

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

10. One River Environmental Assessment Update: Phase II Stage I Report

- C. Therrien, 961 Wonderland Road South – attending on behalf of the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee – expressing support for the decommissioning of the Dam as there are species of fish in that portion of the river that are at risk and one is critically endangered; indicating that there is research that shows there has been a great deal of fish migration from Lake St. Clair, up the Thames River to Downtown London for spawning purposes and that could cause an increase in revenue due to increased fishing.
- R. Huber, Thames River Anglers Association – expressing support for the decommissioning of the Dam; indicating that due to the effort put into this decision-making process, the “do nothing” option would throw all of that hard work out the window; stating that we have an opportunity to make a mark throughout the continent by making the tough decision with respect to the Dam and doing the right thing for the river, which will pay huge dividends to the community in the long run, including opportunities for eco-tourism.
- G. Brown, 35A-59 Ridout Street South – expressing support for the decommissioning of the Dam; stating that when the Dam was operational it had negative effects on the river and the environment; stating that the environment should be able to just be enjoyed by everyone; noting that this has been discussed for almost twelve years and it is time to put the issue to bed; stating that there are other areas in London with slack water for canoeing.
- S. Lewis, 67 Trapper Street – expressing support for the decommissioning of the Dam; stating that Council was elected to make the tough decisions and it is time that a decision is made on this issue; agreeing with Mr. Huber that the “do nothing” option is not the right choice; acknowledging that there will be costs associated with the decommissioning of the Dam but there is an opportunity for the City of London to get funding assistance for decommissioning and habitat reinstatement or rehabilitation through the Federal Government and he hopes the City would take advantage of that.
- B. Callow, Thames River Keepers – indicating that he has a different view of the matter; stating that the Thames River in London is not a free-flowing river due to other structures or Dams in London; indicating that the Thames River Keepers are all about clean water and it is misinformed to say that the river is running clean; providing information regarding the algae blooms in Lake Erie and indicating that the Thames River flows right in to Lake Erie; referencing a study done entitled “Freshwater Research – Water Quality Assessment in the Thames River Watershed – Nutrient and Sediment Sources”, completed by G. Nürnberg, Ph.D. and B. LaZerte, Ph.D. (a copy of which is on file in the City Clerk’s Office for viewing) and referring to data related to the area watershed, found at <http://thamesriver.on.ca/watershed-health>; noting that the study was done on March 30, 2015 for the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) and stating that the study indicates that the Thames River has experienced excess nutrient levels for decades resulting in nutrient enrichment in the river system and therefore the Thames River is one of the priority rivers; indicating that the study from the UTRCA that was put out later states that phosphate levels have improved; stating that the issue is not getting better, that we are just flowing the problem down river for other areas to deal with; indicating that yes, fish are coming back, but we should be working on cleaning up the river; noting that there was blue/green algae last summer at Wildwood, Fanshawe and Pittock and the levels have been increasing every year, therefore it is not getting better, it is getting worse; stating that he has spoken with the two companies doing the Environmental Assessment and told them that Oneida was having a conference regarding the water quality and neither company attended; indicating that we cannot blame Springbank Dam for all the issues; stating that he believes that this matter needs further study.
- E. Paloza, 62 Westwinds Drive – expressing support for the decommissioning of the Dam by indicating that she used to fish with her grandfather outside of Sault Ste. Marie in beautiful, pristine waters but that she grew up downriver of Chemical Valley outside of Sarnia and she would not eat fish from there; stating that there is an opportunity before Council today and she encourages Council to decommission the Dam and remove all traces of it in order to prevent the Dam from being repaired and put in use in the future; explaining that she is a scout leader and a parent and enjoys the outdoors and sees this as an opportunity to redevelop the area as another outdoor resource for children, schools, trail runners, or any Londoner to enjoy.

- T. Cull, 119 Grand Avenue – indicating that he is speaking on behalf of Thames River Alley which is a group that does monthly clean ups of the Thames River area; stating that the group is in the area all the time and they are seeing many animals and species, including the spiny soft shell turtle and this is the future of London; stating that the future of humans is tied to species at risk and anything done to help these species will help us, in the long run; supporting the decommissioning of the Dam and indicating it is an opportunity for a win for London and to do what we say we want to do which is to be one of the greenest cities.
- R. Bailey, 21 Calleter Place – stating that he was involved in the original meeting with respect to the Springbank Dam, around 2003; indicating that staff did a great job with the public information sessions; stating that Council asked for information and science and they have been given information and science and now is the chance to do the environmentally right thing and decommission the Dam; indicating that the option to do nothing is not really an option.
- H. Moussa, 155 Thornton Avenue – stating that he attended a public participation meeting two years ago where this was being discussed and he kept hearing that information was needed in order to make an evidence-based decision; supporting the decommissioning of the Dam based on the fact that the evidence is available to support it; stating that Council should make the bold decision to decommission the Dam and tear it out so that it will not waste any more time for this Council or future Councils; indicating that he has property near the river downtown as well as in the west end of London which is the last property that the river runs through before leaving London and he can see a cleaner river now, to a layman's eye.
- J. Cornelius, 435 Simcoe Street – stating that she is the environmental co-op student in Oneida Nation of the Thames; indicating they have a lot of concerns about species at risk; noting that there are a number of boil water advisories on the Reserve; noting that there have not been many studies done on the shoreline between Oneida and Chippewa; stating that there should be more studies done in that area; noting that there are people afraid to fish due to the toxic chemicals; indicating that a number of the knowledge holders on the Reserve have noted that there has been an increase in the number of species in the river and it is much better than when the Dam was working; stating that in the studies that have been done, there is never an Oneida or Chippewa contribution; expressing support for the decommissioning of the Dam and the water flowing naturally.
- S. Gibbs, 48 Parliament Crescent – representing the Western Ontario Fish and Game Club in London; thanking the people who did the work on the Environmental Assessment and indicating that the public participation meetings were well done; reiterating a point made by B. Callow regarding the other Dams in London; supporting the decommissioning of the Dam in order to start somewhere.
- J. Jordan, 970 Willow Drive – indicating that the water quality is not declining because the Dam is open; stating that he is a cyclist and travels along the Thames River quite a bit and the natural area, the trees, the habitats, the river, are all more lively now; noting that he lived in the area before the Dam was closed and the area looks so much better now; supporting the decommissioning of the Dam; indicating that he would like to see more lookouts along the river to avoid people all gathering at the Dam to see the river.
- B. Vanderwettering, 708 Hedley Drive – stating that he has a forestry and engineering background and is a lifelong Londoner; indicating that he has made a point of checking out the Springbank area over the last ten years and has noticed a vast improvement, from his own perspective; stating that there are Dams in place that serve a purpose, such as flood control, and in his opinion that is the only thing that makes them worthwhile; noting that the flood weir by Labatt Park could be removed if the money was available to fix the sewer; noting that other Dams in London are for flood control and necessary to be there; supporting the decommissioning and removal of the Dam.
- C. Ebar, Canoe Club – enquiring whether fish ladders have been considered because they are used in Owen Sound; stating that when he first moved to London he started paddling; noting that in the past the Canoe Club had approximately 1000 members; indicating that the Rowing Club used to have regattas, which brought people to London; stating they have now moved out to Sharon Creek and only have about 100 members; noting that it is a nice location but it is necessary to have a vehicle to get there; supporting putting in fish ladders and repairing the Dam.