

Atlantic Packaging Odour Issue Meeting Minutes – Thursday, July 29, 2010
Scarborough Civic Centre – Council Chambers

- **Councillor Thompson** welcomed everyone to the meeting. He emphasized that this was not a public health or safety issue but a quality of life issue. He introduced:

Councillor De Baeremaeker, Paul Doyle & Fatima Correira of Atlantic Packaging, John Fergusson from CRA Consulting, Heather Marshall from the Toronto Environmental Alliance(TEA), Rod Adams and Jason Mitchell from the Ministry of the Environment(MOE)

- Councillor Thompson was asked by residents to investigate the odour and noise issue – MT responded by initiating a dialogue between residents, Atlantic Packaging and the Ministry of the Environment to ensure that the residents were informed

- Councillor Thompson has asked Atlantic Packaging to tell us about the steps that will clear the air

- **Councillor De Baeremaeker** recognized a few faces in the audience and advised that Michael and him have worked closely together over the years and have known each other since high school/football – he advised that he grew up in Scarborough – he is a “lifetimer “Glenn smelt smell a while ago – smells kind of like a fertilizer smell but more mild – everytime he is in the area, he makes sure to be aware if the odour is present or not but he really has not smelt the smell that much – his experience with Atlantic has always been positive – they are willing to work together and they do not deny there is a problem – a lot of other companies that he has dealt with over the years as an environmental activist would outrightly deny that there is a problem – Atlantic has remained very proactive – the issue is not resolved yet but there is a continuing, open dialogue – residents must remain diligent in reporting odours which will eventually resolve the problem for everyone

- Michael asked for a show of hands from the advisory group members – there were 3 in attendance at the meeting

- After the presentation, Michael will open up the meeting for residents to ask questions to the panel – Michael advised that residents will be asked to state name and address and that the addresses would be marked for documentation purposes on a map

- Michael lives in the area and smelt the smell occasionally – sometimes strongly, mildly or not at all but he is also hardly ever home as a councillor – Michael has travelled to the community to speak with residents, businesses and even workers from Atlantic Packaging

-not a health and safety issue but an issue of great concern – Michael had mentioned that at the Taste of Lawrence there was a “Smelly Tofu” vendor who was eventually asked to leave as people were greatly affected by the smell – a good example of how smells can really impact a community

-**Paul Doyle from Atlantic Packaging, VP Financing** spoke to the residents: Paul advised that this issue was very important to Atlantic – the company is very proud to be part of this community for 50 years – proud to be a large employer in the area – he advised that the Executives of Atlantic take this matter seriously and will allocate what ever resources are necessary to fix the problem – they are moving quickly and are committed to finding out what the cause is and then resolving it – he appreciates the feedback from the community from the past, tonight and in the future – more information will result in faster results – Paul then proceeded to introduce Ms. Fatima Correirra, Atlantic’s Environmental Engineer

- Fatima welcomed and thanked everyone for attending – explained that they were a recycling company that took old products and makes them into new ones – they take old cardboard, pulp it and convert it back into boxes – Fatima introduced New Forrest Mill which began in April, 2006 – this facility has state of the art machinery – best equipment – very efficient process to make paper – bales of flattened cardboard converted into new cardboard – they employ 2,000 people, 1,000 in the immediate area – they have been in the community 48 years – she has been listening to residents’ observations and is committed to resolving issue – advised that air emissions have been well below Ministry of Environment(MOE) standards

-**Process Overview by Fatima** – used cardboard contains lots of contaminates (glass, etc) – the cardboard is turned into liquid slurry (pulp) – it goes through a process to remove garbage components – if not taken out it will result in a poor quality product – press section to further reduce water content – paper goes into dryer section – heated by steam (process of evaporation) – in the beginning it is 99% water and 1% pulp – after it is 92% solid and 8% water – it is then rolled into smaller rolls and sent to the customer – they essentially take waste paper that would eventually end up in a land fill and turn it into a usable product

- **Odour Issue Review by Fatima** – started to receive complaints in March, 2010 at which time they began investigating their paper making process – machinery and operations has not changed – they have hired an employee to be in the community on a daily basis collecting data from the neighbourhood – they have also hired a “best-in-class” odour consultant to develop a strategy to reduce potential odours – they will i) identify potential sources ii) evaluate potential off site odour iii) evaluate potential odours iv) possible solutions

- **Community Odour Profiling by Fatima** – odours from the community can be traced to Atlantic, city garbage, gas/diesel traffic, cut grass, bread, chemicals and paint, burnt rubber – Atlantic odour is a “wet, paper” smell – odour consultants do odour studies every day – a lot of smell contributors in the community

- **Odour Audit Data Review by Fatima** – 16 sample locations identified (“Atlantic” smell) consultants have been collecting samples to identify odour sources

- **John Ferguson – Lead Consultant for Conestoga-Rovers and Associates** – company started in 1976 – employs 2800 people in 90 offices throughout North America – some clients include Kraft, Firestone, Magna, Hitachi, GM – There is a typical odour smell methodology – first, identify odourous sources, then source testing and odour panel analysis – air dispersion modelling as well as contour mapping and source ranking- they conduct on site pilot studies and design engineering as well as equipment installation and start-up – the collection of data can take some time – they need to come up with a solution for Atlantic that makes sense economically – putting the mill out of business will not resolve the issue

- **Heather Marshall – Toronto Health Alliance** – advised that she was excited to be at the meeting – the meeting is a “good sign” in resolving this issue - there was a by-law made by the City in 2008 that she worked on that makes companies report what they put into the air and water – she first smelt this odour when she was a student at U of T Scarborough- while working at TEA she heard some complaints to their office starting January, 2010 – she started to investigate and contacted the company wanting to work on the issue – Atlantic expressed a desire to work on the issue as well – TEA works with the community to make sure their experiences are shared with the company – some people in the area are more sensitive than others and they include Oakley, Cannadine, Birkdale, the townhouses at 1075 Ellesmere – she came up with a “concerns calendar” that was easy for people to use – all of the calendars have been sent off to the company on a regular basis –Heather has been impressed by Atlantic’s response – in her past experience, this has not been the case when working with companies

- **Michael asked residents to line up at the microphone with their questions to the panel:**

1) Resident advised that she was part of the focus group

Q – her question to John Fergusson is “Are you testing what is coming out of the stacks at the same time as people are complaining?”

A – his answer was probably not, they take “snapshot” samples – filling out the forms are very tedious but are very helpful to the consultants – they cannot be there all the time

Q - Joanne also stated that the odour is not present all the time so if they do not sample at the smelliest time, then how do they get accurate data

A – John answered that sample charts from residents are matched to times of testing – overtime, they end up getting accurate data by using this method

Q – Joanne asked if residents were supposed to continue reporting

A -John advised “yes”

Q - Joanne asked What are in the storage tanks outside 333 Progress?

A – Fatima advised that some of the tanks contain raw, dry paper before decontamination – first 3 tanks are raw pulp with no chemicals, 4th contains short fibre, 5th contains long fibre, 6th tank contains pulp and water and the 7th contains only water

2)

Q – When the north wind blows you always smell the odour and the odour is very bad in the Birkdale Ravine (acts as a holding corridor) – this odour smells like bad waste or gas – What is the energy for the plant?

A – Fatima advised that they buy electric power and use some methane gas that is produced by the steam and is also odourless – they also use heat from the boilers to heat the water and the system is self contained – Atlantic is also in the process of investigating emerging power sources as well

Q – Sen is concerned about property values going down as a result of the smell – residents will take it to the next level maybe even the Attorney General – he suggested that Atlantic have a public meeting at the plant - an open house for the public

A - Fatima advised that she is aware of the concerns and they have taken them very seriously – the mandate of the input group is to resolve this and keep residents informed – Jason Mitchell (MOE) addressed the reporting structure issue – he advised that he has done numerous inspections over the last few years and he has regular contact with Atlantic – MOE is concerned with personal enjoyment of residents’ properties – if you have a concern, please report it to the MOE at:

**(416)326-3381 – Monday to Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm
1-800-268-6060 – after hours and on weekends**

3)

Q – MOE has confirmed that the air quality is fine and below Ministry standards – what does that mean?

A – Jason advised that Ontario has very strict air quality standards – companies must self assess and demonstrate to MOE that they are in compliance with the standards. There is no link that the odour is causing health related issues – the odour is unpleasant as opposed to pleasant – it is a nuisance odour – their review of emission data reveals that that it is safe

Q – How do you know that this is not causing ill effects?

A – Jason advised that he has been working with Toronto Public Health and the Ministry of Health – Jason also advised that if someone is experiencing ill effects they should report it to Public Health – the scientific data that Jason has proves the air emissions are safe

4)

Q – What is processed at the 2 different plants located at 333 and 111 Progress?

A – Fatima said they produce the same thing – they produce cardboard boxes however the process is slightly different but mostly the same as they use steam and not chemicals at both locations – the newer facility is at 333 and they have newer equipment but the process is still the same – this is the reason why Atlantic is so confused by the issue.

Q – Is the odour consultant going to both buildings?

A – John F. advised that they are not – they are focusing on 333 exclusively

Q – Why would you not compare the 2 locations?

A – John advised that they will take this under consideration

5) Michael addressed the residents and said what people are asking is:

Q - “What is the real problem?”

A – John advised that it is premature to give an answer – would hate to be misquoted – there are probably a few different problems

Q – What is the timeframe?

A – Over the next month they will be modelling and collecting data – by the end of the summer they will have a prepared solution report

6)

Q – He has found that the smell is really bad today and has given him a headache but he is hearing rumours that Atlantic has plans to take over the Dad’s cookie plant site?

A – Paul Doyle advised that they have no plans to take over Dad’s Cookies – they have a long history of working with the community and reinvesting in the community – they do have long term expansion plans for the long future

7)

Q – She has a question about communicating information to the public – she heard about the meeting through our office but lots of neighbours have not heard of the meeting – the message has not been spread through the community?

A – Michael advised that 3,000 flyers were sent to the community through unaddressed aemail by Canada Post -also the meeting info was posted on Michael’s website

8)

Q – Is more of a statement then a question – his daughter rides her bike in the Birkdale Ravine and she complains about the smell – the family is grateful that this issue is being looked into

9)

Q – Thanks the panel for hosting the meeting but wanted to bring up the concern about horrendous noise coming from 111 Progress since November, 2009 – he measured 68 decibels this morning and 86 at McNeil Electric. What does this tower do?

A – Fatima explained that this was a torbade reactor which takes short and unusable fibre and burns it at 9900 degrees Celsius and turns it to ash so the fibre does not go to landfill – Paul has advised that he has not heard the noise but will treat this as seriously as the odour issue

10)

Q- Quality of life is appalling for her - she is nauseated and she feels bad because the smell is centred around the daycare – she smells this smell when she is at St. Victor’s, Bendale and St. Andrews schools – she advised that she has asthma and cancer and she wants this issue resolved

A – Michael advised that we need to go through a process – this is the purpose of this meeting – the company is hearing these concerns directly

11)

Q – The smell is really bad and should be directed to Pollution Probe for investigation. She appreciates Atlantic’s efforts. How will we all stay committed to resolving this? This information should be made available from one source only so that it does not get confusing and information lost.

A – Jason advised that she should continue to call MOE when she smells the odour – calling or e-mailing is sufficient as it creates a report in the database

12)

Q – When are the samples collected? Is it collected when the smell is very bad or when it is normal?

A – John F. advised that it is collected over all periods – “modelling” addresses this to give us a good/bad/ugly picture

Q – Are the 2 facilities operating the same or differently?

A – Fatima advised they are investigating both facilities – bioside is used in both facilities

13)

Q – From 5:00 to 6:00pm tonight he was cutting the grass and the smell was really bad. He feels that it is overwhelming to report to all of these different people, it should be to only one source?

A – Michael advised that we are in the process of refining – we gather all the info – Franz Hartman of TEA was very surprised that the 2 councillors were so involved with this problem – usually Councillors are 3rd party – Michael advised that our website will list the numbers stated earlier by MOE

14)

Q – What about the safety of the children?

A – Jason advised that if she suspects a health issue it should be reported to Toronto Public Health – this company is being very proactive unlike any other company – MOE has not had to ask them to do anything

15)

Q – She has an issue with this contaminated material – is it new or are they burning sludge?

A – Fatima stated that the contaminants consist of rocks/plastics/metal and glass – paper cannot be made out of these things

Q – Has anyone considered that this may not be an Atlantic issue?

A – Jason from the MOE said that they have reviewed the complaints, they have gone into the community to investigate - there is no dispute that this wet paper odour is the smell in question

Q – How long will a resolution take?

A – John F. is hoping that there will be a full report with a solution by the end of summer followed by testing equipment(what ever has to be added to existing equipment to resolve the problem) which will have to be installed – this process may take up to one year

16)

Q – This has been a long term problem which he feels has gone back to before March, 2010 – the one plant was a problem and the new one just adds to it. At the last TEA meeting, they invited a TTC rep who was speaking about TTC employees who reported being ill from the smell. The TTC rep advised that they would investigate and report back. What ever happened to the TTC report?

A – Heather from TEA advised that she has not heard from the TTC rep but will be following up to get the update. Some of the TTC employees complained of sore throats in 1995 but these complaints are not relevant to the current issue. Heather has been out recently to the Midland RT Station to speak with some of the TTC employees and there are no relevant complaints – she will continue to go out to speak with these employees and will post any concerns on the website – Heather also mentions that it was good to see Atlantic people out to this meeting and it was good for them to hear peoples' concerns first hand

17)

Q – Stated that Atlantic has mentioned in a report that they will increase output by 25% and wanted to know if they will hold off with this increase until the odour issue is resolved?

A – Fatima advised that there was an error on the report and they will not be increasing the output at this time

Q – Is the torbade reactor in constant use?

A – Fatima advised that this is a demonstration model and that in 2008 it was operating at 19% and in 2009 it was operating at 49%. They are working at getting the reactor to perform more efficiently.

18) Councillor De Baeremaeker's Constituent(no name given)

Q – Will Councillor De Baeremaeker be making a better effort to communicate about this issue?

A – Glenn stated that he does not currently have a website but will be communicating more – he has not received very many complaints in his office

Q – The plant was shut down within the last 2 weeks, just prior to the shut down, the bad smell was very prevalent. Was this the cause for the shut down?

A – Fatima advised that this was not the cause for the shut down but rather it was a mechanical error. The shut down was necessary to ensure there was no damage to the machinery

19)

Q – Where does Atlantic get the raw materials? What is the source?

A – Fatima advised that they buy waste from brokers. The brokers have pizza boxes, boxes from grocers, etc. Suppliers have to adhere to strict guidelines.

Q – What does wet paper smell like?

A – Fatima advised that you can wet a box and leave it for an hour and you will smell the smell quite strongly. You can also take a dry box and sniff it and will get a faint smell.

Q – At 5:00pm on Tuesday, July 27th, there was a rotten egg smell on Midland. Was this Atlantic or not?

A – Fatima advised that they will add this to the observations.

20)

Q – He advised that he is a printer. There are generally 5 to 6 colours in paper. He believes that chemicals in the ink are in the water and that is the cause of the smell.

A – Fatima advised that they do not boil but agitate at 40 to 45 degrees Celsius. They do not chemically remove the ink from the water – the ink stays in the pulp – they only remove the solid contamination

Q – If there is a problem with the ink, how will Atlantic resolve it?

A – Fatima advised that processing cardboard is different than processing newspapers – Atlantic does not remove the ink but newspaper deprocessing does take out the ink

Councillor Thompson advised that it was time to conclude the meeting. There will be no conclusion tonight. This matter is extremely important to everyone at this meeting. This meeting was designed to open the dialogue between residents and Atlantic. We must find a resolution quickly. This matter has an impact on how we enjoy our community. We ultimately want to eliminate the problem. Atlantic Packaging, MOE, consultants, residents and politicians are all working together. The MOE would be charging the company if they were not complying with regulations. The community has been diligent in reporting back. Everyone has heard that the reporting process needs to be refined. A future meeting will be called with TEA, Atlantic Packaging, Public Health, the Councillors and the community. The media has reported that there is a Scarborough odour issue, they have not isolated it to one area. Michael's office started to hear about these complaints in March, 2010. We do not have all the answers tonight but this matter is a priority matter for this community and the Councillors are committed to actively pursuing a resolution.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30pm