

Solar tracker project back on track

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GUELPH — A solar tracker project in the city's north end is back in motion after almost being derailed amid safety concerns from Guelph Junction Railway.

The concern was that the 6.4-metre structure that orients solar panels toward the sun would be too close to a nearby railway crossing.

With at least two trains passing Speedvale Avenue on weekdays and the crossing lacking lowering arms, there was a perceived risk

the tracker would limit train operator's sightlines and distract motorists.

But since the dispute late last year, Sunpark Energy Corp. agreed to move the tracker's planned location back a few metres and contracted surveyors to draft additional drawings to show the safe distance.

"It's moved back only by three or four metres, but it's enough," said Tom Sagaskie, general manager of Guelph Junction Railway.

Sunpark's Bruce Fraser said he hopes to see the solar tracker outside the AgEnergy Co-operative of

office on Speedvale, northeast of Woolwich Street, this spring.

In early November, Fraser said Sunpark "was not certain there is a safety concern."

Sagaskie said there wasn't enough information.

But it seems the sides came together.

After receiving Sunpark's updated information, Sagaskie sent a letter to the city's committee of adjutment on Jan. 16.

The committee passed Sunpark's zoning application for the project in October, but it was sub-

ject to a number of conditions, including a road-railway safety audit for Guelph Junction Railway.

At the time, Fraser said that would be too expensive and the company would have to look at other sponsors and a new location.

With Sagaskie's latest letter the railway's conditions are absolved and the zoning is therefore fulfilled. Now all the project needs is warmer spring weather to move forward.

"We are satisfied with the outcome," Fraser said. "I believe all the conditions have now been met or are being addressed as we

move forward."

It's the solar tracker project's intention to be a highly visible example of solar generation and create public awareness about low-impact renewable energy.

"This project will get public attention and we hope this will lead to other residents and businesses in Guelph to seek out information," Fraser said.

"This in turn should result in the advancement of solar energy in Guelph as set out in the goals of Guelph's community energy plan."



MERCURY NEWS SERVICES

Recycling program ramps up

Participating stores will accept paint, batteries, solvents

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GUELPH — Local residents will soon have additional options for recycling paints, propane tanks, oil filters and other hazardous materials.

The province will launch the \$28-million Do What You Can program later this week, allowing residents to return such materials to various participating retail outlets to be recycled or properly disposed of.

The goal of the program, which is sponsored by Stewardship Ontario, is to divert 32,000 tonnes of household and hazardous waste from landfills over the next five years.

Barbara McConnell, a spokesperson for Stewardship Ontario, said once materials are collected the provincial agency will arrange for transportation

and processing "and the cost of that will be borne by industry."

The program will be phased in.

McConnell said in the first phase, participating stores will collect paints, solvents, propane tanks, batteries, oil filters and containers "and then down the road we will be adding other materials."

Kevin Harris, assistant manager of Guelph's Home Depot store on Woodlawn Road, confirmed his store will be one of those accepting the hazardous materials, noting Home Depot already collects light bulbs and batteries for recycling.

Wayne Filsinger, owner of the RONA Cashway Building Centre on Dawson Road, said his store has been accepting paint for recycling from residential customers for about six months.

The paint is sent to a recycling depot where it is made into recycled paint, "which we do sell here."

"It's been well-received, but we haven't promoted it too much because we've been getting the bugs out of it," Filsinger said. "I guess it's timely for us to promote it now."

McConnell conceded some stores already have established recycling programs in place "but we're looking at expanding that much more broadly across the province."

The program has a website — www.dowhatyoucan.ca — on which residents can use their postal codes or municipality to find the nearest participating recycler.

But McConnell warned the website will not be fully up and running until after Environment Minister John Gerretsen holds a news conference tomorrow to announce details of the program.

Man pleads guilty to forgery, fraud

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GUELPH — Justice Margaret Woolcott found it hard to buy a Quebec man's vows that he had learned from a past littered with fraud and forgery convictions.

"I am not entirely optimistic about your ability to reform based on your criminal record," Woolcott said in a Guelph provincial courtroom yesterday.

“It's a pretty daring scheme. It was simple. It was reasonably effective over the short-term.”

Justice Margaret Woolcott

Nicholas Basilevsky, 46, stood in the prisoner's box before the judge and pleaded guilty to nine counts of uttering a forged document, two counts of attempted fraud and one count of fraud.

In the last three years, after wrapping up a six-month sentence for possession of forgery instruments in Laval, Que., Basilevsky said he's tried to turn his life around. He went back to school to become a computer repair technician and got married more than a year ago.

"I feel remorse . . . I don't want

that kind of life," he said, referring to a past where he was hooked on drugs.

Basilevsky's choice of crimes — fraud, false pretences and forgery — has been consistent, Woolcott said as she sentenced him to serve two years in jail.

His latest crime involved approaching another man to open up a TD Canada Trust bank account using false identification. The man, along with a woman, drove to several TD banks across southwestern Ontario and attempted to cash several fraudulent cheques, each valued at just less than \$1,000.

Basilevsky kept in touch with the pair using a cellphone.

"It's a pretty daring scheme," Woolcott said. "It was simple. It was reasonably effective over the short-term."

On Dec. 2, the pair first struck a bank in Kincardine where the man tried to cash the false cheque, presenting a debit card under a similar false name. Within two days they had hit banks in places such as Port Elgin, Meaford, Hanover and Walkerton.

Police were alerted when a bank teller in Meaford called them Dec. 3.

"Mr. Basilevsky masterminded the scheme," Crown attorney Marilyn Dolby said, adding two years was a fair estimate for the crime.

In addition to his sentence, Woolcott ordered Basilevsky to pay \$3,251 in restitution to the banks.

Local paint spill investigated

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GUELPH — A local manufacturer is the subject of a Ministry of the Environment probe following a paint spill that reached a Guelph creek last summer.

Ministry and City of Guelph environmental services crews were called to GMA Cover Corp. at York and Victoria roads last July after a water-based paint spilled into the sewer and travelled to a nearby creek. The incident took place in the early morning of July 9.

The company makes camouflage covers for military vehicles and weapons systems.

In July, a ministry spokesperson said minnows in the creek were killed from the exposure. No other public comment was made about the incident's environmental impact.

Ministry spokesperson Marcel Parent said the provincial investigation opened last summer; but said he couldn't comment further because the matter remains unresolved.

But he also said there is no timeline for when the GMA file

in other words

GMA Cover Corp. was scheduled for an Environmental Review Tribunal preliminary hearing this past November. It was cancelled after both sides agreed it was no longer required. It is unclear whether the tribunal hearing withdrawal and pending investigation are linked.

may be settled.

Janet Laird, the city's director of environmental services, said the city has had no involvement with the investigation for six to eight months.

The city is typically only involved with the immediate environmental concern and mitigation, manager of wastewater services Cameron Walsh said.

"Having said that, during any investigation conducted by the MOE, we would, of course, provide our notes and data and provide witness statements as re-

quired and requested," he said.

GMA was scheduled for an Environmental Review Tribunal preliminary hearing this past November. This independent body governs in cases where companies, corporations or individuals refuse to comply with a Ministry of the Environment director's order.

The preliminary hearing was cancelled Nov. 18 after both parties agreed it was no longer required.

"Because GMA Cover Corp. has fulfilled the requirements of the Director's Order, there are no longer any issues that remain outstanding between the parties," the Environmental Review Tribunal document reads.

It is unclear whether the tribunal hearing withdrawal and pending investigation are linked.

A Freedom of Information request by the Mercury for a report on GMA was denied by the Ministry of the Environment, because it may affect the integrity of the investigation.

GMA Cover Corp. could not provide an official for comment this week when contacted for this story.

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