



**NORTH WEST COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES
October 26, 2015**

PRESENT: Councillor Steve Craig, Chair
Councillor Matt Whitman, Vice-Chair
Councillor Brad Johns
Councillor Tim Outhit

REGRETS: Councillor Barry Dalrymple

STAFF: Mr. Liam MacSween, Legislative Assistant

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to Community Council are available online: <http://www.halifax.ca/Commcoun/central/151026nwcc-agenda.php>

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m., and adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Councillor Steve Craig, Chair called the meeting to order at the Sackville Heights Community Centre 45 Connolly Road, Middle Sackville.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 21, 2015

MOVED by Councillor Whitman, seconded by Councillor Johns

THAT the minutes of September 21, 2015 be approved as circulated.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

Additions:

Councillor Outhit requested that Information Item Number One - Memorandum from the Director of Planning & Development dated October 14, 2015 re: Bedford West Seasonal Water Quality Reports, Spring & Summer 2015 be placed on the agenda for a brief presentation from staff.

Councillor Johns indicated that he would need to excuse himself from the remainder of the meeting at 7:30 p.m. due to a prior commitment at another community engagement.

MOVED by Councillor Whitman, seconded by Councillor Outhit

THAT the agenda be approved as amended.

Two-third majority vote required.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

5. MOTIONS OF RECONSIDERATION – NONE

6. MOTIONS OF RESCISSION – NONE

7. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

8. HEARINGS

8.1 PUBLIC HEARINGS – NONE

8.2 VARIANCE APPEAL HEARINGS – NONE

9. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

9.1 Correspondence – NONE

9.2 Petitions

9.3 Presentation

9.3.1 2016-2017 Budget Consultation – Staff Presentation

The following documentation was before North West Community Council:

- A presentation dated October 26, 2015

Councillor Steve Craig, Chair advised that the staff presentation will be followed by a public participation component. He noted that members of the public will be given five minutes to address North West Community Council with comments and questions which relate to the budget and budget process. He invited Ms. Barb Wilson, Budget Coordinator to present on the 2016-17 Budget Consultation process.

Ms. Wilson Barb Wilson, Budget Coordinator gave a presentation with respect to the 2016-2017 Budget Consultation. Councillor Craig thanked Ms. Wilson for her presentation and invited members of the public to speak on budget consultation process.

Mr. Walter Reagan, of the Sackville Rivers Association inquired about the potential impact of increasing property taxes by 10% with the intent of paying down debt. He further noted that HRM should consider increases to Lot Service Charges in the amount of \$50,000 per new lot to decrease expenses. He requested further information with respect to the relationship between Halifax Water and the Halifax Regional Municipality, particularly with respect to how financial statements from each organization are presented to Revenue Canada. Mr. Regan requested further information regarding HRM's vacancy management practices and inquired if more resources can be allocated for recreation trail construction, urban tree planting, RCMP services, flood plain mapping and watershed management.

Councillor Craig thanked Mr. Regan for his comments and noted that Halifax Regional Council is responsible for providing direction on how funds are allocated based on the recommendations and analysis of staff. He advised that his comments will be shared with staff.

Mr. Brian Murray, of Hammonds Plains provided commentary with respect to the residential property tax comparisons with other jurisdictions. He inquired if the average property tax assessment used in the comparisons with other municipalities includes utility charges. Mr. Murray requested further information respecting HRM's debt management planning.

Mr. Wilson advised that other municipalities include costing for utility charges and differing levels of service within tax assessments.

Councillor Craig thanked Mr. Murray for his comments and advised that members of Council start budget discussions with working assumptions brought forward by staff and set a tax rate based on that information. He further noted that Council is interested in obtaining the most accurate comparisons with other jurisdictions as possible.

Mr. Shane O'Neil, of Lower Sackville, requested further information with respect to cost sharing between HRM and Halifax Regional Municipality. He inquired if HRM is responsible for covering debt incurred by Halifax Water.

Councillor Craig thanked Mr. O'Neil for his comments and advised that there is a working group between Halifax Water and HRM to coordinate major projects so they take place at the same time. He noted that if there are situations where there is to be cost sharing between the two entities, letters of agreement are drafted and the matters are brought before Halifax Regional Council for consideration.

Councillor Craig further advised that Halifax Regional Water Commission is separate entity. He commented that all debt plans undertaken by the Halifax Regional Water Commission are subject to the approval of the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board. He advised that the Halifax Water Commission cannot take on debt that it cannot service.

Councillor Outhit explained that the Halifax Regional Municipality acts only as a guarantor for Halifax Water.

Councillor Johns left the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

9.3.2 Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) re: A Small Business Vision for Halifax

The following documentation was before North West Community Council:

- A presentation dated October 26, 2015

Mr. Nick Langley, Director of Provincial Affairs, Nova Scotia Canadian Federation of Independent Business provided a presentation regarding A Small Business Vision for Halifax.

Councillor Craig thanked Mr. Langley for his presentation and requested questions of clarification from members of North West Community Council.

Councillor Outhit inquired as to how the CNIB determines what a small business is and potential eligibility to join the organization.

Mr. Langley advised that the CNIB defines small and medium size businesses as those which are comprised of less than 215 employees. He commented that the CNIB utilizes the same standard as Industry Canada in that regard and advised that 75% of the CNIB's membership is comprised of businesses which have less than twenty employees.

In response to a question from Councillor Whitman, Mr. Langley commented that the City of Saskatoon implemented a five year plan to get to address the gap in commercial and residential taxation. He advised that most of the other Maritime Provinces are currently on par with Nova Scotia in terms of the disparity between residential and commercial tax rates. He further commented that a number of economists have pointed to municipal expenditure control as a matter of mitigation in this regard as opposed to increasing residential tax rates.

Councillor Craig provided commentary with respect to residential and commercial taxation. He advised that there is not an easy answer to address the many challenges faced by business owners. He advised that regulation is essential but noted that there must be a relevant range in terms of the "red tape" which is involved.

Mr. Langley provided commentary with respect to the necessity of regulation and noted his opinion that "red tape" can be mitigated. He provided several examples such as the creation of a red tape advisory panel, the creation of a Chief Regulatory Officer to monitor and manage regulatory and red tape issues for the municipality, the creation of a plain language policy for regulations and by-laws for better adherence as possible measures to assist small businesses to operate within the regulatory framework.

Further discussion ensued with Councillor Craig thanking Mr. Langley for his presentation.

10. REPORTS

10.1 STAFF – NONE

11. MOTIONS – NONE

12. IN CAMERA – NONE

13. ADDED ITEMS

13.1 Information Item No. 1 – Information Report re: Bedford West Season Water Quality Reports, Spring & Summer 2015

Mr. Cameron Deacoff, Environmental Performance Officer, provided a brief overview of the information report dated October 14, 2015. He advised that the report presents the summary of three monitoring

events which took place over the spring and summer. He commented that the report monitors eleven different stations in Kearney Lake, Papermill Lake and their associated tributaries and advised that all locations, at the end of the monitoring cycle showed exceedance of phosphorous thresholds. He advised that the data suggests that there are ongoing issues in this regard that are not entirely consistent. He stated that staff is currently working on a plan to address the results and will obtain access to information collected from the province particularly data on construction activities taking place in the area. He further commented that staff is looking to obtain independent professional advice to assist in mitigating phosphorous levels in the area.

Councillor Outhit commented that the increased phosphorous levels are a cause of concern to the community. He inquired if staff is drawing any conclusions as to what is causing the increases.

Mr. Deacoff commented that staff does not have strong conclusion at this point and noted that another monitoring event will be undertaken. He further advised that staff should see the results in November.

In response to a follow up question from Councillor Outhit, Mr. Deacoff commented that no decisions have been made with regard to increasing the threshold for phosphorous levels in the watershed at the current time. He noted that will continue to investigate the situation and will communicate its findings to Council once the analysis is complete.

14. NOTICES OF MOTION – NONE

15. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Walter Reagan, of the Sackville Rivers Association expressed his thanks to Council and staff for acquiring the 160 Acres on Land at Sandy Lake. He further noted his opinion that Council should direct more resources to hiring Trails staff as there is a demonstrated need in that area.

Mr. Shane O'Neil, of Lower Sackville extended his thanks to North West Community Council who approved funding through the Sackville Landfill Compensation fund to assist in the construction a parking lot on First Lake Drive which provides parking access to the trail system located at that area. He advised that an informal sign hanging day will take place on November 14, 2015 and encouraged members of North West Community Council to attend.

Mr. Brian Murray, of Hammonds Plains thanked Councillor Whitman who had worked with the Hammonds Plains Area Business Association to obtain audio equipment for the use of several non-profit groups in the area.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – November 16, 2015

17. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Liam MacSween
Legislative Assistant