

# Colchester's Public Works Director's Report

Public Works Director, Michelle Boudreau circulated here Director's Report to Colchester Council at its committee meeting on January 12th. The following summary presents some of the projects and initiatives currently being undertaken by the Public Works Department.

**Staffing** - Recruiting efforts for the vacant position of Wastewater Treatment Manager were successful and Kerry-Anne Taylor was the successful candidate. Kerry-Anne comes to us with 20 years of experience with Halifax Water and has been a great addition to the team.

We will be recruiting for a new custodian in Wastewater Treatment, as well as a new Engineering Technician in the Public Works Office.

**Recently Completed Projects** - The following projects were completed during the 2022 construction season: Sidewalk Reconstruction, Barry Avenue; Sidewalk Construction, Highway 2 Hilden (Phase 2 of 2); Repaving, Silverwood Drive and Truro Heights Sewer Project.

**Ongoing and Upcoming Projects** - The following projects are ongoing or will commence construction in Spring 2023: Debert STP2 Elimination (Ongoing); New Well, Debert Water Utility (Ongoing); Courthouse Bathroom Accessibility Renovations (Upcoming); Sewer Capacity Review - Brookfield, Hilden, Truro Heights, Tatamagouche and Valley (Ongoing); Support for Proposed Housing Development, Debert (Ongoing); Marshland Drive Screw Pump Replacement (Upcoming); Truro Heights Crosswalk at Morley Avenue (Upcoming); Retson Stormwater Improvements (Upcoming); Sidewalk Replacement, Valley - First/Second/Mosswood (Upcoming).

**Other projects include:** New Sidewalk, Brookfield, Highway 2 to Whidden Road (Upcoming); Scroll Replacement, Centrifuge, Sludge Dewatering Facility (Upcoming); Pumping Station Improvements, Robie (#7) and Hilden (#9) (Upcoming);

Repaving, Cornerstone Drive (Upcoming); Street Light Replacement, CPDS, Debert (Upcoming) and Topping up of Gravel Roads (Upcoming).

**Regulatory** - Receiving water studies are underway for the Great Village and Brookfield sewage plants. These are needed to confirm long term treatment requirements at the plants. Staff were successful in gaining long term approval to shut off UV lights at the Central Colchester Wastewater Treatment Facility between November and April and Water System Assessments for both water utilities are due in April of 2023.

**Other Tidbits** - Staff continue to work on capital upgrade costs for the Debert Airport; The Provincial Capital Assistance Program has granted \$140,000 in funding for a proposed new sewer line on Tracker Road in Debert to service a potential future housing development. Still waiting on ICIP application for the required expansion of the Debert Sewage Treatment Plant. Staff are investigating options for implementing a computerized maintenance system for Public Works equipment and facilities.

A tender was issued in December for a new 5T plow truck; however, only 1 tender was received, and it was substantially over budget. Staff will re-tender in summer with the hopes that market conditions will improve. Northern Pulp continues to haul wastewater to the Central Colchester Wastewater Treatment Facility. Their hauling approval was renewed for the 2023 calendar year.

Staff are reviewing the feasibility of installing street light sensors to monitor traffic

speeds. Staff are providing input and data for the establishment of GIS based infrastructure mapping, which will also incorporate the ability to view information more easily, and input inspection information from the field.

Staff are working with technical consultants to develop a bridge inspection program for existing/proposed pedestrian bridges. • Staff performance reviews will take place in January. Infiltration of groundwater and rainwater into our sewer systems continues to be a major issue and staff are investigating further. Staff are looking at options to remedy drainage issues at Sunset and Cornerstone - work expected in the Summer once schools are closed.

Area water utilities have purchased new meter reading software which will introduce edata collection efficiencies. The Lower Truro Spring/Water Filling Station is back up and running after a boil order in November/December. The issue was caused by a broken UV disinfection system.

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#### HOURS OF OPERATION:

Monday to Friday

from 9:30am to 5:30pm



## Fiona, a Name with New Meaning

By Maurice Rees

A few decades ago, Fiona was a moderately popular name for new born baby girl. In the subsequent years it was a rarity to hear the name. All that changed at the end of September 2022. Fiona, the hurricane, and in some areas, a tornado became the most often word in Atlantic Canada.

In just over 24 hours it passed through wreaking destruction of anything in its way. Houses were blown off their foundations; modular / mobile home became piles of twisted metal several hundred yards from their rightful place; roofs flew through the air looking for a new home; century-old barns collapsed or only half were precariously left standing and vehicles were overturned.

Hundreds of thousands of Atlantic Canadians whose houses remained were left without electricity, telephone, internet and cell phone coverage for up to 8 days. Meanwhile others where large trees took down poles and power lines faced two and three weeks without services. Thousands of dollars of food was lost. As an example County of Colchester spent approximately \$500,000 on roadside debris cleanup, and thousands of dollars damage to buildings,

especially at the Kemptown Waste Management Facility and Landfill site. Those are only preliminary expenditures. Accountants are still compiling the claims.

Fiona has listed as the most violent storm ever to hit Atlantic Canada, and the cost will be in the billions.

Another sector hit hard was the region's forests. Woodlot owners are scratching their heads wondering how they will recover and how they will be able to clean up the mess. Trying to salvage some downed timber, and reduce the potential of future forest fires have then worried and working full-time.

Woodlot owners and co-ops are finding it difficult to salvage and market pulpwood or find an economically sustainable market for pulpwood or chips. In previous years product could be shipped to the now-idle mill at Abercrombie. Woodlot owners who have been able to retrieve some of Fiona's ravaged wood as logs or studwood are hoping local hobby-like sawyers are able to absorb the surplus inventory.

One such small woodlot owner is Charles & Linda Harrington, Glenholme. Charles worked many years at Natural Resources, Truro, but contin-

ued raising a family and improving his small woodlot and several acres of blueberry fields. About three years ago, he retired and figured he would have some spare time but when he wanted he could tend to the woodlot and blueberry fields. In three days at the end of September all that changed.

If he was to attempt to restore his woodlot to its previous state, it would take two or three years. The other day he said, "It's a total mess. I don't know if I can do all that is needed. Trees are down everywhere and crosspiled like matchsticks".

Since early October, it has been a full time job, cutting and trimming downed trees, then gathering up lots of six at a time, and winching them tree length to a nearby blueberry field. Several photos taken by wife, Linda, accompany this article (*see page 12*), showing the mess and some of the timber he has winched to a blueberry field.

Like other woodlot owners, Charles, is on a short time schedule. Most of the downed timber will loose a significant portion of its sale value in just over a year, two if trees are blown over and attached to the root system.

The provinces forest sector

is also restricted to where they can sell the product. Nova Scotia does not have a pulpmill, which would be a source of selling logs, pulpwood and chips. The market is limited and many are hoping the local smaller hobby-like sawyers with small mills will be able to absorb the excess inventory. Others are hoping those who want to buy raw timber and have it milled for build a house or farm outbuildings will start searching for timber.

The situation is somewhat similar for those with hardwood stands. Their market is limited for logs or chips, but they are hoping firewood dealers from around the province will contact them seeking distress woodlot owners as a source of firewood for the next couple of years.

Many woodlot owners are working long hours, not for the financial benefit of disposing product, but for the pride of improving their woodlots and hoping to reduce the risk of future forest fires.



### Colchester

be centred here.

Presentation Meeting  
Tuesday, February 7 @ 6pm  
(call ahead to confirm)

Council Committee Meeting  
Thursday, February 9 @ 6pm

Council Meeting  
Thursday, February 23 @ 6pm

Municipality of Colchester, 1 Church Street, Truro  
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