

## **Press Release – March 23, 2017**

### **Perth-Andover Recognizes 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Devastating Flood**

#### **Introduction**

On behalf of our municipal council, I would like to thank everyone for attending today. As we are all aware, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017, is the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the most devastating flood in Perth-Andover's history.

Five years ago this morning, our community was busy evacuating -- as it has done on several occasions in the past. [As the school buses drove our students home from school that morning, the water and ice in the river behind you were at the level of this road.] Little did the community realize that this flood would be the worst in history. The 2012 flood reached a level 3 feet higher than any previous flood. Other devastating floods occurred in 1976, 1987, and 1993.

The costs to the community of the 2012 flood have been tremendous. The loss of the largest private employer and the closure of numerous businesses resulted in a loss of approximately 100 jobs in this community. Properties experienced significant damage that in many cases was not fully covered by insurance or the disaster financial assistance program. Many of the remaining property owners in the flood area still have not recovered from the financial impact and the loss of equity in their property.

The municipality has been faced with the loss of over 50 buildings that were destroyed. This has impacted our property tax base and utility revenues: for example, our water utility lost almost 9% of our unit customers. Numerous residents left the community after the event and never returned.

#### **Support**

Council would like to recognize the outstanding support our community received during and after this dramatic event. Organizations that came to our aid included our wonderful local fire department, 13 other fire departments, RCMP, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Transportation, Brunway,

Commercial Vehicle Unit, Public Safety and EMO, Red Cross, Ambulance, Samaritan's Purse, local service clubs, churches, Matt Anderson, the flood victims group, and 100's of volunteers from Canada and the United States. Our municipal staff went above and beyond the call of duty. We thank all those who helped us!

We received enormous support from provincial and federal politicians and numerous government departments. This support was shown during October 2012 when the Minister of Environment & Local Government announced a residential relocation program to allow residential property owners to be moved out of the floodplain. This program was offered to 80 residential properties and was to be the first phase of mitigation. **At this time, the community was also promised that a business flood mitigation program would be explored after the residential relocation program was completed.**

## **Studies**

Numerous studies have been undertaken in search of a solution to the problem of flooding in our village.

### Perth-Andover & Tobique First Nation Mitigation Study – August 31, 2012

Council through this study recommended that Government appoint a Working Group to pursue options for our downtown businesses:

- Raise businesses & municipal infrastructure (streets & services) AND/OR
- Businesses should be considered for a relocation program similar to the residential program

### Perth-Andover Downtown Plan – Glenn Group 2014

Village & NB Power Working Committee - explored two options

**Option A: Fixing river** – dredging, ice breaking, removing the piers (also considered widening river, berm, status quo)

**Option B: Business flood proofing or relocation**

### Perth-Andover Ice Jam Study April 2015

### Crandall Business Mitigation Study December 2016

## **Proposed Business Mitigation Program – History & Current Status**

Within 20 days of the 2012 flood, the first official request for a business relocation program was sent to the Provincial Government (on April 11, 2012). Since that time our Council and numerous business members have worked hard on this important file. It has become clear that getting businesses to higher ground may be the only **one-time solution to this long-term problem**. To accomplish this great task, the municipality requires the support of our provincial and federal governments.

## **Meetings/Meetings/Meetings – Since 2012**

Since the flood of 2012 we have had two meetings with Premier Alward, meetings with Ministers of Environment & Local Government from both governments, meetings with Wes MacLean MLA, meetings with NB Power CEO Gaetan Thomas, two meetings with Premier Gallant, meetings with Premiers' Staff, Minister of Finance, and Minister of Public Safety, meetings with Mike Allen and TJ Harvey (Members of Parliament), many public meetings with local businesses, meetings with key department senior staff, meetings with DTI Staff, and of course, numerous meetings with Andrew Harvey, our MLA.

## **Current Status**

Since December, consequent to the completion of the Crandall study, provincial staff have been working on a project charter that will hopefully design and develop a business mitigation program for Perth-Andover.

## **Statement from TJ Harvey, Member of Parliament**

I send my regrets for not being able to attend this press conference due to this being a sessional week in Ottawa.

It is very important for me to extend a warm thank you to the organizers who dedicated their time to plan this occasion marking the 5th anniversary of the devastating flood which hit Perth-Andover and area in 2012 and to ultimately

extend a thank you to all the volunteers, agencies, organizations, and government partners for the roles they played during and after the 2012 flood.

I look forward to continuing to work with the Municipality here in Perth-Andover on the efforts to mitigate future flood risk.

Thank you.

TJ Harvey

### **Andrew Harvey, MLA**

Perth-Andover Village Council would like to thank our MLA, Andrew Harvey, for his hard work on behalf of our businesses. He was instrumental in securing provincial support and federal funding for the greatly needed flood-proofing renovations at our local hospital, Hotel Dieu of St. Joseph.

**Chala Watson will now speak on behalf of Andrew Harvey before I conclude.**

### **SUMMARY**

In conclusion, flooding has been devastating in our community since the construction of the Beechwood Dam by NB Power. As our community has experienced, **sometimes** it is impossible to place hundreds of kilometers of ice and water from three dams and three rivers into 15 kilometers of narrow and wind-y sections of the Beechwood head pond.

Council would like to again thank our residents and business community for your patience and support with this important community matter. A special thank you is extended to the numerous government agencies, volunteer organizations, media, and the hundreds of volunteers who supported our community during our time of need.

We also recognize the commitment to our community shown by organizations, businesses, and individuals who have attempted to rebuild, reorganize, restore, and beautify against many obstacles.

We are requesting from the provincial and federal governments:

- 1) A financial commitment to implement the floodplain infrastructure plans developed by Crandall engineering in conjunction with the village of Perth-Andover, and
- 2) A flood mitigation program for businesses in the flood zone – a plan that includes financial assistance to flood-proof, move, or rebuild, and incentives to reinvest in our village.

Our Council is eager to work with provincial and federal governments to achieve a **one-time solution to this long-term problem.**