. In Cycle 1 the program was delivered for a flat \$55 per property a year, for the entire 8 years. The program grew and evolved over time and with experience became more efficient. In Cycle 2 there was a graduated-with-time series of costs that started at \$60 per property and ended at \$70. This kept the Program costs matched somewhat with inflation. We would propose another graduated-with-time costs schedule that will remain static at \$70 for 2 years and advance to \$80 at the end of Cycle 3. This equates to a reasonable 1.5% average annual increase over 24 years.

Sewage System Management Program (Part 8)

This Program had historically been undertaken by the Grey Bruce County Health Unit on behalf of the Township. They notified the Township that they were not going to continue this service and in 2012 BMROSS was requested to become the Part 8 provider. This is a program beyond that of the HKCSI Program and not usually a service provided by BMROSS. However, there was some synergy gained from managing both programs simultaneously, as BMROSS had trained and licensed staff available. In this program we operate under the direction and license of the CBO to enforce the requirements of the Ontario Building Code Act related to the permitting and installation of septic systems. This arrangement has worked well but it should be stressed that it only is possible because we have staff available working on the other program. Although the re-

inspection program operates in a 6-8 month inspection window we are able to maintain a relationship with our licensed staff to be available year round for Part 8.

This is a fee for service program. In the first 5 years of our relationship there were approximately 40 new systems a year, but with the increase of building construction the average is about 64 systems. For the past 8 years of the current arrangement, the fees to deliver this service have been constant. This has only been possible because of the availability of the inspector as he is involved in the other program. We have reviewed the fee structure, especially given the inflation environment of today and believe we can keep the fees static for one or two more years. This is reviewed yearly with the CBO.

Summary

The agreements to manage the HKCSI Program and the Sewage Systems Management Program (Part 8) expire at the end of 2022. We believe both programs have been successful and would like to continue to deliver then for the Township. There are significant benefits accrued to operating the Re-inspection Program – direct benefit to the homeowners through maintaining the correct operation of their systems, and indirect benefits to the Township relating to environment, future development and responsibility. Over 3,200 individual sewage systems, \$80 million in asset value, and responsible stewardship of local waterways and Lake Huron.

The Septic Re-inspection Program can continue independent of BMROSS involvement with the Part 8 Program but not vice versa. There is a synergy of staff resources and knowledge that allow us to respond to Part 8 needs as requested and at the scale required, whether it be 20 new systems or 80. It is part-time on a fee per system basis. This allows the Township to concentrate on other Building Code Act needs.

Attached to this memo are draft Memorandum of Agreements for both Programs. They are similar to the previous Memorandums signed in 2007 and 2015, setting out responsibilities, fees, and a procedure to end the program mid-stream if necessary. They are set up to begin on January 1, 2023, to replace the previous programs and allow seamless delivery.