

As one of the spokespersons advocating for the Colliery Dam Park, I was gratified that City Council decided on Dec 17 to pass a motion exploring all options to maintain the park with its lakes, while ensuring the safety of our citizens.

Staff will review information that was presented by our group on Monday. It is necessary to point out that almost all of this information brought forward by our engineer, Dr. Lorne Gale, and engineering technologist Geraldine Collins, is taken from studies that have already been done. Most of the information was drawn from the 2002 study on the spillways and the 2010 seismic study. The recommendations to bring the dam structures to a standard, that could satisfy the Dam Safety Branch, were explained in each study.

At this time city staff and the Dam Safety Board have said that the dams are stable and there are adequate measures in place while a permanent fix is being put in place. Furthermore the water could be drained in a relatively short period of time if there was a need to, using siphons and pumps.

City Staff asked council to approve a motion to explore the costs for removal and replacement of the dams. While this was a step forward, our group thought that exploring rehabilitation of the dams would be more cost effective. So we asked council to designate funds to the development of conceptual solutions and their cost estimates for the rehabilitation of the Dams. We also asked that no further plans for deconstruction proceed until further information was presented to Council.

After much discussion council decided that they wished to know all options and costs which will require a more extensive report. We are very aware that options to rehabilitate the Dams to a safe standard do exist and that we consider this avenue to be the most efficient and cost effective. Council, however, did not recommend that deconstruction of the Dams be put on hold. It is our goal, and we have asked, to be included in this process of exploring options.

As the contractor within our group, who has dam building experience, has stated, "We are not dealing with the largest bodies of water (he calls them puddles); this is a relatively small engineering endeavor." We are certain, with the information we have presented to council, a feasible and workable solution can be found that will allow us to keep our park and its lakes for future generations, while securing safety for our community.

Jeff Solomon