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Community Update on addressing Anmore Green Estates Septic Field Failure

Coquitlam, BC (March 5, 2020) – The Coquitlam School District (SD43) is pleased to provide an update on recent activity in addressing the issues associated with Anmore Green Estates' septic field since our last community update of January 27, 2020.

On February 18th, the Village of Anmore passed the Local Area Bylaw to establish a regional sewer connection for Anmore Green Estates (AGE). The Village of Anmore has submitted the bylaw to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing requesting an Order in Council (OIC) for membership to the Greater Vancouver Sewage and Drainage District (GVS&DD).

This step was necessary regardless of whether the AGE connection is made across school district property or AGE connects via the alternative route (preferred by SD43) that avoids school district involvement, appears less legally complicated and could be completed within the proposed project timeline.

A meeting with the facilitator, school district representatives and AGE participants occurred on February 13, 2020. The project timeline was reviewed, as was an overview of required legal agreements. At this meeting it was indicated that the project timeline of August 2020 was extremely aggressive, and concerns were raised about the ability to secure all the necessary legal documentation and required project work in a timely manner. Key to this concern is the status of AGE's Letter of Intent.

Board and Staff representatives met with members of the Eagle Mountain Middle School Parent Advisory Committee on February 20, 2020. Some of the details relating to legal agreement complexity were discussed, as well as the project timeline.

On February 25, 2020, the Board received a presentation from AGE representatives formalizing their request to secure an easement over School District property to connect AGE's sewer system to the GVS&DD sewer pipe located in the City of Port Moody. This presentation was further to AGE's Letter of Intent dated February 18, 2020 sent to the Board.

The Board deliberated on AGE's presentation and grappled with the notion of taking further dollars out of operating classrooms. Subsequently, the Board unanimously, passed the following motion:

Whereas the Board preferred approach is for AGE to connect to the Greater Vancouver Sewage and Drainage District (GVS&DD) via the identified option that would not impact or cross School District property; and

Whereas the Board is supportive in working with AGE to accommodate the initiative by Anmore Green Estates (AGE) to decommission their septic field and connect with the GVSⅅ and

Whereas the Board will provide the opportunity for AGE to connect to the GVS&DD on School District property, on the condition that the School District will not be negatively impacted financially or otherwise by any means, including legal costs, project costs, staff costs, or ongoing connectivity costs, etc. as a result of AGE's connection on School District property; and

Whereas the Board expects financial consideration consistent with those it has incurred or received from other granted property easements or statutory right of ways; and therefore,

Move to direct staff to focus their efforts on securing a signed letter of intent with AGE, addressing any misinformation that may be included in the preamble of AGE's letter of Intent dated February 18, 2020, prior to incurring any further staff time or other costs associated with legal or project work obligations associated with supporting AGE's connection to the GVS&DD.

While the Board has been kept informed by staff of developments related to AGE's septic field matters over the past two years, the over-riding consideration by the Board is the lack of confidence that the project will be completed to an acceptable standard, that SD43 will receive cost reimbursements on a going forward basis, and the August 2020 timeline will be met - if the access is through SD43 lands. The District has considerable experience working with multiple partners to complete projects in complex situations, and that knowledge brings us to conclude that the most expedient and timely method for all parties is for installation to take place along the route that does not run through school district property and appears far less complicated.

We will continue to work with all parties to find and secure a lasting and permanent solution.

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