

To: Warden, Council and all Stakeholders

I write to Municipal Council on behalf of the majority of residents in the Pinehill Drive, Beech Street and Lorna Court subdivision in Elmsdale regarding stormwater issues. It is quite well known that our subdivision is one of several that suffer from stormwater issues resulting in the flooding of the streets and the properties of residents. I've been a resident of this subdivision for just over 27 years, and I can attest to the anxiety created during major weather events. The basement of my home has flooded fully twice, partially a few times and had close calls too numerous to mention. With the increasing frequency and severity of weather events brought on by climate change warming, the number of flooding incidents and "near misses" in our subdivision has also increased.

The included briefing note outlines the issues and background information while also including a brief discussion. The document ends with an options analysis, a recommendation and conclusion. I will endeavour to keep the document brief in consideration of your busy schedules, but I welcome any opportunity to discuss with any municipal worker or councillor in order to provide amplification and context to this briefing note. It is truly my hope that I will be able to convince council to authorize action to be taken to assist in mitigating stormwater flooding issues in our subdivision by working with FH Development Group to find efficiencies in the creation of stormwater infrastructure through collaboration as the development moves ahead.

Kind regards,

Dave Hooper, CD, BEng

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## **BRIEFING NOTE FOR EAST HANTS MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**

### **STORM WATER ISSUES IN THE PINEHILL DRIVE, BEECH STREET AND LORNA COURT SUBDIVISION**

#### **ISSUE**

1. For decades, this subdivision has had frequent and often destructive stormwater flooding issues, leading to loss of insurance, increased insurance premiums and anxiety for all residents.

#### **BACKGROUND**

2. The subdivision has historically been inundated with storm water during severe storm events. I've lived at 76 Pinehill Drive for just over 27 years and I can attest to the increasing frequency and severity of weather events.
3. On a near annual basis, ditches in the subdivision fill to overflowing covering roads, driveways and properties with storm water. Those flood waters also inundate sewage systems with stormwater by draining through access holes on the sides of the road and through the lift station.

#### **DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATIONS**

4. Flooding resulting from stormwater is no longer something that occurs every 5 to 10 years. While flooding of homes isn't typically an annual occurrence, flooding of ditches and driveways happens at least annually if not on multiple occasions every year.
5. While almost all insurance providers have provided repair assistance post-flooding, some providers have acted to terminate the policies of some residents due to this area being considered at "high risk" of flooding. In every case however, insurance rates have increased dramatically; almost doubling in some cases.
6. Many homeowners have installed flood mitigation measures such as sump pumps, generators, backflow valves, battery backups etc however not every homeowner has the financial means to enact all these measures.
7. I met with Margaret Miller, TIR representatives, and municipal council staff in 2018. That meeting took place in Margaret's office in Enfield. TIR and municipal representatives said that it was impossible to determine which entity could be considered "responsible" for the current situation and agreed that it is likely shared. No agreement for action was made at that meeting.
8. For most people, myself included, their home is likely all they have in terms of physical assets. Climate change is a fact and it's only going to make our situation worse over the coming years. Without intervention now, the worst-case scenario will be that this neighbourhood will become uninhabitable in the coming years whereas the best-case scenario will be that homeowners will be living here in fear of flooding without any insurance to cover their properties. Neither scenario is acceptable.

## OPTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

9. There are only so many options in dealing with stormwater flooding in this subdivision. Those options are:
  - Do nothing and allow homeowners to continue to suffer from flooding on a scale that is impossible for them to address alone with the limited resources they have
  - Municipal and provincial governments come together to design and implement infrastructure changes required to mitigate stormwater flooding **prior** to the new development
  - Municipal government works with FH Development Group to find efficiencies by collaborating with them on shared infrastructure improvements that will offset the costs of the municipal government “going it alone”
10. The option to do nothing is simply not a viable option if there is any concern for the homes of residents in this subdivision. If something is not done **before** the new development begins, it’s likely that nothing will ever be done about it when one considers the increased costs associated with stormwater mitigation **after** the developer has installed infrastructure and built homes.
11. The municipal/provincial option is simply not feasible at this time unless the development is delayed to provide time for municipal and provincial stakeholders to reach an agreement on funding and design. It is unlikely that an agreement would be reached and action taken in time for the development to proceed along a timely schedule.
12. Since the developer will install stormwater infrastructure in Phase 2, there is time for the municipal government to collaborate with the developer to augment their designs and thereby provide much needed flood relief to residents of the subdivision. There is an opportunity for the municipality to offer credits to the developer to provide the incentive to design and install augmented infrastructure resulting in no strain on the annual budget. I spoke last week with two of the engineers contracted by the developer and they indicated to me that it is absolutely possible for such a scenario to be successful.

## CONCLUSION

13. It is clear the neighbourhood of Pinehill Drive, Beech Street and Lorna Court has persistent issues with stormwater flooding.
14. In accordance with the Municipal Storm Water Drainage Policy, this current situation provides an ideal opportunity to work with a private entity to upgrade local infrastructure thereby improving the lives of residents and assist in safeguarding their life’s investment. On such a small scale, collaboration would provide infrastructure improvements and solutions while also offering the municipal government valuable experience which could be leveraged in any or all future developments.

15. I respectfully request that council give serious consideration to the opportunity that sits before it. Working with a developer to improve this infrastructure will be seen as a success story for modern municipal development. If council declines to take action on something this important to residents in this subdivision, we will continue to suffer from flooding as seen in Appendix A. Flooding will only become more frequent and more severe as climate change continues to impact weather patterns, potentially making our homes uninsurable at best and uninhabitable at worst.

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Neighbourhood Representative Address: 76 Pinehill Drive, Elmsdale NS

Date Submitted: 15 Oct 2021

Annex A: Photos of Sewage Backups in the Subdivision

**Annex A to BN**



Flooding at 74 Pinehill Drive. Flood waters were within 10 feet of the home.



Flooding on Pinehill Drive. Water was 1 foot in depth at the crest of the road.