Message

From: John Cannella [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=CD667C6D53774DD0A749783BB02AE89D-JOHN CANNEL]
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Today's News

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Edited by: John Cannella (John.Cannella@ieso.ca)

Contact Editor

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Power turbine coming to Galt dam; Parkhill Dam plan has been in the works since 1999

Waterloo Region Record - Thu Jun 22 2017
Byline:Anam Latif, Record staff
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Open house for Park Hill dam hydro project

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Toronto Hydro, Ryerson launch pilot project to store energy in pole-mounted compact box

thestar.com - Wed Jun 21 2017
Byline: Hina Alam

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Comments matter in rate decisions, OEB officials say

Owen Sound Sun Times - Thu Jun 22 2017
Byline: Scott Dunn
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Report targets high price of power; About 80 per cent of local money spent on energy leaves Windsor

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Power turbine coming to Galt dam; Parkhill Dam plan has been in the works since 1999

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The Parkhill Dam will soon be churning out power after nearly two decades of stalled proposals to build a hydro plant at the historic dam.

"This was the best of all the sites based on the amount of production," Dwight Boyd, director of engineering at Grand River Conservation Authority told Cambridge council on Tuesday.

He said the plant will generate about 500 kilowatts of energy, enough to power about 560 homes.

The conservation authority secured a 40-year contract with the Independent Electricity System Operator last fall under its feed-in-tariff program. It will allow them to sell electricity at 23.63 cents per kilowatt-hour.

Hydro-generated power from the 180-year-old dam was first proposed in 1999. The project kept getting put off because it was not financially feasible at the time and the conservation authority had to do some repairs along the way.

"We've done our homework. It's a financially viable project," Boyd added.

The new plant will cost about $5.2 million to build. Right now the conservation authority has launched an environmental assessment of the project, the first step in a long process. It should be up and running between 2021 and 2022.

Boyd said they will need to assess the impact of the hydro plant's turbine on fish species in the Grand River, which include three species at risk within the turbine's reach, among other environment factors. They will also need to have discussions with local anglers who frequently fish downstream of the dam.

Many around the Cambridge council table were worried about what the hydro plant would look like and how its appearance would impact such a heritage-rich part of downtown Galt.

"Esthetics, that is my main concern," Coun. Frank Monteiro said.

Boyd said the plant's appearance is also a big issue for nearby businesses such as the Cambridge Mill and Napa Grille and Wine Den, both situated on either side of the historic dam.

Parkhill is what the conservation authority calls a "run of the river" dam which means water flows over top of the dam. The plan is to install the plant against a flood wall

on the dam's west side opposite the Cambridge Mill where the water can drive a turbine.

The plant will essentially look like a box. Boyd said there is potential to clad it with stone and add fake shutters to give the plant an appealing appearance that would match heritage in the area.

"We're looking to the river again for hydro power. So it will have an industrial type of flavour to it," he said.

The conservation authority is expecting to earn about $900,000 from the plant each year. Once the project's costs are paid off the money will go toward conservation efforts.

Three other dams owned by the conservation authority at Shand, Conestogo and Guelph generate about 1,350 kilowatts, enough to power 1,200 homes. This energy brings in about $450,000 for the conservation authority each year.

The conservation authority owns 27 working dams throughout the Grand River watershed.

The first public open house about the hydro plant is on Tuesday, June 27, between 4 and 8 p.m. in the Falls room at the Cambridge Mill.

alatif@therecord.com.

Twitter: @LatifRecord

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Open house for Park Hill dam hydro project

Cambridge Times - Wed Jun 21 2017 Page: 1

Plans to install an electricity generating station on Galt's Park Hill dam will be the subject of conversations during an open house on Tuesday (June 27).

The $5.2 million project, proposed by Grand River Conservation Authority, is in the environmental assessment stage.

"We are very pleased to take this first step in building a hydro generating station at Park Hill dam," said Joe Farwell, GRCA's chief administrative officer, in a news release. "We look forward to working with the community throughout the process."

The public information centre, intended to introduce the project to residents and stakeholders in order to gather input, runs from 4 to 8 p.m. at Cambridge Mill restaurant (130 Water Street N.).

Project team members will be on hand to answer questions.

Last year, the Independent Electricity System Operator awarded a 40-year contract to GRCA for the generation of 500 kWh of power, enough to supply about 560 homes.

If all goes according to plan, the hydro station is expected to be up and running within five years. The assessment is anticipated to take 12 to 18 months to complete.

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Toronto Hydro, Ryerson launch pilot project to store energy in pole-mounted compact box

thestar.com - Wed Jun 21 2017
Byline: Hina Alam

In what it says is a world first, Toronto Hydro is testing pole-mounted energy storage devices that can supplement electricity during peak hours in homes.

In a pilot project, a compact white box, a little bigger than a suitcase, has been mounted about six metres up a hydro pole in the Keele St. and Sheppard Ave. W. area. It's paired with a 50 kilowatt transformer that typically powers about 12 houses.

"It's a lithium ion battery just like the one in your cell phone, and it's equivalent to 2,000 cell phone batteries," said Gary Thompson, supervisor of engineering at Toronto Hydro.

These units, each storing 15 kilowatt hours of energy, aren't meant to provide bulk electricity to power houses but to provide support for a grid by making it more efficient, Thompson said.

They are charged during off-peak hours, around 1 a.m. or 2 a.m., and when a transformer begins to see its biggest load during peak hours, the storage unit will supplement some of the energy, he said.

This means that some of Toronto Hydro's aging assets won't have to be replaced soon, he said.

Just imagine plugging in a new Tesla car in your house, said Bala Venkatesh, director of Centre of Urban Energy at Ryerson University, which is the lead on this project.

There's a sudden demand in the electricity of your house when the car is charging. So what this pole-mounted storage unit can do is store energy during off-peak hours. Peaks in energy demands, like when Tesla cars and other electric appliances are plugged in, will be mitigated through that energy storage device, Venkatesh said.

"The biggest benefit is that you can charge those storage units during off-peak hours and use them when electricity is required for a short time," Venkatesh said.

To support the charging of the Tesla car, one might have to upgrade the electrical wiring of the house, he said. That means, as energy needs increase, transformers will have to be upgraded. But with these pole-mounted storage devices, that upgrade for electrical systems can be avoided.

Thompson said replacing transformers and electrical infrastructure is easier said than done. It involves a lot of planning, resources and engineering designs.

One of the criticisms (www.thestar.com) government officials faced was dumping excess electricity to neighboring states and provinces.

But if thousands of these storage units are deployed across the province, they can store that excess energy, Venkatesh said.

The cost of these units if mass produced is about $20,000-$30,000 per unit.

Tori Gass, spokesperson for Toronto Hydro, said energy storage is a relatively new technology within the utility sector. Pole-mount energy storage is a new concept that Toronto Hydro has worked with its partners to focus on, deferring asset replacement and costs by relieving the load on an overloaded transformer, she said.

Early results have demonstrated an ability to reduce strain on the local transformer, Gass said.

"We're going to continue to run the pilot for quite a while longer, but there's no firm end date," she said.

If the pilot continues to show positive results, then more of these pole-top systems could be put in across the city, Gass said.

"Toronto Hydro has more than 175,000 hydro poles and each one could be a candidate," she said. "But there aren't any definite plans to install any more just yet. We need to wait for the pilot results."

Venkatesh envisions Ontario having lots of these units.

"We've done research on energy storage before," he said. "We've worked on large energy storage unit, which is the size of a 40-foot container from 2009 to 2016. So this storage unit is a product of that evolution."

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Comments matter in rate decisions, OEB officials say

Owen Sound Sun Times - Thu Jun 22 2017
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Is the public being heard at consultations about Hydro One distribution rate increase requests like the one held Wednesday night in Owen Sound? The Ontario Energy Board, the provincial regulator responsible for setting electricity rates after it reviews requests for changes from companies, asked for input Wednesday night at the Harry Lumley Bayshore Community Centre -its fourth of nine community consultations this year.

Kristi Sebalj, who oversees the adjudication process for rate applications at the OEB, said the board must consider whether the rate increases are reasonable and customer input, intervenors and OEB staff each have "great weight" in the board's rate decisions.

It's more than a public relations exercise, she said, because its process "requires us to involve the public" by giving public notice of the rate increase, educating them about the applications, that they have a right to be heard, and assuring them "there's a regulator that's watching out for them as well."

Once they have public input "the decision-makers ultimately would decide whether or not or how that would influence their decision-making," Sebalj said.

She said in a phone interview as she made her way to Owen Sound for the meeting that the board's role already is to be a check on excess rates by acting as a "proxy for competition."

Since 2009 the OEB says it has reviewed more than 130 major rate applications from all power providers and "reduced requested rate increases by an average of about 40 per cent." That's kept average distribution rates "close to the rate of inflation" over that period.

These consultations come after the provincial government introduced its Fair Hydro Plan -which promises to cut power bills significantly, even if Hydro gets its rate hike - in response to concern about skyrocketing hydro bills.

"The general message, consumers are concerned about affordability, about accountability and about efficiency," Sebalj said of input from the meetings.

Hydro One is asking for permission to raise distribution rates incrementally between 2018 and 2022 for a total monthly increase of $11.75 for a typical residential customer using 750 kWh per month.

Distribution rates pay for building and maintaining the transmission and distribution lines, towers and poles used to bring electricity to customers.

Hydro One says most of its distribution system was built in the 1950s and '60s and "many assets are approaching or are beyond their expected service lives, resulting in an ongoing need to replace or refurbish them."

"Hydro One is committed to reducing costs and increasing the company's productivity and efficiency. The rate application reflects this commitment and is based on a plan that includes making only the necessary improvements to ensure the reliable supply of electricity," a statement on its website says.

Hydro One's communications director Jay Armitage said if they don't pay for maintenance now, "there is a chance that customers will see a reduction in reliability" and this "would kick the problem down the road." The new five-year plan involves "replacing more poles than we ever have before."

Armitage was en route to Owen Sound to explain why Hydro One needs higher distribution rates and to stress new government hydro rate relief will mean customers won't feel the hurt.

Armitage touted the provincial Fair Hydro Plan which she said would shave 31 per cent off the average medium density customer's bill as early as August - with more savings in rural areas and for those who use more power.

So "most of our customers," those using 750 kWh a month and paying $177 now, would pay $124 per month -$636 per year less, even if the rate hike is approved, thanks to the Fair Hydro Plan.

The OEB touted the government's rate relief too. "Any amounts approved by the OEB will not impact the distribution line of the bill of most Hydro One customers, after the Fair Hydro Act credits and changes are applied," its news release said.

United Way executive director Francesca Dobbyn said when the hydro bill relief plan was announced that all together, the measures could result in a 50 per cent reduction in hydro bills for some households in Grey-Bruce.

Armitage wouldn't comment on what would happen to bills at the end of the five-year hydro bill reprieve. But the provincial financial accountability officer has warned the provincial plan to reduce hydro bills by 25 per cent on average will cost at least $21 billion over the next three decades.

Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound MPP Bill Walker said when the plan was announced that it will cost taxpayers "in a worst-case scenario" as much as $42 billion over 30 years in added interest costs.

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Report targets high price of power; About 80 per cent of local money spent on energy leaves Windsor

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Roughly 80 per cent of the money spent on energy in Windsor leaves the community, which will cost up to $3.1 billion over 25 years if the trend doesn't change, a detailed new report says.

The 97-page report entitled Windsor's Community Energy Plan: A Powerful Plan for the Future, which goes to the city's environment standing committee June 28, notes that Windsor spent $842 million on energy in 2014.

With a conservative estimate of energy costs increasing 120 to 280 per cent, by 2041 Windsorites will spend $1.8 billion to $3.1 billion if the city adopts a "do-nothing" approach.

"It's money that leaves the community so it's not providing an economic benefit locally," Karina Richters, the city's supervisor of environmental sustainability and climate change, said Wednesday.

Most of the local money spent on energy goes to such things as electricity, gas and oil produced out of town.

"So we want to look at how much energy we use and how we can reduce that and save money."

Windsor's Community Energy Plan proposes a bold step: reducing Windsor's energy use and greenhouse gas emissions 40 per cent by 2041.

The report also envisions a number of approaches: reducing energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions, increasing locally produced power to create more energy security, and providing as much local economic benefit as possible.

The whole idea is to be friendlier to the planet as well as Windsorites' wallets.

Currently, Windsor residential energy use is about 142 gigajoules, compared to the Ontario average of 107.

"Why do we have such a higher energy use compared to the Ontario average?" asked Richters, who helped produce the report. "One of the reasons is we have a lot of very old homes. Half the houses were built before 1945. A lot of them are wartime homes that have not been upgraded."

The city already has District Energy, a high-efficiency heating and cooling system in the basement of Caesars Windsor, that serves a number of downtown spots such as the 400 Building in City Hall Square, significantly reducing their energy use.

Besides improving energy-efficiency, can the city really produce more of its own power? Actually, yes.

The city has installed rooftop solar farms in three places: the aquatic complex, the WFCU Centre and Transit Windsor (though a recent windstorm left the latter temporarily out of commission).

As high as home energy use is for Windsor, however, houses are not the biggest issue. A lack of active transportation is an even bigger culprit - given that Windsorites spend 46 per cent of their energy costs getting to and from places.

"Everybody complains about electricity costs, but we spend far more in the community on transportation costs than we do on electricity," Richters said.

In the end, Richters believes that the economic and environmental goals of Windsor's Community Energy Plan - which should be available for public input after going to the city's environment standing committee - jibe with a better quality of life for the community.

"About 80 per cent of the $842 million is not spent here," Richters said. "It's a huge cost and it was very surprising. If we can re-invest some of that money in our community we can make it more liveable and affordable."
cpearson@postmedia.com

ENERGY COSTS

Windsorites spent $842 million on energy in 2014. The cost percentages break down as follows: Transportation - 46% Commercial/institutional - 20% Residential - 19% Industrial - 14% Municipal - 1% Source: Windsor's Community Energy Plan

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