

FLOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Flood Advisory Committee was held via Zoom Webinars on Wednesday, March 9, 2022 at 9:00 am.

Present: Councillor Tim Johnson, Chair
Councillor Lisa Patton
Mayor Christine Blair
Hank Kolstee, Citizen Representative

Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works
Rod MacLennan, Project Supervisor/Consultant
Charlotte Sullivan, NS Environment
Carl Esau, NS Agriculture

Regrets: Robert Monk, Citizen Representative

Approval of Agenda: An agenda was prepared and circulated for the Committee's review and approval. Attendees were present for the Retson Drive Ditches item, so the item was moved up on the agenda for discussion after Business Arising from the Minutes.

Moved by: Mayor Blair
Seconded by: Councillor Patton

"That the agenda be approved as amended."

Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the meeting held on November 9, 2021 were circulated for the Committee's review and approval.

Moved by: Mayor Blair
Seconded by: Councillor Patton

"That the Minutes from the meeting on November 9, 2021 be approved as presented."

Motion carried.

Business Arising from the Minutes: None.

Retson Drive Ditches: Additional attendees were present for discussion on this item including Kevin Harnish, Vasantha Rupasinghe, Fred Mason, Mitchell Bell, Tim Shea and Councillor Parker.

Michelle Boudreau provided a schematic overview of the infrastructure in the area, photos, as well as updates on the site visit and meeting with residents. On February 8th, residents experienced flooding on the south side of Retson Drive between Fenwood and Meadowland caused by heavy rains and ice buildup in the ditches. As a result, Staff were directed to clean out the ditches on Retson on

February 17th. During the snow removal, it was noted that some residential footing drains going into the ditch were frozen. Staff also flushed and videoed culverts along the ditch and under Retson, and no blockages or structural issues were identified.

The area in question consists of open and covered ditches, and underground storm water piping. Some of the system falls under County jurisdiction and some under Provincial jurisdiction. The final outlet for the storm system drains through a park area owned by the Village of Bible Hill, then under Pictou Road.

Michelle met with residents on site on February 25th to review conditions and drainage. From an infrastructure perspective, the ditches are doing what they are designed to do and are carrying water away from the road surfaces and eliminating pooling. The County has design specs for infrastructure which outlines driveway culverts to be sized for 1:10 storms. During the site visit of February 25th, residents expressed concern with the speed at which stormwater was being carried away from their area. They felt that flooding has been an ongoing issue for a number of years and that culverts in the area need to be upsized to accommodate runoff.

Hank Kolstee suggested that upsizing these culverts still may not alleviate flooding during winter weather events with freezing and thawing. Staff suggested that a stormwater assessment could be completed for this area but would require outside resources.

Moved by: Councillor Patton
Seconded by: Mayor Blair

“That the attendees be permitted to address the Committee and provide feedback on the Retson Drive ditches issue.”

Motion carried.

Attendees provided comments and observations related to the drainage in their area including:

- Poor drainage has been a historical issue in this area for years
- Stormwater is not being carried away from the area fast enough
- Some residents have experienced flooding in the past
- Snow is plowed into the ditch at the corner of Retson/ Meadowland and water can't reach the culverts
- Culverts are too small
- Ditches are not being cleaned out regularly by the County
- There is an issue with the driveway culvert for the vacant lot – during the February 8th rains, water was not flowing through the culvert but over the driveway causing water to backup all along Retson Drive

The Committee held further discussion on the presence of back flow preventers on footing drains, and discussed possible issues caused by existing frontage culverts (where the ditches have been filled-in and piped). Staff noted that the current grade of the ditches (7%) far exceeds the minimum required 0.5%. Water is flowing as it should as indicated by photos and videos captured by staff. The Committee considered two options:

- (1) The ditches are operating as they are designed: to collect water and eliminate any pooling on the roads, so no improvements required; or
- (2) Hire a consultant to complete a stormwater capacity study for this area.

Staff also noted that the County receives numerous stormwater calls each year, including requests to remove snow from ditches, and this is not the only area that is affected by this issue. A study could cost \$20K. Michelle will obtain quotes and bring back to the next meeting for the Committee's consideration.

Moved by: Councillor Patton
Seconded by: Mayor Blair

"That the drainage issue on Retson Drive be referred back to Staff for more information including confirmation with residents on installed backflow preventers, as well as cost estimates for a stormwater capacity assessment."

Motion carried.

New Applications: No new applications were received.

Review of Projects: The following updates were made to the project list:

Portapique Cemetery:

- Rod completed a site visit in the Fall- no new changes to report
- Will review again in the Spring
- Project cannot proceed without external funding, and may not fit the criteria for FAC projects as the area is influenced by tide

Ed Franklin:

- \$14K of work completed in 2021 with 50% funding from FRIIP
- Rod to revise scope of work to complete remaining \$60K
- Rod waiting for confirmation from NSE and DFO on status of approvals'; may need to reapply to NSE

Johnson:

- Property owner requested project to be put on hold
- Contractor has approval from NSE for quarry operations

Parker:

- Rod to apply for NSE approval

FRIIP Funding Extension Request – Franklin:

The province approved an extension to the FRIIP funding for the Franklin property.

Status of Budget:

When the Franklin project was originally discussed, the property owner was responsible to commit \$2,500 towards the project. Since then, FRIIP funding has been received for this project, so the Committee must decide whether or not cost sharing should still be requested from the property owner. In the funding application to the province, no funds from other sources were listed.

Moved by: Councillor Patton

Seconded by: Mayor Blair

“That the FRIIP funds be used to cover the entire cost of the Franklin project and that the \$2,500 cost sharing amount from the property owner be waived.”

Motion carried.

Proposed Budget Fiscal 2022/23:

Each year the Committee makes a recommendation to Council to approve a budget amount for the following fiscal year. The last number of years, the budget has remained at \$100K. Discussion was held on requesting the same amount as previous years since FRIIP funding cannot be guaranteed in future years, and with an increase in significant weather events, the Committee could see an increase in applications.

Moved by: Mayor Blair

Seconded by: Councillor Patton

“That the Flood Advisory Committee recommends that Council approve a budget of \$100,000 for the 2022/2023 year.”

Motion carried.

Status of Payments:

This list has been updated since the meeting materials were circulated. The only outstanding payment is the \$5,000 from the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board for the Exhibition Grounds Holding Pond project. All other payments have been received.

Updated Policy:

A copy of the approved Policy was circulated with the meeting package for information. The Policy was updated to include the \$2,500 cost sharing cap, to be applied to principal residences only.

New Business:

Work was completed in the Fall of 2020 on the Upham property on Gaspar Cross. The completed work has significantly improved flows in the area but with recent heavy rain events, some additional work is required as the existing culverts cannot handle these high volumes. Rod estimates the work to be approximately \$3K which would fall under the 2022/23 budget.

Moved by: Councillor Patton
Seconded by: Hank Kolstee

“That the Upham property on Gaspar Cross be added to the project list and approved for the 2022/23 year with a cost estimate of \$3,000.”

Motion carried.

The repair work to be completed on Gary Patterson’s property needs to be added back to the project list. Funds remain within the original cost estimates and work would only take one day to complete but is weather dependent.

Carl Esau provided an update on the recent flooding where the dykes were breached near the Agromart as part of the Salt Marsh project. Agriculture will continue to monitor the culverts under the railbed as well as complete repairs to a gate frame at the aboiteau near the Agromart. Carl also suggested it was too early to tell if the salt marsh project has reduced flooding in the area – the Province will continue to monitor and provide updates.

Future Meeting Dates: The next meeting will be held in Council Chambers on Wednesday, May 11, 2022 at 9am.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 10:28 am.

Crystal Deuille,
Recording Secretary