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## Saranac Lake weighs its sand-salt options

Village board leans toward a simple containment facility on Van Buren St.

By CHRIS KNIGHT, Enterprise Senior Staff Writer

SARANAC LAKE - Faced with a series of deadlines from the state Department of Environmental Conservation, the village Board of Trustees is moving closer to a decision on where to locate a salt and sand storage facility.

Following a Monday night presentation by village Manager Marty Murphy on the village's options, the board seemed to be leaning toward building a simple containment facility on village-owned property on Van Buren Street.

Board members said the containment area, which could include a concrete pad, six-foot walls around the storage area and a large tarp over the sand pile, would be less expensive than a covered salt and sand storage shed. The village had been working with the town of Harrietstown to build a 60-by-120-foot storage shed on town-owned property off John Munn Road, but bids came in around \$700,000 and trustees were split over that plan.

Village officials are now working to satisfy a DEC consent order that was issued after the Adirondack Council, an environmental advocacy group, threatened to sue the village for allowing its sand and salt pile to contaminate a brook that drains into Lake Colby.

If the village plans to build anything on the Van Buren Street site, DEC wants construction to begin by May 1, 2010 and be complete by Aug. 1, 2010. If nothing is to be built, the sand pile must be removed from the site by Aug. 1, 2010.

"It's imperative we make a decision as to which way we want to go with our sand storage facility," Murphy told the board.

Murphy outlined several options, including the possibility of the village using the town's John Munn Road property for a storage shed or some other type of containment structure. The other options included using the village's property on Van Buren Street to build a new storage facility or finding another village-owned location for storing sand in the village.

Murphy said other village-owned locations wouldn't be as convenient because the village loader would have to either be driven to the site each time it's needed or left outside.

Mayor Tom Michael asked Murphy to see if the village can use the \$175,000 grant it received for the project for something other than a storage shed. He said the village could build a concrete pad with six- or eight-foot walls to serve as a containment facility, then cover it with a roof sometime in the future.

"Personally I don't see any municipality building a \$700,000, \$500,000 or even a \$300,000 building to store salt and sand," Michael said. "It just doesn't make any sense."

Murphy said DEC officials are not requiring an enclosed structure. A containment area could be enough to satisfy the state, he said.

"As long as we can address their concern about sand getting into the tributary, I believe we'd satisfy DEC's concern," Murphy said.

Trustee John McEneaney suggested the village could use the existing concrete pad at the mechanic's garage on Van Buren Street to store its sand. Space could be added to the highway garage for the mechanic, he said.

Murphy said he would get estimates on engineering costs and develop plans for a containment facility on Van Buren Street.

Earlier in the meeting, the board had discussed plans to reduce the amount of sand used on village streets this coming winter.

Murphy noted that they have less sand stockpiled now than they've had in prior winters, in part because the village sand pit had to be shut down after an inspection by the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration.

"What we have on Van Buren Street now and what we have already screened at the sand pit is less than we would normally stockpile for any one year," Murphy said. "But our goal is to use less sand this year."

The village is also cutting back on the amount of salt it adds to road sand, from 5 percent to 3 percent.

Trustees Jeff Branch and Christy Fontana were absent from Monday's meeting.

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