



MUNICIPAL WORKING GROUP REPORT

Date: March 15, 2018
To: Crowe Valley Source Protection Authority
From: George Offshack, CV SPA MWG Chair
Re: Representation at Municipal Working Group Meetings

The Chair of the Crowe Valley Source Protection Authority (CV SPA) Municipal Working Group wishes to address low attendance experienced at 2017-2018 Municipal Working Group meetings. Attached is a proposed letter intended to bring this to the attention of CAOs of municipalities that should be represented at Municipal Working Group meetings.

Staff Recommendation:

That the Crowe Valley Source Protection Authority endorses the proposed letter and directs it be sent to municipal CAOs.

March 2018

Attention: Municipal CAOs

Carbon Copy: SPA Board Members

Proposed Letter to Address Attendance at Municipal Working Group Meetings

Municipalities have had the opportunity to be heavily involved in “drinking water source protection” over the past decade. “Municipal working groups” played a *major* role in the development and shaping of Source Protection Plans and policies. This represents an immense amount of invested resources – both money and time – and municipalities can be proud of the efforts they committed to.

After a hiatus of several years while Source Protection Plans were being fine-tuned and implemented, municipal working group meetings are once again being held each year to seek *local input* for improving the effectiveness of drinking water source protection in your area. The number of these meetings annually depends on current initiatives of the source water program. Municipal working groups are the opportunity for municipalities to provide meaningful local input, ensuring that Source Protection Plan policies remain effective, reasonable, and fair for municipalities to implement. A major contribution to the success of the drinking water source protection program to date is that it is locally-driven.

Through municipal working groups, municipalities are able to provide local input that becomes integrated into Source Protection Plans and related policies that municipalities are legislated to implement. These meetings are an opportunity to express local concerns and serve as an avenue for these concerns to be brought to the attention of the Province. The municipal working groups also help provide and maintain source water protection knowledge among municipal staff in attendance. This allows municipalities to remain responsive and capable of dealing with future source water initiatives that may arise. Local issues, significant changes to the Source Protection Plan, or the addition of new drinking water systems through well clustering, are just a few possible situations that could call for municipal working groups to increase their efforts. Through participation in Municipal Working Groups, municipalities can provide input, based on individual interests, for decisions that will have an impact on their residents.

The Crowe Valley Source Protection Authority scheduled three municipal working group meetings in the 2017-2018 fiscal year. The meetings lasted two to three hours making the total annual commitment roughly in the time frame of ten hours. Attendance for the first meeting was excellent with virtually all municipalities in attendance. At the second meeting just one

DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION

municipality was represented, and unfortunately, the third meeting had to be cancelled with zero attendance responding.

This lack of commitment is of concern given the importance of clean drinking water. Protecting water at its source is the most cost-effective and reliable way to safeguard our drinking water. It is much more cost effective than relying solely on treatment. Source protection is the first step in a multi-barrier approach that ensures residents have safe drinking water. This was among the key recommendations from the Report of the Walkerton Inquiry that led to the establishment of the *Clean Water Act* in 2006. The *Clean Water Act* ensures communities protect their drinking water supplies through prevention by developing collaborative, watershed-based source protection plans based on science and that are *locally-driven*.

The Crowe Valley Source Protection Authority wishes to stress how important it is that the designated staff member(s) attend this year's municipal working group meetings for drinking water source protection. It is a minimal commitment of staff time, and the transfer of information to and from your member municipalities far outweigh the cost of attendance. Please ensure adequate representation at these meetings.

Sincerely,

George Offshack

Chair, CV SPA Municipal Working Group