

Trilogy development talks turn to rocks and water

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Interest is waning in Trilogy's public information meetings in Cumberland -- what used to attract a couple of hundred residents have now become meetings at which consultants outnumber residents.

But another meeting was held Wednesday evening, this time to present some new information about the geology and hydrology of the land upon which developer John Evans plans to build hundreds of homes and thousands of square feet of commercial space.

Levelton Consultants engineer Carl Miller said that the Trilogy lands, an area where the sea and the glacier met in the distant past, are extremely interesting, geologically speaking.

More than 100 test holes have been drilled in an attempt to determine whether or not the land is "safe and suitable" for development.

Miller said the area contains both hard areas and softer areas but that, fortunately, the softer areas are primarily beneath the significant portions of the site on which Trilogy does not plan to build.

Another interesting aspect of the site is the miles and miles of abandoned underground mine workings beneath the area, mine workings that could subside.

"Under all that interesting soil is a part of Cumberland's history," said Miller. "It was a question mark, an uncertainty."

But testing revealed that the areas that contain mine workings are typically four feet lower than non-mined areas, an indication that they have already subsided. He had predicted five feet of subsidence in the areas with mine workings.

"That's good," he said.

Lee Ringham, also a Levelton engineer, studied the hydro-geology of the area and determined that it sits atop a large aquifer that extends out to, and possibly beyond, Comox Lake.

"It is really significant in this area," he said.

Interestingly, Miller said that Maple Lake is in fact unlikely to be connected to the aquifer but rather is probably perched atop a rocky area.

"That was kind of a revelation," he said. "The regional water table is deeper than Maple Lake. Comox Lake is the driver of the whole system, it's an enormous body of water."

There are a variety of materials beneath the ground, he said, from sand and gravel to clay as well as layers of fine grain sand that hold the water in the aquifer beneath the ground.

"Unfortunately, it's not a real nice, simple place to work," he said.

Trilogy consultant Clive Grout said: "What we're doing is trying to understand our land so when we come to develop it we can do it properly."

Finally, Lisa Trimmer, an accountant with Meyers Norris Penny, conducted a residential market analysis and an assessment of the economic impact of the development.

According to her presentation, the big demand over the next 20 years will be for multi-family rather than single-family accommodation -- both types of housing are proposed for the Trilogy lands.

She said that over the build out of the entire project, however long that might take, the community could expect to see an economic impact of between \$455 million and \$660 million and between 9,900 and 18,500 person years of employment.

Details of all reports, including what was said to be a very detailed economic analysis, should be available shortly on the Trilogy website at www.trilogyatcumberland.com.

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