

A thumbs up and down for city council

Council is wise to restrict water use, but why is it proceeding with costly ditch infilling contracts?

- The Guardian (Charlottetown)
- 15 Sep 2012

The capital city's newly announced restrictions on water use seem reasonable enough, but they're only part of the solution to the city's over-taxed water supply. The long-term solution is in completing work on a new well field at Miltonvale Park. Surely the city will soon make that a priority.

Council passed a resolution this week changing water-use guidelines into restrictions. Among other things, the rules specify when residents can water their lawns, fill their pools or wash their cars, particularly during dry periods. But what's odd is that at the same meeting, the city also voted on spending \$ 667,114 on ditch infilling, money that Coun. Mitch Tweel and Danny Redmond have argued should be diverted toward completing the work already started on adding a new water source from the Miltonvale Park area.

According to Tweel, the city has \$ 6 million set aside for ditch infilling, but none earmarked for completing work at Miltonvale Park, even though the city is already using more than 90 per cent of its current capacity supplied by the Winter River. Redmond introduced a motion earlier this month to divert the money toward the Miltonvale project, and the city's utility committee passed it. But the request still has to be approved by council's administrative committee and a committee of the whole before going before council and a public meeting. What Tweel wants to know is: "Why are we voting in support of ditch infilling contracts when the priorities might change soon?"

That's a good question. With the city using close to its current maximum capacity and taking action to restrict water use in the city, doesn't it make sense to complete work needed for an additional water source? Ditch infilling is important, but it's hardly as pressing as securing additional water supply. Approving the spending of more than a half-million dollars on ditch infilling at Monday's meeting is particularly mystifying given that the motion to divert the entire ditch infilling envelope to the Miltonvale project is currently working its way through the approval channels.

So thumbs up to council for announcing the water restrictions, but thumbs down for proceeding with ditch infilling when, at the end of the day, it may be bumped down the list of priorities.