

WNBZ
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Village Manager Urging Trustees to take Action on Salt/Sand Storage

Saranac Lake Village Manager Marty Murphy told the board of trustees Monday night that it's time to start weighing options for the permanent containment of a sand and salt pile on Van Buren Street.

This summer, the Adirondack Council threatened to sue the village if it didn't address the contamination of Colby Brook via its sand and salt pile. The lawsuit was avoided after the village signed a consent order with the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

That agreement required the village to temporarily cover the sand/salt pile by October 30. But DEC also wants the village to begin construction of a storage facility by May 1, 2010 and complete construction by August 1, 2010 or remove the pile from the Van Buren Street site by August 1, 2010.

Murphy and Community Development Director Jeremy Evans presented the board with several possibilities that would satisfy the DEC's consent order.

One option would be to construct a new storage facility on the village's property off Van Buren Street, near the highway garage. Another features the use of Harriestown's property off John Munn Road to build a shed. Or, the village could move the pile to another piece of village property where sand/salt contamination is out of the equation.

Murphy says the third option – moving the pile – is less logical, because Department of Public Works crews would have to drive the front-end loader to the site to access the pile.

Only three board members were present at last night's meeting – Mayor Tom Michael and Trustees Susan Waters and John McEneany. All three agreed that the construction of an entirely new storage shed isn't cost effective.

Michael says spending several hundred thousands dollars on a facility to store salt and sand is out of the question. McEneany agreed.

“To spend even \$300,000 to cover up a sand and salt pile is a hard pill to swallow,” he said.

Rather than explore options to construct an enclosed storage unit, the board pushed the idea of building a simple containment facility. That would consist of a large concrete pad surrounded by six-foot high walls, covered with a tarp, located at the Van Buren Street site.

Murphy says as long as the pile is contained, the demands put forth by DEC should be met.

-Chris Morris, 11-25-09