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City Dump 2026

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In 1972, Halifax, Dartmouth and two-thirds of Halifax County decided to put city dump in Beaver Bank across the railway track from Lower Sackville rather than in Burnside, which was the first choice of the group tasked to find a new site for the city dump.

Because a municipal election was due in the fall of 1973, the conspirators buried the city dump proposal until the fall of 1974. Then, with no warning, they gave Beaver Bank and Sackville citizens only two weeks to appeal the decision to put the city dump in their neighbourhood. At no time did the conspirators tell the municipality of East Hants that Halifax was planning on dumping the leachate of the HRM dump into the water of Enfield and Lantz.

My father, Harold T. Barrett, lived and worked and endured the Great Depression in Beaver Bank. The land designated for the dump was the backbone of Dad's company, Barrett Lumber Company Limited. This land had been in the Barrett name for generations. It was used for growing timber for pilings used in Halifax Harbour and other special orders.

Dad was too young to find the First World War and too old to fight in the Second World War, but lost a number of relatives to those wars. He worked long hours to help the war effort. Dad was very concerned that Hitler was promising Nova Scotia land to his soldiers. When the city slickers tried to put a city dump in Beaver Bank, he felt it was no different than our young men going to war in 1914 or 1939 to protect our land.

He then went out and bought a shotgun and put up a sign at the mouth of one of our harvesting roads. Dad not only put his life on the line, but he also put his personal wealth and the wealth of his company, Barrett Lumber Company, into the fight.

We were told by knowledgeable people that we would lose the appeal because the deck was stacked against us. The chairman of the committee was the solicitor of the City of Halifax, which wanted to move the dump out of Fairview Cove. The strong man on the committee was the campaign manager for Fraser Mooney, the cabinet member who approved moving the dump to Beaver Bank. Other members included a widow whose meeting payments meant a lot to her. I don't remember the fourth member of the board; the fifth was an independent Cape Bretoner.

The appeals board came down four to one in favour of the Beaver Bank site, which we had expected. The next step was to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada because there is a law that one county cannot do something against the interest of another county (such as dumping leachate from a city dump into the drinking water of East Hants because our Halifax engineers didn't know that water flows downhill).

We were happy that we didn't have to go that far because our premier, Gerald Regan, became involved.

We in Beaver Bank received support from the following groups:

- The Woodbine Trailer Park Association
- The Greater Sackville Community Council
- Beaver Banker Ken Margeson, who appealed on his own
- James Wilbur of East Hants who helped guide us with his wisdom and knowledge of how the system works and how to get things done
- The people of Enfield and Elmsdale
- The veterans of the Second World War from all over Nova Scotia who called and promised to come with their rifles if it came to that
- Councillor Archie Fader
- A number of other Halifax councillors
- The Beaver Bank and the Sackville citizens who came out to the final meeting where Premier Regan shut down the city dump in Beaver Bank