

Pre-Budget Consultation 2012

Presentation to the Town of Clarendville

Thank you for this opportunity to give my input to the Town. These recommendations are not so much budget recommendations as they are investment recommendations – investing in our staff, our infrastructure and our people. We have a great town here, and I believe we can make it even better – now and into the future.

*Paul Tilley
October 2012*

Council Recommendations

Increasing Revenues– Building on Place, Capturing Potential

Poll Tax

Regardless of the values allocated by the municipal assessment, the Town ultimately decides the rate that determines how much tax is collected. Regardless of Council's decision on the rate, I feel that any adjustments to the tax burden should also be reflected in Poll taxes and Minimum taxes as well to more equitably share the tax burden.

Property Tax & Business Tax

Efforts that I propose below are neither substantial nor radical; however taken together; these suggestions will contribute to making the town more attractive for businesses and young families. Although there is an elder focus to the "Age Friendly" initiative, I prefer to think of age friendly in a much broader context – people friendly. I feel (I Know) the future success of our town, rests with our ability now to attract and retain young, highly skilled people who will build on the success of the people who have worked so hard to make this town what it has become. To do this, Clarendville needs to modernize its processes and procedures on par with the communities that it competes with. More people and more business will be attracted with this approach, positively impacting the Town's bottom line.

Increasing Efficiencies through Investment

Clarendville has seen unprecedented growth in the past 2 decades. The existing town based systems that may have worked adequately in the 70's and 80's are now failing us. Although we have stabbed at integrating modern and proactive strategies they have largely fallen short because we simply do not have the ability to manage them. Take for example the citizen-led Strategic Plan the Council adopted in 2008 and the Municipal plan adopted last year. In theory, these documents are designed to ensure that growth is managed and that the natural beauty of our town – the stuff that is truly valuable – is preserved.

The reality has been different. Growth has overtaken us everywhere we turn. Growth however is not the problem; rather it is our inability to manage the growth that is causing the trouble. The time has come to make the needed investments in people and policies.

Investments in Staff:

1. Hire an Engineer Planner / Contract a Planner (\$100,000)

This Council and the previous council have acknowledged the need for a better managed approach to development. The Town needs a planner with engineering background to guide the vast array of projects that are underway. We have the guidelines in place but there are paper tigers without a better degree of Town supervision to ensure that the regulations are followed. A professional planner will not be cheap, but compare that with the cost of continued chaotic type development that is now more the norm than the exception. In the near term this problem needs to be addressed immediately by contracting a planner; however the goal needs to be to get a person on staff.

2) A stronger commitment to staff training (<\$30,000)

The Council needs to evaluate its goals relative to the skills of its current staff. Where gaps exist there needs to be provisions put in place to narrow the gap. This could include training, hiring or early retirements. By training and appropriate hiring, we could improve the ability of Council staff, improve citizen service and, most importantly, reduce staff stress levels. Of course, I am not familiar with all the things that staff does, but I do know that Social Media training and software training are things that should be on any list. As for trainers, there are plenty of talented people in this town with the necessary skills – most (me included) will be all to glad to help if asked.

3) Municipal Enforcement (\$40,000)

Clarendville has a host of rules on its books that, on paper at least, speak to the progressive intentions of our town. It's the kind of regulations that speaks loudly to younger families. No smoking on Town properties, appropriate signage, and subdivision development regulations are

just a few examples. Unfortunately, without public education and enforcement rules ring hollow and add to public cynicism. Today I see smoking on town property, on-sidewalk parking, illegal signs, and industrial vehicles in neighbourhoods everywhere – this is making a mockery of our rules. On balance our town has had a positive experience when we had enforcement and now without it we are seeing the difference – we’re closer to an LSD than a Town when it comes to rules – and that makes the case for taxation that much more challenging. We need to invest in education and enforcement. A municipal official responsible for these two prongs would add value to the Town.

Investments in Systems:

1. A 3-1-1 system Telephone/web Job Order System(\$20,000)

It may have worked okay 30 years ago, but getting Town assistance by calling the Mayor or Councillors out of bed when an incident occurs during the night is no longer a suitable approach for a modern town. As we have grown and as experience has shown, situations occur time-to-time, day and night, where citizens need to contact the town in order to address a situation. As we witnessed many times over the past few years, if a water line breaks overnight, few people would have any idea who to call – while time is important. The non-emergency telephone number 3-1-1 exists in larger municipalities in Canada and the United States. Dialing this single number would allow a resident to obtain important non-emergency services through a central, all-purpose phone number quickly and effectively.

The implementation for Clarendville could be relatively simple. We can either contract the existing 24/7 fire call service or we can contract a call centre to take the calls. The Call information would then be documented and routed to the contact assigned for that night/day.

We could also set up a Clarendville311 email / website / twitter address, so people can contact the town in more ways than phone.

For the system to work effectively, the system number needs to be well communicated. Significant effort needs to be put here.

2. Clarendville Traffic Study (\$30,000)

Deputy Mayor Fraser Russell was right to raise the issue of (better managing) traffic flow on Manitoba Drive. Roads & traffic problems have become a perennial issue in Clarendville – Overpasses and Manitoba Drive this year, Huntley Drive last year, before that it was Balbo Drive and on it goes. As a progressive town, we need to address the issue of growth and the associated growth in traffic with a study that will provide evidence based information for long term planning.

A properly conducted traffic study could and would help to quantify the traffic issues and provide solid evidence to support a particular course of action. Such objective evidence would be critically important in helping to convince government funders that we have a problem that needs addressing.

Once we have the traffic study completed, Clarendville will be in a much better position to plan and prioritize our roads spending and we'll be in a much better position to lobby the Federal and the Provincial government to help us.

Investments in Infrastructure & Equipment

3. **Trail Lights and Barricades.** Install two streetlights above the paved trail between CEC and the Middle School Gym. There are a lot of people moving back and forth between the CMS gym and the events centre. The paved trail is a wonderful addition to the link however because it is unlit it is dangerous. A couple of streetlights on each end would make that well used pathway safer. A more suitable barricade (imbedded removable posts) is also needed. (\$1,000 + ongoing costs of lights)
4. **Town Signage:** Install new Entrance signs for Clarenville. Ensure the location of the west sign is visible on the NL Highway traffic camera. Move the East sign location to Naked Man area. **KEY:** Light these signs – Solar may be an option (\$8,000)

5. Highway lookout / Entrances to Clarenville (\$4,000)

The Naked Man highway look off could give a great view of Clarenville, however in recent years brush has built up obstructing the view. We could harness maximum potential of the site if we allow people to capture a more impressive view. Work needs to be done (with Rotary as a partner?) to trim the trees and clean the area up. Some signage that describes Clarenville and invites people in would certainly be a progressive move as well. As well, if we placed the WELCOME TO CLARENVILLE sign prior to that look off it might help drive more traffic into our town.



6. **Large Print Street Signage:** Purchase and install large size road signage for major Roads (Manitoba, Marine, Memorial, Shoal Harbour, & Balbo). Install on the arms of traffic lights at Manitoba/Memorial, Manitoba/SHDrive, as well as the eastern & western intersection of Marine/Memorial/Balbo. By adding 9 inch letter signs on our major thoroughfares we would make navigation around town much simpler. A side benefit would be to point people to our key business districts. (These signs are roughly twice the

cost of traditional signs – but considering the number we would install the cost is immaterial for the benefit) (\$1,000)



7. **Replace the "Shoal Harbour" "Clareville" signs with signs capped with the Clareville logo.** In support a “One community philosophy” while recognizing our past, and in an effort to improve directional signage – here’s an example of a possible sign format. (\$500)



8. **Television Monitors in Events Centre** (Partner with White Hills and Winter Games Committee) – Lobby and above track area. These monitors could broadcast Town announcements, promote the Town’s website, cross market with White Hills and announce events. These monitors could be connected to a computer feed/PowerPoint show. (I would gladly offer to do training) (\$2,000)
9. **Sliding Hill:** One of the things Clareville does not have in the town is a community sliding hill (there is however, a great sliding hill at White Hills, just above the Lee Churchill Chalet). The gentle (safe) slope that falls from the School Ball field to the new Age Friendly park would make a great sliding spot is some of the trees were removed in time for winter – it’s an opportunity to build community. (\$300)



10. **Speed Sign:** In the trade they are called Vehicle Management Systems. I call them a good idea.

The Town of Gander has recently purchased this sign. It's portable and it can serve a number of roles including making people aware of just how fast they are driving (it has a speed radar). It's particularly good for those drivers who insist in driving through our town at rate of speed that shows little regard for live (you, me and our children) and Newton's laws of physics. The fact that they work so well as a proactive driver education tool, coupled with the fact that they can serve many purposes including communicating key traffic or event messages (Targa Day: ROAD CLOSED, Clarenville Day: FIREWORKS TONIGHT, or CONGRATULATIONS CARIBOUS) means that such a sign could be a good investment for Clarenville that might just help save a live or two. (\$19,000)



11. **New Directional Signs.** Remove obsolete directional signs around town. Replace with more clear (lettering on white background) and attractive "finger board" signs pointing to Town amenities. These would be place on 1) Eastern intersection of Marine/Memorial 2) Intersection of Balbo/Harbour Drive 3) Intersection of Manitoba/Memorial and intersection of Manitoba/SH Drive. The sign could be topped with the Clarenville Logo and each removable fingerboard would contain a single item / logos. **QR codes:** Almost everyone has a smart phone (Ipad's too). By embedding QR (Qick Response) Codes on

some of these signs it will allow people to access the relevant information. For example if, you 'read' the QR code on this sign with your smart phone it would direct you to the White hills website. Although it may sound complicated, it is a simple as taking a picture with your phone – but it delivers a vast amount of information to the reader. (\$5,000)



12. **Trail on Shoal Harbour Drive – phase 1.** Walking along Shoal Harbour drive is dangerous. BUT many people do it and there is a ready trail already in place that could, with some work, help keep pedestrians safe. It would be easy and relatively inexpensive to create a trail along side of the road for bikers and pedestrians. Class A would be sufficient to start, however as budgets permit a 8ft paved strip could add a lot of value to Clarenville. (\$30,000)



13. **Pave a 5 meter leader in all intersections of the Trail way** and Town roads. Notice how many rocks are ending up in the roads at these intersections. This poses a hazard to tires and affects people's ability to stop. A paved leader would also more clearly indicate to people using the trail way that they are at an intersection. (\$4,000/cost share with Province)
14. **Duck House:** This past year, Council has spent a lot of time talking about the duck problem on the Shoal harbour Causeway. With the new benches that have been installed on the trail, it may be an idea to build a floating Duck House in the inner harbour that would attract the ducks, keep them away from the main road and provide people with an opportunity and a reason to sit on the new benches to feed the ducks. **(\$500)**



15. **No Smoking & blue line** – the smoking situation around Town properties has gotten out of hand. Aside from enforcement there needs to be a blue line and NO SMOKING signage painted on the sidewalk/entrance/post- ways to town facilities. (\$300)



16. **Hardwoods Dam Pond Protection** - This is Shoal Harbour Dam Pond on the Bare Mountain Trail and just below the water tower. Most people don't even know it exists but is one of the prettiest spots in Clarendville. Development is encroaching on it and it should be protected before houses start going up around it, or worse it gets filled in. (\$0)



17. **Develop Pleasant Street – Town Hall / Fire Hall Expansion** (\$0) The Town should acquire the land that stretches up Pleasant Street from the Town Hall to the College campus (current this land is owned the province). This land could then be developed (by a private developer) to allow for 1) expansion of the town hall, 2) opening up the trail space behind 3) potentially create a meeting amphitheatre space & 4) make the campus more visible

18. Shoal Harbour Drive River Overlook

The town beautifies the area around the former Butler's Store on Cormack drive over 20 years ago. That work has contributed to emphasising the natural beauty in the town. Now that the Shoal Harbour Causeway walk has become so popular and the area so scenic it is time to build a patio deck structure (similar to the one on Cormack Drive) at the location pictured below (\$5,000).



19. Post / publish Annual Report

One of the things that could help in civic engagement and reflect on each year's accomplishments and well as outline goals would be an on-line Annual Report. The Town would benefit in showing people what their tax money is doing for them. Currently the town does not publish its financial statements – this would facilitate this as well as help explain (\$2,000)

Investment in our People

20. Affordable Housing/food bank/corner brook example (\$10,000)

Because Clarendville is growing at such a rapid rate, there are people being displaced, or indeed left behind, by the development boom. People at the middle & lower end of the economic spectrum are being increasingly financially stressed in providing themselves and their families the very basic of needs - adequate housing. This is a great problem - recognized in the town. An organization known as REACH (Regional Action Committee on Housing) has been formed to help address this issue and the group's housing support worker, Tracey Coady spelled out the gravity of the issue at the Hebron Hearings held here before Christmas. At the hearings she noted:

“Since starting this position in June, I've had to help almost 30 people with their housing needs. That is not to say that I found housing for all 30 because, unfortunately, I have not been that lucky. I have been able to secure new housing for nine of these individuals. For some of the others, I was able to help them sustain the places that they were already living in by preventing eviction, working with landlords to help resolve issues with rental arrears, talking landlords into going and cleaning up the mold that was in the apartments so that the tenant can stay there without suffering the health problems that they are currently experiencing, things of that nature. But, however, there are still currently another 16 individuals on my caseload who are in desperate need of affordable housing and more on the way. I actually have four referrals right now I'm waiting to get appointments to see these people, so that will be 20 more looking for housing.

Since the announcement of the Hebron Project, the rent prices in Clarendville and surrounding areas have pretty much gone through the roof. We understand that nearly 3,000 workers will be employed at the Bull Arm Site. While most of these workers will be housing at the on-site camp, it is anticipated that a significant number of new residents to the Clarendville/Arnold's Cove area will seek accommodations in these nearby communities. The anticipation of this influx of new renters is having a dramatic, negative effect on the community.

(See <http://hebronpublicreview.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Nov-24-2011-Transcript-on-Web1.pdf> p.63)

A Role for the Town of Clarendville?

The Town's municipal plan clearly spells out a role of the Town. Corner Brook has the workings of a potential model for Clarendville. That city provides non-profit organization's who are involved in developing affordable housing tax relief (see below)....if the Town of Clarendville sees a role for itself, this may be an idea worth pursuing here.



CITY OF CORNER BROOK

Policy Statement

Index	Finance and Administration	Section	Taxation
Title	Affordable Housing	Policy Number	11-08-10 Authority Council
Approval Date	May 2, 2011	Effective Date	May 2, 2011 Revision Date

Policy Statement:

The City of Corner Brook supports affordable housing for residents of the City. The City will provide tax relief to registered non-profit organizations operating affordable housing.

Reference:

Approval: 11-147 (May 2, 2011)
CPS11-27 (April 25, 2011)

Detailed Action Required:

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the non-profit organization/developer/proponent to:

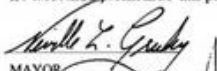

- submit a request for tax relief;
- ensure that the affordable housing will be operated by a non-profit organization

General Information

Registered non-profit organizations/proponents/developers can discuss with City Staff whether or not their project would fall into the category of "Affordable Housing" prior to beginning a development/project.

The term affordable housing is generally used to describe housing units where rental cost is considered to be realistic for those with an average income. The City shall require registered non-profit organization proponents to set their rent either at or below the housing approved maximum rental rate for affordable rental units. These rates are established annually by NLHC who obtain their maximum monthly rental rates from CMHC benchmark data.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF this policy is sealed with the Common Seal of the City of Corner Brook.


MAYOR

CITY CLERK

21. The Social Media Tool Ask people to volunteer their assistance (\$00000)

Social media is a tool that has huge potential. The Town's Facebook, and more importantly, its Twitter presence could be leveraged so much more than it currently is. It's true that some dismiss it, but remember my focus throughout has been on Economic Development to attract and retain a new generation; these are the folks who get social media and the town needs to as well. By harnessing Social media we could get more people involved in the town – there are lots of volunteers waiting to be asked – it's a great way to ask.

Thank You

Check out the OUR TOWN blog for more commentary on the Town.

www.ourtownclareville.blogspot.ca