
❖ Speaking Out ❖

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The Truth is Mighty and Will Prevail

Experts?????

by: jim tolnai

The city called a news conference for Monday afternoon Nov. 8 to have their EXPERTS explain just what is involved with the Molson Swamp cover-up. Yes it is a cover-up instead of a cleanup and information forth coming was mediocre to say the least. Along with Shaheen and Peaker expert Cynthia Robins who took the lead there were five representatives from the Ministry of the Environment. I will try to recap what went on and share with you items that the Packet failed to report on that is at the heart of this sham.

First as you all know I have a personal interest in that the site must be cleaned not covered up before we send children to play. According to the city and it's experts?? they feel that if risks are at an acceptable level then that is OK??? Why do we need any risk at all and what is an acceptable level? Clean the site and there is no problem. I am also against the disposal of 40,000 tons of Toxic soil at the landfill. If this soil is non hazardous as claimed then leave it where it is and use it or sell it. It seems these people want it both ways. It is non hazardous but because it is toxic it can't be left on site?? So yes I have a keen interest in making sure that everyone is protected from harm.

It was obvious that these experts assembled were singing from the same page in the hymn book. The MOE people went out of their way to let us know that Shaheen and Peaker were in charge and as professionals their work was basically unchallenged. The very people who we think are there to protect us blindly support the private contractor. So it was interesting and disturbing to hear the answers to some very simple questions I and others posed. Here is a recap and hope you find it interesting.

Q: Have you done a historical study of the site as to what types of business had used the site and had you spoken to former employees in regards to what was

buried on the site over the years?

A: No we did not talk to any former employees but we did look at some history.

Now how can a historical study of any kind be done without speaking to the people involved as many are still alive. It seems "if we don't ask it can't be there" attitude prevails.

Q: Have you tested for asbestos in light of the claim that over 600,000 lb. of asbestos contaminated material has been widely disposed on the site?

A: We don't test for asbestos because we can't: it is a rock???

Now I don't want to seem critical but that is the biggest line of "Bullshit" I have ever heard. What kind of professionals are these people? Why did none of these experts??? challenge this statement made by Cynthia Robins the cities EXPERT? Not one person from the city, Shaheen and Peaker nor the five MOE puppets spoke up to correct this blatant lie. Or maybe it wasn't a lie and the cities lead EXPERT doesn't know that you can test for asbestos and that processed asbestos is not rock but fibres??? Some EXPERT???

Q: What guarantee can you give that the site will be safe covering it up?

A: A professional will sign off on the project.



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The question was asked again and the same answer was given. You see there is no guarantee if you or your child is harmed.

Q: You say that the fill being removed is Non Hazardous but is it Toxic?

A: None

Q: Is it Toxic?

A: No answer

And this from the five MOE puppets

Q: What testing will take place on the soil as it is removed?

A: We will be watching for signs of change in the soil and will be smelling the air for signs that we have hit contamination.

Now isn't that scientific. Some guy on a bulldozer is expected to see a change in the look of the soil and smell toxins. He is then required to stop digging. Yea right. What about when they hit vinyl chloride a colourless odourless gas that is really toxic in concentrations of .5 parts per billion?

Unbelievable, tragic and this is endorsed by the five puppets from the MOE .

Q: How will you protect the people from exposure?

A: We have a health and safety plan for the workers and will be implemented.

If you go down to the site you will see no protection for the workers other than some are wearing a simple mask that will protect them from nothing. Yesterday workers were observed jumping into holes with no protective gear. When warned that the site is contaminated and they should have protection we were told by these people that they "had not been informed that Toxic and harmful material was present on the site" contrary to law. So much for health and safety issues. Don't believe me?? Just go down to the site and witness it for yourself. But do wear a mask for your protection??



More Bad News???

by: doug peddle

Did you think that the bad news from the MURF had finally stopped. Did you think that finally the city and their experts had finally levelled with you and that with the work taking place all that should be known had been divulged? Well think again. This story just keeps getting worse and worse. I have finally figured out why Ralph Cipolla said that readings of vinyl chloride which were 7,300 times higher than MOE allows was good news and in relation to the news I'm about to give you it was even better than good.

You see our friendly council and mayor along with the MOE and Shaheen and Peaker for some odd reason forgot to mention that other holes tested also had high readings. How high were these reading? Just between you and I the reading from a hole 50 meters from the first hole which was a disaster at 7,300 times above MOE standard came in at a conservative 82,000 times higher than MOE allows. Must be a typo you say. No that is exactly what their figures say. So you see Ralph had a point, 7,300 times higher was good news to them.

Any more news you ask? Well in keeping with our policy of letting people know all the facts I have some more BAD news. Remember the same good news that Ralph was on about had a second chemical called Trichlorethylene which came in at above MOE standards. Now we have

new test results that show just how bad this good news really is. Are you sitting down? Trichlorethylene according to MOE is dangerous above 20 parts per million. These tests came in at 290,000 parts per million. Now seems to me that is 14,500 times above the MOE standard.

So do you know what Chris Hyde from the MOE says about these numbers? "So they hit a hot spot". Don't worry the experts know what they are doing. Makes one feel fuzzy and warm all over doesn't it? But what Chris failed to say was that if in one hole the exceedence was 7,300 and the next hole came up with exceedence of 82,000 50 meters away and another hole 50 meters the other way also came up exceeding their limits then it is not a hot spot but a pond. Infact every test came up in exceedence regardless of where they drilled. And these are the people who are being paid to protect us.

Want some more news? Well it seems that they are not following their own Health and Safety plan. Remember when these people said they would have a comprehensive plan to protect the workers and Orillians from adverse effects? One of these plans was to wash the trucks before leaving the property so that they would not spread the contamination all over town. *Not being done!!!* Then they said that the ground would be wetted down so that dust would not fly all over town on the wind. *Not being done!!!!* Next they said that at the dump the soil would be placed carefully in an area with a clay base in a bowl shape then capped. *Not doing that either.* Where are they putting this toxic dirt? Why on top of a hill affectionately known as Cell 7. That's right trucks drive to the top where there is always a nice breeze and dump their load spewing poison possibly for miles around. Don't believe me? Then go down to the dump and follow one of these trucks. Of course you will be stopped and turned back as they want no witnesses. But hey! you can go over to the trail at Memorial Ave. and with binoculars you can get a very

clear view of the top of Old Smoky Cell 7. You can witness first hand the toxic soil swirling in the wind spreading it's deadly self far and wide. Then you will see these same trucks which have now driven through the muck head back up West St. spewing even more toxins on unsuspecting people. So much for protecting the workers or Orillians. Then there is the part of the health and safety which says and I quote

"To reduce the risk of ingestion or inhalation of designated substances such as lead and ingestion and/or inhalation of other potentially toxic materials, smoking, drinking, chewing gum and eating is prohibited on site unless within specifically designated areas. These designated areas must be provided with hygiene facilities and it is the responsibility of the contractor to provide and to maintain the hygiene facilities. Prior to smoking, eating or drinking, personnel must wash their hands and ensure that their mouth area is clean. Drinking water for workers is to be kept in an area free of dust. Workers should ensure that their mouth area and the lip or spout of the drinking vessel is clean and free of dust prior to drinking".

It seems there is no wash station. You see we entered the property on Sat. Nov. 13 and a pleasant young fellow chewing gum drove over and asked us to leave. When we questioned where the wash station might be he refused to comment. When informed that this was a health and safety issue and it would be in their interest to identify the facility he still refused comment leading us to believe there is no facility. When we informed him of the serious concentrations of vinyl chloride found he made no comment, but you could see that he was never informed of these facts by his concerned look. A short time after work stopped and a worker was observed walking towards the excavation in a full body and head hazmat suite which all workers should be required to wear all the time. Up to this point most workers weren't even wearing their dollar store dust masks. More to follow????

Downtown Benefits?????

by: jim tolnai

I have been doing a bit of snooping about down on Queen St. the last couple of weeks. It seems the businesses located in the industrial mall and behind have had a fair share of inspectors from a number of departments of the city doing checks on the premises and their activities. The people I spoke to who have gone about their business for years without ever seeing a soul from the city all of a sudden were subjected to scrutiny under a microscope. these people couldn't understand what the reason was for all this attention until they received notices from the landlord to move out. One business was ordered to either spend big bucks or shutdown by the fire department. This business has been operating safely without incident for 12 to 14 years. Even the sign by law officer ordered business signs to be removed or face a fine. Their signs have been there for years before the new bylaw was passed and should have been grandfathered like everyone else's were. But they apparently would have non of that and made the order.

So what the heck is going on? Well according to the people I talked to the city is wanting to buy the property. But why? There is no need for more land to house the MURF. Asking more questions it seems that there are plans in the works for commercial development for this property. That's right commercial development. Boutiques, clothing stores, restaurants etc. But wait a minute didn't council say that one important reason to locate the MURF down there was to help to revitalise the downtown? Funny way to revitalise a shopping area by building a wall of stores between the MURF and the downtown??

I was shocked as this story unfolded because it just does not make sense. How can you claim that business in the core will benefit and

then plunk competition between you and the MURF and use tax dollars to spur development. I decided that before I believed the story it had to be checked out. Along comes Tim Lauer giving me an opportunity to see if there was any truth to the story. Well folks Tim has confirmed that yes commercial development is in the works and he said "I don't think downtown business will mind if we develop this area for retail". Frankly I almost fell off my seat. I wonder how many of you downtown merchants were surveyed as to how you felt about this. Tim was really serious in his comments and it seems that this is a done deal.

Council has asked and I suppose expects merchants to support them all the while working behind your back to siphon off most if not all the benefits that might have spilled over to you. Pretty sneaky and underhanded. But hey! this council has pulled off much worse and more is to come.

I received an e-mail awhile back from the owner of the Ossawippi telling me that he expects to have benefit from all the people heading to the MURF and then coming downtown to shop. Well with this program council is planning it will ensure that there will be no benefit to him or anyone else. I suppose the A&P Mall will probably fill up along with this new development and maybe the old A&P will fill up as well. These businesses will be within walking distance and it is very doubtful that Mississaga St. will benefit. Frankly I never believed that this project would bring shoppers regardless of the MURF but now I am positive.

Wake up downtown your going to pay \$50 million dollars to build it and they will not come. You are being had. But don't believe me ask your councillor to explain it away.

Citizens Coalition

The Citizens Coalition of Orillia and Area are asking for your help. You see the council in their worst moment has decided to go ahead and cover-up instead of cleanup the Molson Swamp. This outrageous decision has culminated in the launching of a request for an injunction and ask the court that they follow the law which requires an Environmental Assessment. We will also be asking that proper and thorough testing be done by an independent consultant. There has been such shoddy public reporting on just what has been found that the independence of the cities experts is in question.

In order to bring this legal challenge it will cost money. We need your support to make sure that council does not getaway with polluting our lakes and fill the land with Toxic material. We also want to make sure that the Molson Swamp will be cleaned up and not just covered up. We must make sure that the reported barrels of cyanide, paint and degreasing solvents that are buried be found and removed. It is too bad that people are made to fight for what should be a common sense decision in the first place. Please get involved.

You can make a direct deposit at the TD Canada Trust Peter St. Citizens Coalition of Orillia

Acct. 0596 5210352 or

mail your cheque to

13 Creighton St.

We Get Letters

AN OPEN LETTER TO ENVIRONMENT MINISTER LEONA DOMBROWSKY

Dear Minister Dombrowsky:

I have been impressed by some of the things you have done. I am delighted that you ordered a review of the Environmental Assessment process.

I attended a media briefing at Orillia City Hall on Nov. 8, 2004 in which five of your officials were present led by John Steele. The purpose of the briefing was to show MOE support for a controversial Multi Use Recreation Facility planned on a site that contains a number of chemicals considered hazardous to human health.

John Steele immediately stated that the plan to remove 40,000 tonnes of contaminated soil to the Municipal Land Fill site had MOE approval.

Unfortunately it soon became apparent that this approval was based on "paper-shuffling" not on scientific evidence. However not all the paper had been shuffled from the consultants to MOE.

An MOE engineer had visited the site once a few days before the briefing. Yet he stated everything was just fine.

MOE had made no attempt to scientifically verify the test results obtained by consultants Shaheen and Peaker. They only made 5 leachate tests on the 40,000 tonnes

of soil. Your officials refused to say if this was an adequate degree of testing. They also refused to answer the question – "Should the Shaheen- Peaker Report be peer-reviewed?" Peer review is an integral part of good science.

None of your five officials questioned any aspect of the Shaheen-Parker Report!

One of your officials said that possibly a risk assessment of the project might be done sometime.

The consultants reported that a five acre swamp on the site would be filled in. Then they said they would protect the ecology of the site. Your officials did not question this.

I would have thought your Ministry would be science-based rather than, in the present case "faith-based". Your officials are relying on figures supplied by consultants, who have a vested interest in the project going ahead.

One possible solution to this problem is to have all testing of potentially hazardous/toxic material done in an MOE lab. The proponents would pay for the tests, thus funding the lab. The results would be objective.

Under the present system concerned citizens will never know if the consultants test figures are accurate.

There has been considerable

citizen opposition to the proposed site – spearheaded by the Citizens Coalition. The local papers *The Packet and Times and Orillia Today* have supported the concerned citizens.

If Premier McGinty is still looking to cut costs he should have a look at some of your officials.

Jim Woodford

TV Ontario

TV Ontario paid Orillia a visit this week. They are doing a feature on the controversy that the Molson Swamp and councils decision to cover up instead of clean it up. David Hawkins senior producer and his crew spent Monday to Wednesday filming interviewing . These guys seem to do a thorough job and asked some great questions. The show will air some time in December on Studio 2 which is on Monday to Friday at 8pm. Make sure you catch the show.

Mayor & Cipolla Outraged

In the last issue these guys were outraged by the picture of the Dioxin babies and stated they would never be party to such tragedy and we had gone too far.

Well it seems that pregnant women must take special precaution when working on site or are subject to adverse effects according to their own Health and Safety Manual. But what about the pregnant woman who is exposed to the dust blown on the wind who does not know or have protection. It's fine to protect the workers but it is also a good idea to protect the public. Are these women's babies at risk when they are unknowingly exposed?

Read your own manual and then tell us why the workers need protecting but not the public. Outrageous????