

MUNICIPAL VOICE

The magazine for the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities

FALL 2017

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Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities

The Collective Voice of
Nova Scotia Municipalities

The UNSM is a not-for-profit organization mandated to represent the provincial interests of municipal governments across Nova Scotia. Total membership is 379 elected officials representing all 50 municipalities.

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Attention All Land Owners!

Do You Know Where Your Property Boundaries Are?

Contributed by Fred C. Hutchinson, BA, NSLS, CLS, QP Executive Director, Nova Scotia Land Surveyors

“Somewhere over there” is not the best answer to the question, but a common reply. Property values used to be measured by the acre, but in recent years they’ve been measured by the square foot/metre and decimals thereof. Landowners have always been desirous of knowing the limits of their property, and it seems that it has become more of a concern as lots become smaller and houses get bigger.

Nova Scotia was carved up by a patchwork of Crown grants, township surveys, road networks and subdivisions. One needs only to look down at the landscape from an aircraft to see the fruits of the land surveyors’ labours; an interesting mosaic of human occupation indeed. The federal and provincial governments are both owners of large real-estate holdings such as parks, airports, highways and property containing public buildings. Local municipalities are also land owners responsible for much the same, but on a smaller scale and having much more contact with their constituency.

Governments at all levels need to know the property limits of their real-estate holdings, with proper title documents and survey plans recorded in the land registry offices. As the custodian of public property, governments and their elected officials have a greater re-

sponsibility than that of a private landowner, since the land is held in trust for present and future generations. All municipalities need to know where their boundaries meet with those of the taxpayer. Pavement, curbs, sidewalks, utility poles and underground infrastructure all need to be contained within the limits of the street corridor. A professional survey and documented plan of a street also provides a great benefit to the adjacent landowners when these properties need a survey. Such surveys could be a requirement for a subdivision/consolidation of parcels for development, or to clarify local ownership.

Municipalities sometimes contract work to establish street lines or public properties, or have qualified staff to perform such. Halifax Regional Municipality, under the former cities of Halifax and Dartmouth, had a policy of surveying streets to establish the extent of their title. In the case of Dartmouth, street line surveys were conducted 100 years ago. This information was and still is made available to the survey professionals when requested or as documented in the Land Registry.

At no time in history has the public been more aware of location than today. Technology has empowered

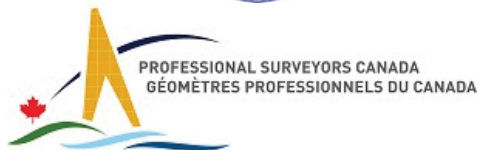
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the person on the street to know their location, the place they wish to visit and how to get there, along with worldwide communication. The professional land surveyor has been on the forefront of technology in measurement sensitive activities, including locating property boundaries, positioning offshore oil platforms, hydrographic charting, road and bridge construction, high-rise buildings and topographic mapping. All that with a present-day workforce of less than 3000 licenced professionals in Canada AND having a statutory mandate to serve and protect the public interest, while preserving the integrity of the profession.

The industry has developed throughout the years from using knotted ropes in Ancient Egypt, to the 66-foot chain to measure provincial land grants, to satellite tracking technology to obtain centimetre accuracy on the ground. The Nova Scotia land surveyor of today is a member of the Association of Nova Scotia Land Surveyors, a self-governing association founded in 1951 and established under provincial statute.

Consult a professional land surveyor and know where you stand.



*Fred C. Hutchinson, BA, NSLS, CLS, QP is a professional land surveyor with 48 years of experience in both the public and private sector. He has been the executive director for the Association of Nova Scotia Land Surveyors since 1999, and is also a director and treasurer for Professional Surveyors Canada
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