

**From:** Peter Moore  
**To:** [Jim Ivey](#)  
**Cc:** Keith Aucoin; Jennifer Moore; Hennessey, Alicia; Heather Brown; [Laurie Murley](#); Amanda Dunfield; jeff dunfield; [Abraham Zebian](#); [Mark Phillips](#); [PublicOnlyCouncilEmail](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Information from or for the Buy Out Input on Possible Program  
**Date:** July 15, 2024 9:35:26 AM

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### **Caution [External Email]**

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Good morning Jim,

It is with some regret that I am compelled to respond to your request in the following manner. Simply because you have been and remain the singular proactive compassionate voice of reason, one of which the Municipality as a whole has avoided following [your leadership] these 3 long years.

I have two points:

1. I do not think it is by design, on your part, however you [as others I believe consciously have decided] have failed to address the 'elephant in the room' as to why discussions regarding a buyout have moved to the fore; and of which would logically form the premise, basis and framework of a 'buyout package' for residents, suffering repeated property and home flooding, the direct result of storm-SEWER water overflow. The elephant:

- The court of public opinion has weighed and measured the multitudes of available information to draw the following conclusion: West Hants Regional Municipality has failed and continues to fail the residents in the area known as the Windsor Flood Zone, and specifically, south Stannus Street. They have failed in their legal responsibility to safeguard the surrounding area, street[s], residential properties and homes from repeated flooding and its effects. The result of this ongoing negligence has resulted in repeated financial loss, accelerated deterioration of building structural integrity, acute emotional trauma and the heightened health risks due to ongoing exposure to gases & toxins found in CSO's. By their own admittance, and long since known to multiple governing bodies, the cause of the repeated flooding is both a combined and undersized storm sewer system.
- The current plea from citizens is entering its 4th year, and as yet not one-single-thing has been done to STOP THE FLOODING and/ or SAFEGUARD citizens their properties and homes, let alone plan/ enact emergency measures during 17 water over curb weather events. Therefore said inaction leads to the logical conclusion - WHRM having had (more) than a reasonable amount of time to act to fix a known situation, for which they are legally responsible, has simply not had intention to even try to rectify the situation with an immediate actionable situation.
- Further to this, it can be convincingly demonstrated, had this awareness and discussion not been initiated and sustained by the residents of South Stannus, BY NECESSITY [and Mother Nature], governance and operational leadership would not have willingly or proactively moved to address this crisis.

- Also, WHRM, by inference and/ or by direct comment, on record, has singularly been focused on these three points, 1] not to do anything that would set a precedence, 2] not to admit [legal] responsibility and negating same, 3] hide behind hypothetical cost factors, which have grown from 20 million to 200 million [implying it would cost 1/5 of a billion dollars to stop flooding on South Stannus], without ANY supporting documentation [cost based or engineering based] in these 3 years - therefore clearly demonstrating citizen concern and care has never been their priority.

2. Not included in your email, yet seems to be a [new] key point of discussion, regarding buyout options, was the mayor telling one of the South Stannus homeowners [mid-crisis], that the buyout number now on the table is \$500,000+, that he said he would like to have something to us in writing within two weeks, and they would be looking at paying all moving expenses.

At this time, and unless the Municipality is willing to acknowledge the above points, I do not see your reasoning for having another meeting to discuss 'option' content. It would seem the Municipality should first do its own due diligence, then get its ducks in a row, FULLY REALIZING THE SERIOUSNESS OF ITS POSITION and fully understanding our [individual] situations in relation to this position. Meaning, understanding the complete context of what a buyout, through no fault of our own, would imply for each of us, BEFORE setting out examples of other's buyout options, from differing geographies, circumstances and forms of governance, in what I am sure could easily be discarded as having no-thing in common with our reality, save the word 'flood'.

One more point. In these 3 years we [as you] have documented 17 water over curb weather events; 3 of these extreme. Doing the math, in three years 17.6% of these events are classified as 1 in 100 year storms, or greater... in 3 years!!!

Peter J Moore

On Sun, Jul 14, 2024 at 9:33 PM Jim Ivey <[jivey@westhants.ca](mailto:jivey@westhants.ca)> wrote:

Hello Everyone,

I apologise for the lateness of this note. It has a couple of purposes:

1. Schedule a date in the short-term for a future meeting discussion on what a buy-out plan might look like if it were to be considered.
2. Gather some initial information in the next 24 hours before the meeting such that Laurie and I can frame the discussion we would seek to have.

Meeting Date: We would like to tentatively book a meeting date for this Tuesday July 16 6PM at the **100 King Street** Office.

We will confirm its availability back to you assuming enough of you are able or interested to meet.

In advance of that we'd like to get a sense of your thoughts since we last met (2 months ago). Since then, (last Tuesday's Committee meeting) in which we received the report from the staff (attached), seeking clarity of direction, and as you are painfully aware, we've had more

storm and combined sewer events in the last 6 weeks, with the greatest event of concern occurring last Thursday.

Some of the areas where staff are seeking direction will involve input from both Council and you as the residents suffering in the area.

The questions below (which have been pulled from the initial report) are intended to help guide us through your input on these areas. Your replies may be similar or completely different, and nothing is carved in stone. We just need to get a sense of things from you.

The timing is important (as you know only too well), to get a potential initiative moving for you and for us to get feedback, back to Council and staff.

Thank you for your help with this. If you can get back to us as best you can by Monday night, it would be helpful. If you reply to Laurie and I we can aggregate the information as best we can.

**Program's Intent:** (Any of us all may feel differently about this)

1. To allow residents the choice to leave the Stannus area (Yes No Other)

**Potential Outcomes or Result of a Buyout for Residents and Municipality**

- (a) Allow creation of more open green space. (Yes No Other)
- (b) Increase the flood storage capacity of the area (Yes No Other)
- (c) Mitigation of the number of properties impacted by storm water during extreme weather events resulting in CSOs. (Yes No Other)

**Method of Implementation – How to best Coordinate**

1. One property at a time (Yes No Other)
2. Collectively as a group (Yes No Other)
3. Geographic locations where buyouts would be considered (Yes No Other)
4. What constitutes a home/house impacted by a over the curb Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) event. Can you briefly describe what you feel would be the

threshold?

5. What would you consider the best means of information that would demonstrate that the homes have been impacted by an over the curb CSO event?
6. It was suggested in the staff report that at this point, the program would solely be looking at the purchase of residential properties and a relocation program would not be included. Can you share your thoughts on this?

### **Market Value of Property**

This will require your thought and input. As noted in the report there are different models that have been shared as done elsewhere.

As an example it identified that the City of Gatineau, Quebec identified houses that were targeted for a buyout with a capped amount of \$200,000 and an additional \$50,000 for the value of the land.

Additionally in the city of High River, Alberta. residential homeowners within the designated area were eligible to receive compensation equal to their most recent municipal tax assessment value in exchange for vacating their homes. Only primary residences were eligible for the program, and the government did not intend to allow any rebuilding on the vacated lots. Those who declined the buyout and opted instead to receive financial disaster assistance forfeited eligibility to receive additional assistance in the event of future over the curb CSO flooding impacting their homes.

Those are just two examples to give you an idea of what has been done elsewhere.

The additional information noted below reflects consideration that will possibly be considered by Council and Staff that we can discuss when meeting. Given the experiences you have all had, we would greatly value any of your thoughts or comments on any of these items

### **Geographic Location**

A clearly defined map from the WHRM Planning Department identifying properties eligible to be considered for a buyout option that may be eligible for a possible program.

### **Homeowner Eligibility**

Eligibility requirements that could be considered may include:

- 1) The home is identified in the mapped Combined Sewer Overflow Flood area within

WHRM;

- 2) Eligibility for existing residential construction that has not been built within the past 5 years;
- 3) The homeowner is in good standing with respect to all municipal taxes, rates, charges or any liens;
- 4) That CSO flooding is over the curb, specifically impacting homes confirmed by WHRM Public Works and/or past insurance claims, not land such as fields, lawns, etc.
- 5) Homeowners are not eligible to receive a property buyout and assistance from the Home Flood Protection Pilot Program and the Switch West Hants Program.

### **Associated Costs**

1. An appraisal of the property. Typically, appraisals can range in cost from \$4000-\$6500 per property.
2. A Hazard Assessment that identifies any health or safety risks associated with hazardous materials found within the home or on the property.
3. Realtor fees associated with the purchase process.
4. WHRM legal fees.
5. Demolition costs including hazardous material disposal.
6. Site remediation and earthworks
7. Tax revenue loss consideration
8. Ongoing maintenance and repairs costs associated with vacant lands.

Thank you all. We look forward to hearing back from you.

Jim and Laurie