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MEMORANDUM

TO: Chair of Regional Watersheds Advisory Board
CC: Emma Wattie, Environmental Performance Officer - Water Resources Specialist
Haruka Aoyama, Legislative Assistant, Office of the Municipal Clerk
FROM: Shannon Miedema, Manager, Energy & Environment, Infrastructure Planning
DATE: June 9, 2021
SUBJECT: **Contamination at Lake Charles**

Good afternoon RWAB members,

We understand that some board members have expressed concern over reports of arsenic in Lake Charles, perhaps because of the recent media article, and have suggested that the matter be brought forward for discussion at tomorrow's RWAB meeting. I offer the following to provide you with some context in which this issue arises and the current process involving both the Municipality and the Province to address this issue.

Recent studies have confirmed that mine tailings continue to be transported through to Lake Charles from the former Montague Gold Mine. The remaining contamination could pose a risk to public and ecosystem health if not properly managed. The Province (Lands & Forest) is the current landowner of the former mine site as well as the watercourses and the mine closure program is being conducted by Nova Scotia Lands Incorporated.

Over the past 2 years, HRM staff have been working with Nova Scotia Lands Incorporated, Nova Scotia Environment and Nova Scotia Lands and Forestry to understand how contamination from the former Montague Gold Mine will impact the development of the Port Wallace lands as well as HRM's lands adjacent to Barry's Run. In the past year, the HRM Chief Administrative Officer has met and corresponded with former Nova Scotia Environment Deputy Minister Farmer and Lands and Forestry staff to discuss the site and potential next steps.

Since 2014, the Port Wallace area has been the subject of a comprehensive planning process, the purpose of which would set the municipal standards by which the lands would be developed. RWAB will be formally involved if and when the secondary planning process moves forward. As a municipality, Halifax has no jurisdiction over the water bodies that are under provincial ownership or for the environmental regulation of contaminated sites, but does manage the planning process.

Several risk studies have been completed to inform the closure plan of the former gold mine – found here: : <http://www.nslands.ca/projects/>. On this website you will find resources such as the Montague report, Barry's Run Risk Assessment Report, Summary and Q&A, and the Lake Charles Summaries and Q&A.

Planning and Development

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