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To: [Knipfel DWS](#); [Council](#); [Clerks](#); [Jeff Molenhuis](#); [Natasha Salonen](#); [Stewart Cressman](#); [Kris Wilkinson](#); [Harvir Sidhu](#); [Steven Martin](#); [Lillianne Dunstall](#); [Carly Pettinger](#)
Cc: petersburgdws@gmail.com
Subject: Petersburg Knipfel Water DWS design to be voted on January 6th through Wilmot Committee of a Whole.
Date: January 2, 2025 9:10:50 AM

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Our neighborhood received the agenda for the Committee of a Whole on Saturday December 28th. This report was received by a resident via email at 3:40 pm on Saturday December 28th. It seems the email was received by township staff on Friday December 27th.

On the Agenda, section 9. Reports, Item 9.4, IS-2025-01 Knipfel Private DWS System - Project Update RECOMMENDATION.

THAT Council directs Staff to proceed with the detailed design for replacing the Knipfel Private Distribution Water System with a new municipal watermain and services that meet current municipal and provincial design and safety standards, including design for service connections for all existing users and properties fronting the proposed watermain layout in northeast Petersburg, Notre Dame Drive and Snyder's Road East.

Our family are business owners, property owners and residents of Petersburg for 35+ years. To say we are disappointed by the method of sharing of this proposal, the timing with little or no opportunity for discussion is an understatement.

A group of residents both on the current DWS and some impacted by the future proposal met on Monday December 30th to discuss this proposal and the recommendation. Considering the meeting was proposed, facilitated and attended by over 40 people within 2 days of learning of this report and during the Christmas, New Year week, speaks loudly regarding the frustration and dissatisfaction with Wilmot.

The proposal report has been analyzed and picked apart and this is a list of the issues found:

- **6 months vs 6 days:** The engineering firm (MTE) prepared their draft Petersburg DWS design / recommendations which took over 6 months to prepare, the residents have been given 6 days to review it and then attempt to understand it. Furthermore, the few days we've had, have coincided over the Christmas / New Years holidays with many of the residents unavailable.

Given the lack of time provided to the residents to review the engineering report, we respectfully request that: **Council defer the decision to consider the staff recommendation and provide the residents more time to digest the Report.**

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Comprehensive Overview of Regional/Township Water Needs: The MTE engineering report highlights that Township staff will work cooperatively with the Region to complete an Environmental Assessment (EA) in 2027 to look at the capacity of the existing Petersburg DWS well to supply a much larger population base, (we understand it could potentially supply hundreds more homes). The Region has also hinted at the need for a possible water tower in Petersburg to increase water distribution / fire protection capabilities. Without putting the cart before the horse, these larger Regional issues need to be completed and then the Petersburg WDS design can be finalized.

Given the need to assess the larger Regional issues first, we respectfully request that: **Council defer the decision to consider the staff recommendation until after the Regional EA process has concluded.**

- **MTE Report Lacks Plain Language / Clarity:** On Dec. 30th, 2024, some +40 neighbours met to discuss the staff report / MTE engineering report and overwhelmingly we concluded that not one of us understands the report recommendations, nor the draft design details, the costing, the timelines, who will be the initial or ultimate users and therefore who will ultimately be bearing the costs. In early 2024, many of us attended a Township meeting hosted by K. Smart and Assoc. under the Drainage Act, to explain about ongoing design work, costing, and pending upgrades to Alder Creek. It was as well received because it was a opportunity for open dialogue for everyone to understand the issues...we're looking for a similar format,

Given the lack of clarity and the engineering jargon used throughout the Report, we respectfully request that: **Council defer the decision to consider the staff recommendation and instruct Staff (and MTE) to meet with the Petersburg DWS users to provide us with simple explanations (using plain language) to and better explain the design options.**

- **Requesting More Communication:** Prior to the Oct. 10th 2024 Open House hosted by Township Staff, when we first learned that; a) Township staff were proceeding quickly to the design stage for an upgraded water distribution system and b) where we would be bearing the full cost of the project, key members of the Petersburg DWS system repeatedly requested a sit-down style meeting with Township staff to discuss the project details, project scale, project direction, all in an attempt for more communication. All requests have been refused. I'd respectfully suggest that just because Twp. staff say they checked off the box for "project transparency", does not always equate to the public agreeing with that assumption.

We continue to maintain that the Open House format used on October 10th was not the appropriate format for this project given there's been so many moving parts; a) MECP/ Regional/ Township issues, b) historical realities of an aging water system vs. future community needs, and 62 users with varying degrees of understanding of the issues. At this time, we respectfully request that: **Council defer the decision to consider the staff recommendation and instruct Staff (and MTE) to meet with the all Petersburg DWS users in a sit-down style meeting, possibly with a power point presentation to walk us all through the project so we will hear the same message and then be better capable to respond to the staff recommendation.**

- **New / More Issues Thrown into the Mix:** To confuse the DWS issue even more, Twp. Staff / MTE Report have now included the topic of upgrading of the overall character of our subdivision from our existing rural cross-section (open ditches) to possibly a semi-urban / full urban cross-section design. We agree that there's been long-standing, serious drainage issues impacting Deerfield / Alice / Redford that need to be addressed. However, we implore you that such a significant change to our neighbourhood deserves more public input / dialogue that can be captured in a 7 min. delegation at Council. Given the lack of time provided to the residents to review the MTE report, including new engineering matters such as changing the entire character of our community, we respectfully request that: **Council defer the decision to consider the staff recommendation and provide the residents more time to digest the Report.**

- **Outstanding Cost-Sharing Questions.** The current Petersburg DWS users agree that the existing water system will need to be upgraded in the coming years, and we understand that a significant portion of the associated costs will be borne by us.

- Question: If we 62 users pay for the w/m upgrades and 1- 10 future users tap into the system 1 – 10 years after the construction finishes, how are the existing 62 users compensated, especially if homes change hands?
- Question: We 62 users will be paying for the well house upgrades, once again, if future users tap into a proposed w/m distribution system, how are we 62 to be compensated?
- Question: If a future larger water use EA study seeks to tie the existing well house into a larger Regional network, and potentially a water tower including fire hydrants and thus require all Petersburg residents to connect to the proposed w/m distribution system, how are we to be compensated.

Given the lack of time clarity or response to these questions, we respectfully request that: **Council defer the decision to consider the staff recommendation and provide the residents more time to digest the Report.**

- **Confusion over Road Upgrades re: Cost-Sharing:** The current Petersburg DWS users are much confused with the MTE report that we think, suggests that the costs associated with upgrading the internal roads (Deerfield/Alice/Redford) will be borne by the Petersburg DWS system users as part the w/m upgrades. Although we acknowledge that costs associated with w/m upgrades will be at our expense, in no manner do we accept that any cost of rebuilding Deerfield / Alice/ Redford and/or any upgrades to the overall internal drainage system be our responsibility. In 60 years, these streets have seen one single re-coat of tar/chip and they, along with the poor drainage issues are the full the responsibility (and cost) of the Township.

Given the lack of clarity of what Staff / MTE Report are implying that the Petersburg DWS users will be responsible to pay, we respectfully request that: **Council defer the decision to consider the staff recommendation and provide the residents more time to digest the Report.**

- **Questions as to the Vulnerability of the Existing W/M System:** All of us Petersburg DWS users understand that our w/m system was built to Municipal standards of-the-day, and up until May 14th 2024, it was in full compliance with all MECP regulations. The past construction of w/m through rear yards to service homes on Notre Dame, were mostly through easements, but we understand that due to the actions of previous Twp. Councils, those easements were removed. We understand that a small portion of the system was constructed with external lead seals, but regular MECP prescribed water testing has been carried out for many years including 'lead' and its' never shown any elevated levels of lead. Staff are presenting the system as being on the verge of critical failure, which could be foreshadowed if there had been a long, or even a recent history of regular watermain breaks, yet none have occurred. We acknowledge that the w/m system is nearing the end of its' life-cycle, but in no way do we agree with the fear-mongering urgency being demonstrated by Township staff.

A plan for the Petersburg DWS does need to be initiated and planned for, but we the users of the system are fully satisfied that the system continues to function well and safely and do not accept the urgency that is being pushed, and we respectfully request that: **Council defer the decision to consider the staff recommendation and provide the residents more time to digest the Report and that we be provided with more**

direct communication with the MTE engineers.

As you can see throughout the analysis of the report, DEFERRAL is the recommended opinion. Give us, residents, tax payers, property owners the opportunity to have input as to the direction of this project. The money to be spent, is coming out of our pockets. Let us have a say on where it goes.

Karin and Rick Demerling

