Hazard Tree and Utility Line Clearance Assessment for Springhill / Cumberland County Municipality

Prepared for:

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Prepared by:

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Environova Planning Group Inc. September 27, 2016
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Environova Planning Group Inc.  September 27, 2016
1.0: Introduction:

1.1: Background

I was contacted in early August by David Stuart from the Public Works Department of the Municipality of Cumberland in Springhill, Nova Scotia to see if I would be interested to conduct a hazard assessment on the town’s trees and make recommendations for possible removals or identify situations that could cause problems with the town’s infrastructure.

1.2: Assignment:

After making a proposal on August 9, 2016, we agreed to meet in Springhill on August 11, 2016 to do a preliminary investigation and look at the number of trees that might be involved in the assessment.

1.3: Limits of the Assignment:

I pointed out that my Tree Risk management work usually involves three levels of assessment. 1. Limited visual, 2. Basic, 3 Advanced. In view of the town’s budget for the tree work we decided the approach should be on a visual drive-thru approach.

1.4: Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to provide recommendations for the removal of any hazardous trees that are an immediate danger to the town’s infrastructure or a liability to public property. The report is also to include recommendations for arboriculture work on the town’s trees that will need attention in the near future and to point out adjacent trees on private property that may come into conflict with the town’s infrastructure.

2.0: Observations and Findings

2.1: Investigation

My first visit to Springhill was on August 11, 2016 where I met with David Stuart at the Springhill Service Centre which houses the Springhill Public Works Department. Mr. Stuart provided a map of the core area of the town of Springhill highlighting the streets where he felt the major tree concerns were. See Scanned copy. We spent a couple of hours driving around the town’s core area looking at trees of concern both on public and private property. After my review with Mr. Stuart, I continued my preliminary assessment and photographed a number of trees that will require priority attention. On August 23, 2016, I returned to complete my assessment work photographing trees and making notes of trees on specific civic addresses that will need to have utility line clearance work done as well to prevent future damage to the town’s infrastructure.
On September 17, 2017 after returning from our ISA-Atlantic Arborist’s AGM in Fredericton and discussions with the NS Power people, I did another review of the utility line clearance issue.
2.2: Observations

A. Hazardous Municipal trees

The following trees are in a hazardous condition and require immediate attention to avoid damages to the town’s infrastructure and public property.

Large Dead Poplar at #9 Drummond located 18 feet from the centre of the street.

Dead Maple at corner of Douglas Drive and MacDougall located 21 feet from centre of road.

Dead Silver Poplar at #30 McGee approx. 65” dia. located 27 feet from centre of the road.

Dead Spruce at 25 MacDougall St. located 31 ft. from Centre of road and 7 feet from sidewalk.

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Little Leaf Linden At 138 Main St.within town limits 18-19 feet from centre of road, has some hazardous issues but could be saved with some arboricultural procedures

Large Linden at 138 Main St. located on Municipal property.. Could be deemed a hazard if arboricultural procedures are not carried out.

Cleaning out the wound, threaded rods inserted for support, structural pruning and thinning to lighten load on house side branches. The tree should have many years of life if these procedures can be carried out.

The owner is willing to try and save the tree if the risk of the tree falling down on the house is reduced. Leaving the option open, removal or try and save.
2. Municipal trees with Utility line issues

Shown in the following pictures are trees requiring clearance attention with utility lines, primarily communication (cable and telephone) and some lower power connection lines.
Municipal trees with Utility line issues (continued)
Municipal trees with Utility line issues (continued)
Municipal trees with Utility line issues (continued)
Municipal trees with Utility line issues (continued)

Many of the trees shown in the pictures are located along Main Street, with some on McDougall St., McFarland St. and Victoria St. In general, the primary Power lines located on the upper most part of the poles are clear and were subject to some clearing work by NS Power in 2014 and 2015. Attached is a report of the spans worked received from Ross Rankine of NS Power.
3. Other trees with Potential Impact on Infrastructure

There are a number of trees located on private residential properties that will require attention to avoid possible liability situations to the municipality’s infrastructure or to adjacent neighbours. There are also several trees located on municipal right-aways that will require structural and deadwood pruning.

Dead Elm at 208 Main St. on residential property. If left, could be potential hazard to Utility lines. Red Maple to the right of it has utility line issues

Dead Poplars on McFarland St. residential properties are potential danger to municipal and private properties
3. Other trees with Potential Impact on Infrastructure

Maple in front of Recreation Centre on Main St. needs deadwood and structural pruning

Grouping of Dying Pines at 208 Victoria Upper portion pose eventual threat to utility lines in front

Large Poplars along McDougall at Civic #’s 13 & 15 require deadwood pruning and 4 dead trees on the residential property require removals
3. Other trees with Potential Impact on Infrastructure (continued)

- On the NSCC campus edge, there are 2 Maples and a Paper Birch requiring pruning.
- On Church St. Upper portion, there are number of trees that will require clearing around communication lines.
3.0: Discussion and Recommendations

A. Hazardous Trees

- Top priority should be given to the removal of the four dead trees shown on page 4 which if not dealt with represent potential liability to the municipality’s infrastructure and public and private property damage. Removal of the large Dead poplar at #9 Drummond St. should be taken care of immediately.

- The large Linden at 138 Main St. is on Municipal property requires arboricultural work to save the tree which involves structural pruning to reduce the weight load on branches leaning towards the house, insertion of threaded rods to support the tree trunk in the hollowed out area. The tree is relatively healthy, the cambium layer is rolling over the wound area nicely. With proper arboricultural techniques, the tree could live for many more years.

- The removal work for the 4 trees should be tendered out to a professional tree Care company and could include the arbor work for the Linden tree if the option is to save the true rather than remove it. In discussions with the owner Grace Dunkirk, she is willing to try and save the tree if the risk of the tree falling on to her house and the safety issue with respect to municipal and public liability is reduced.

B. Trees with Utility Line Issues

- As NS Power has reviewed line clearance issues affecting protection of their primary lines and recently completed their cyclic clearing work in 2014-2015, their further participation in doing further work is doubtful except in cases where lower secondary lines are involved. For Information regarding their further involvement contact Rob Young, the Chief Forester at NS Power 902-428-7560 (of.) or 902-456-1820 (cell).

- As noted by the pictures shown in the Utility line clearance Issues section, both the telephone and cable companies involved should be contacted to advise them of potential line clearance conflicts that could disrupt services in the near future. These utility companies may be prepared to assist in line clearance pruning to avoid future problems.
3.0: Discussion and Recommendations (continued)

C. Potential Conflicts with trees on Private and residential properties

• As shown in this section on pages 11-12, there are a number of trees located on private or residential trees that pose as a liability to neighbouring properties and possibly to municipal infrastructure. These homeowners at the particular civic numbers identified should be notified about their responsibilities to remove their dead or dying trees and have structural or deadwood pruning carried out to avoid possible liability problems.

• Some of this work required in the private sector could be carried out by the Arboricultural contractor who is awarded the tree removal work recommended. There are also several municipal trees requiring structural and deadwood pruning on Main Street by the Recreation Centre and the NSCC campus which could be included in the tree work tender for the removals.

4.0: Conclusions:

• Based on the condition of the 4 dead and dying trees described on page 4 under Hazardous Municipal trees, the trees located at Drummond, McGee, and MacDougall should be removed immediately to avoid the possibility of damage to municipal infrastructure and to public or private property.

• In my opinion, the large Linden at 138 Main Street situated on Municipal property should be saved with the arboricultural practices described. The tree has potential for providing shade and beauty to the home owner for a number of years.

• The municipality should advise the private homeowners of their duty to practice due diligence in the case of their responsibilities to remove their dead and dying trees and have deadwood and structural pruning carried out to avoid potential liability to other private property or municipal infrastructure.
5.0: Qualifications of the Appraiser and Disinterested Party Statement

5.1 Certification:

I certify that all of the statements made in this report are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and are made in good faith. I have no personal interest or bias with respect to the subject matter of this assessment report or the parties involved.

5.2 Disinterested Party Statement

I also certify that I have no present or contemplated interest in the property inspected and that neither the employment to make this assessment nor the compensation for it is contingent upon the recommendations in this report.

Stan Kochanoff, MCIP, LPP, RCA #427
Registered ASCA Consulting and ISA Certified Arborist, Licensed Professional Planner