

October 8, 2013

Delegation to HVGB Newly Elected Town Council

GRK: Roberta Benefiel

Good evening everyone. First let me introduce myself for those of you who may not know me. My name is Roberta Frampton Benefiel, long time resident of Happy Valley... I came here as a baby with my parents during the late 40's and lived here through the mid 60's before leaving to parts unknown. I returned home in 1989 and have been involved in various environmental and community issues ever since.

I want to say congratulations to all of you this evening. Special congratulations to Jamie Snook, our new mayor, and to Tony Chubbs, Deputy Mayor and to all the councillors! It's nice to see so many people come out to run for town office... I'm sure you are all aware you have your work cut out for you but please also be aware that many of us are here to help with various different issues.

Over the years, Grand Riverkeeper members have been active in bringing issues here to these chambers and we will continue to do so. There are a few important items we've brought forward to the last council and we would like to make you aware of those this evening. (likely there are many more...but we don't want to inundate you on your first evening>)

1. The First item is the minutes of these public meetings. In the past, it has often been weeks and even months before minutes from a public meeting were posted on the Town's web page. And often when they were posted, they were simply bullets with not much discussion about the issues mentioned. Grand Riverkeeper would ask this council to ensure that minutes from each public meeting are posted at least one week before the next public meeting AND that there is substance to the minutes such that anyone in the public reading them has a good idea of what the participants views are.
2. Sewage Treatment Plant: We are pleased that the past council and Mayor were able to finally get the

sewage treatment plant up and running. That's a huge positive for the environment in our community, a secondary treatment plant. You may or may not know, that Grand Riverkeeper, mostly our former President Clarice Blake Rudkowski, and our current Treasurer Eldred Davis and myself on occasion, have been pushing this issue for a long time. Another of our very vocal members, Mr. Gerald Dyson was so vocal so often about this issue that I actually think we should consider asking his family if we could name the Treatment Plant in his honor. What you may not know is that Grand Riverkeeper is responsible for having Environment Canada visit the town and do the necessary tests to determine that we/the Town was actually in contravention of the Fisheries Act... we were breaking the law by dumping raw sewage into the River which was capable of killing fish! (the test clearly showed that we were contravening the law as ALL the fish subjected to the water from the outflow died). We believe this action was the catalyst for the final push to get the treatment plant. You should also be made aware that many people over

the years came forward to present their dissatisfaction with the sewage issue. One community member even got over a thousand signatures on a petition. But, we believe it really was the Fisheries Act contravention that finally got the ball rolling. Never mind how it happened , we're simply happy that it did. That said, there is another glaring issue that perhaps this council might have to face and that is the disposal of the sludge that will eventually have to be removed from the bottom of the lagoons. Currently it is planned that the sludge will be simply taken to the land fill. Grand Riverkeeper does not agree with this as the land fill is not contained and leaching may occur, contaminating the water table or even Goose River. So, while were extremely happy with what has already happened... the job isn't completely done until the sewage is completely treated to get rid of pathogens that will not be destroyed by secondary treatment. So, we'll be bring this issue forward constantly over the next few months and years.

3. I've also brought forward a copy of a presentation Grand Riverkeeper did to the previous council in

2011. I have just one extra paper copy that perhaps someone could photo copy for each of you... or... to save trees, if I am provided with all of your e-mail addresses, I will pass on a digital copy.

I bring this presentation to your attention because it is so relevant to what is currently happening to our community because of the Muskrat Falls project.

Much of the information in our presentation came from workshops done by Infrastructure Canada following the Mackenzie Pipeline project

Environmental Impact Statement and it deals with the effects the original proposal had on the small community of Norman Wells . There are many

lessons to be learned from the Community of Norman Wells' experience with the first proposed pipeline and Grand Riverkeeper warned the previous Mayor and Council that this community was certain

to experience some of these same effects. Frankly, we are experiencing them NOW as I speak and the Muskrat Falls project is just beginning. We feel a

meeting with Infrastructure Canada and a review of the Norman Wells experience would benefit the new Council and we hope you will take note of the

various issues outlined in their workshop as they absolutely apply to Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

Here are some of the recommendations we made to the previous council as possible solutions to the issues! READ FROM THE PRESENTATION

As far as we can tell, NONE of the recommendations have been enacted thus far.

4. One more very serious item we have brought to these chambers, time and time again in the past two years: This community needs an EVACUATION PLAN should there be a dam break! The current emergency preparedness plan is great.. but it does NOT go far enough There is currently no plan to move citizens in the lower streets out of harms way if, for some reason the dam should fail in some way. That is totally unacceptable... and we will continue to bring this issue to you again and again until we KNOW that a proper system is in place to evacuate! This evacuation plan SHOULD ABSOLUTELY BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF NALCOR... IF IT WERE NOT FOR NALCOR AND THE PROPOSED DAMS, WE WOULD NOT NEED TO MOVE PEOPLE FROM OUR COMMUNITY IN LESS THAN 2 HOURS... FOREST

FIRES GIVE US MUCH MORE NOTICE THAN THAT.
THIS IS A NALCOR PROBLEM... DO NOT LET NALCOR
SHIRK THEIR DUTY.

5. That is about all for this evening... we will certainly
return at various times ... and again Congratulations
on your election.