

Karen Ukura

I am very concerned about the Liberty Expansion and the effects it will have on this community. This is not the place for such a project.

This area is rural residential and has had very strict rules governing its growth and use since I moved here in 1969. Having said that, there have been things that have been allowed that have already impacted this area negatively. For example, when Hugo decided to develop into a larger city it drilled municipal wells that have had negative impacts on our individual wells downstream from the city. Hugo has recently approved another 152 unit development. Those units need water. Now Liberty wants to drill wells for its project. No wonder the neighborhood is concerned about impacts to its wells.

I am also concerned about the implications for the run off to Brown's Creek. I was a manager on Brown's Creek Watershed District from its inception until 2005. I lost several acres of usable land to the water levels that are maintained on Plaisted, School Section, and Goggins Lake to prevent water from negatively impacting Brown's Creek. I suggest an extensive review be made of the School Section Feasibility Study done by Montgomery Watson around 1996 before it may be acceptable to dump thousands of gallons of water daily.

Ironically, the members of the community have not been made privy to the changes that are now being discussed in any detail. Hugo has not revisited, to my knowledge, the changed plans. They should be asked to do a more recent review.

But, one of the most disturbing things for me is the fact that I watched the local farmers spread mounds and mounds of free incinerated waste full of PFAS on our local fields. What impact will the Liberty development have on this situation or its remediation?

These concerns deserve further study. It is much easier to prevent polluting than it is to remedy it.

Some side thoughts: What happens if Liberty fails? They are a for profit organization, which means they can file bankruptcy and walk away. Liberty has said their septic design should last about 10 years and they have stated they believe there will be city sewer and water here by that time. Who would pay for that? Why should a commercial venture be able to impose itself on a rural community and be granted benefits that the rest of the community cannot share? If, the way Liberty has taken care of their property to date is any indication of how well they will take care of things in the future, then I don't hold out much hope for them complying with what will be expected of them.

I hope the MPCA will hold some meetings to inform this rural community what and how decisions are being made. Thank you for allowing us to give our input.