



**Agenda
Town of Westville
Committee of The Whole
Council Chambers
August 23, 2021 - 6:00 pm**

1. Call To Order

Mayor White called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

2. Roll Call

Mayor Lennie White, Deputy Mayor Meghan Bragg, Councillor Mitchell MacGregor, Councillor Clarrie MacKinnon, Councillor Betty Jean Sutherland, Chief Administrative Officer Linda Brown, Recording Secretary Kristen Reed, Dale Patterson of Northern Pulp, Michael Wilson Environmental Leader of Northern Pulp, Kim MacLaughlin of the Environmental Liaison Committee, 4 members of the public

3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

4. Presentations

a. Northern Pulp

Dale Patterson of Northern Pulp made a presentation regarding the proposed plans for the Northern Pulp Mill. Northern Pulp is the producer of high quality bleached softwood kraft pulp.

The mill went into a safe and environmentally sound hibernation in January 2020. Due to the costs of that process the company entered the Company Creditor Arrangement Act in June of 2020.

Prior to shutting down they were Groupe Savoie's largest supplier. They had 330 direct jobs and approximately 2700 indirect jobs.

When you have a softwood tree 30% of the tree is used for lumber at the saw mill, 51% is pulpwood used by the kraft pulp mill and 19% is sawdust and bark. The Pulp wood is used in a variety of products including tissues, boxes, shredded cheese, LED screens, shoes, purses and masks.

It became clear that there were multiple issues to be dealt with. An independent Environmental Liaison Committee (ELC) was created to establish all of the issues that were brought forward by the communities. The Committee is made up of fisherman, forestry workers and landowners, road construction, Pictou County Councillors, businessmen and a retiree from the mill.

All of the environmental issues went to an environmental consultant to get answers. There is a large amount of community mistrust, which they hope the community input, ELC and transparency will help with.

Northern Pulp is looking to have a clean, environmental focused and community based mill. The transformation plan envisioned includes community input, engagement and feedback, full implementation of the Lahey Report, reconciliation, active outreach and partnerships with the First Nations and communities, and an engaged independent Environmental Liaison Committee.

The predicted environmental improvements include 80% reduction in total reduced sulphur emissions with no detectable odour in surrounding areas, 70% reduction in visible plumes and 45% reduction in water use.

Community input will include the active independent ELC, a public environmental dashboard and ISO 14001 Environmental Management system.

They will work collaboratively and respectfully with First Nations.

Plans include the reduction the water used from Middle River by 45% by reusing the water and storing it in holding tanks. Reduction in the untreated waste water that leaves the mill by 70%, increase the spill detection and collection, improve the recycling of steam plant wastewater and oxygen delignification. Instead of disposing of wood knots they will be recovered and put back in the cooking system.

To improve the Wastewater treatment they will use a tertiary treatment. The primary and secondary treatments will be the same however this will be the second mill in North America to use the tertiary treatment. After treatment the solids will be taken to an engineered landfill on the property and the rest will be discharged into Pictou Harbour. The suspended solids being discharged were below the current permitted levels and it will go down to the lowest in Canada. In the 1980s the Effluent water was dark brown. With the improved treatment it would not be coloured.

There are 3 large washers that previously vented outside allowing the odor to escape. The proposed vent fumes will be recovered and used during normal operating conditions eliminating the odour in the surrounding areas. There is the possibility of 3 to 4 hours of venting per month.

In 2011 the air quality was double the permitted levels. With improvements to the Mill it was reduced to below permitted levels. With the proposed improvements it will be substantially better by 2025.

Northern Pulp will maintain sustainable forestry initiatives. They will continue to grow healthy forests and maintain an open gate policy on company owned land for use of hiking, snowmobiles and ATVs. The mill will identify and protect land for conservation and the changes to the process will allow them to use pine trees as well.

There will be an opportunity for district heating in nearby communities. This sustainable source of heating is practiced in several Scandinavian communities located in close proximity to pulp mill operations. Northern Pulp will provide the heat source and work with any community interested in exploring the opportunity.

Many citizens have complained that the place looks ugly. The intention is to repaint the mill and install some new siding. They will remove unused equipment and tanks and with the reduced visible plumes they feel it will improve the looks.

The transformation process will be a long process. Currently at the beginning doing Community Input. In 2021 and 2022 will be the Transformation process and the Environmental Assessment. They hope to have that finished by 2023, which would be the best case scenario but could take three years or longer.

For more information Northern Pulp has created the website tomorrowsmill.ca where people can ask questions and provide input. They also have virtual open houses and are hoping for in person engagement sessions if protocols allow.

The Environmental Liaison Committee has a website of www.ELC4NS.ca. People can reach out to the Committee with questions or concerns as well as input regarding the mill. They also put any reports they publish on the site or people can contact them for copies of the reports.

Mr. Patterson finished off with the quote of “ Tomorrow’s Mill operations and processes- from community engagement, to forestry practices to addressing odour, air and water emissions- must be far superior to the Mill of yesterday.

During the discussion with Council it was asked about where in Pictou Harbour the effluent would be released and if it was possible to have a closed loop for effluent. It was explained that nowhere in the world has a closed loop system for effluent and that they are still doing research and before the consultant will inform them of where the best place to put the pipe and what kind of diffuser to have on it.

Council asked why this wasn’t done back in 2017 and Mr. Patterson stated that back then they didn’t realize the variety of issues they were facing and were only focused on replacing Boat Harbour.

The ELC currently does not have any First Nation involvement. There were three issues to be dealt with first. Two of those issues have been dealt with and they are working on the third.

Mr. Patterson acknowledged that Boat Harbour was not a proud moment.

Councillor Mackinnon asked about the fact that the company is currently in a creditor arrangement so where is the money for all these upgrades and repairs going to come from. Northern Pulp will be responsible for only their portion of the clean up of Boat Harbour. It was run by the government for the first 30 years and then a survey of the site was done. There was another survey done when it closed to give them the amounts. There will be investors that pay for the projects.

Council asked about how the ELC was chosen and Mr. Patterson had reached out to a number of people in specific areas that they wanted involved. There were no local fisherman that agreed to join but they found 3 from Lismore. The Committee meets weekly and are open for more members if people are interested.

Mayor White asked about the pension plan for existing pensioners and widows. Mr. Patterson confirmed that Northern Pulp had fulfilled the required underpayment to make whole the amount for 2020, and will be working on medical benefits next.

This was the 25th meeting and it is a combination of transparency, public consultation and publicity of what the Transformation will be. Mrs. MacLaughlin takes minutes at the meetings to take back to the ELC. At the October Court date the ELC will be required to submit documents themselves.

Mayor White thanked Northern Pulp for the presentation and the number of questions discussed. It is a topic with a lot of concerns and divisiveness. He hopes that people view the new proposal with an open mind and be objective. The government will be the ones to make the final discission but we Thank Northern Pulp for keeping us updated and ask that people please remain respectful of each other.

5. Business

a. Accessibility Committee Appointment and Policy

There was only one person interested in joining the Town's Accessibility Committee, so a partial committee will be recommended for appointment at the September Council Meeting. A policy has also been drafted and attached to the agenda for review. Council will review the information this week and will move this item until the Council Meeting.

b. Tender for Surplus Properties

Attached to the agenda is a copy of the draft tender and recommended minimum bid prices. Council will review the information this week and will move this item until the Council Meeting.

6. Next Meetings

a. Regular Council Meeting

Westville Council Chambers
August 30, 2021 – 6 pm.

b. Committee of the Whole

Westville Council Chambers
September 20, 2021 – 6 pm.

7. Adjournment

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:36 to go offline to speak with Mrs. MacLaughlin of the Environmental Liaison Committee.

Mayor: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Date Approved: _____