

**HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY**

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**GRANTS COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**December 7, 2009**

PRESENT: Councillor Russell Walker, Chair  
Councillor Jennifer Watts  
Councillor Peter Lund  
Councillor Jim Smith  
Councillor Barry Dalrymple, Vice Chair  
Mr. Geoff Baker  
Ms. Gina Byrne  
Mr. Andrew Higdon  
Ms. Monica Jordan  
Mr. David Woo

REGRETS: Deputy Mayor Brad Johns

ABSENT: Ms. Pamela Henley

STAFF: Ms. Peta-Jane Temple, Team Lead, Tax, Grants and Special  
Projects  
Mr. Peter Greechan, Community Developer, Community Relations  
& Events  
Ms. Carla Thistle, Real Estate Officer, Transportation and Public  
Works  
Mr. Bruce Fisher, Manager, Fiscal & Tax Policy  
Ms. Krista Tidgwell, Legislative Assistant

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m. in the Duke Boardroom 1, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Duke Tower, Halifax.

2. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

Councillor Walker left the Chair at 1:02 p.m., at which time the Legislative Assistant assumed the Chair calling for nominations for the position of Chair and Vice-Chair of the HRM Grants Committee for the 2010 term.

**MOVED BY Councillor Peter Lund, seconded by Mr. Andrew Higdon, that the HRM Grants Committee nominate Councillor Russell Walker as Chair of the HRM Grants Committee for the 2010 term.** Upon Councillor Walker's acceptance of the nomination, and hearing no further nominations, the Legislative Assistant declared the **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**MOVED BY Councillor Peter Lund, seconded by Mr. Andrew Higdon, that the HRM Grants Committee nominate Councillor Barry Dalrymple as Vice-Chair of the HRM Grants Committee for the 2010 term.** Upon Councillor Dalrymple's acceptance of the nomination, and hearing no further nominations, the Legislative Assistant declared the **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Councillor Walker resumed the Chair at 1:04 p.m.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES - November 2, 2009**

Ms. Peta-Jane Temple, Team Lead, Tax, Grants and Special Projects, advised that on page 9 of the Minutes the paragraph regarding *Ecology Action Centre* would be brought up to \$8 should read \$5 per square foot by 2011/2012.

**MOVED BY Councillor Peter Lund, seconded by Mr. Andrew Higdon, that the minutes of November 2, 2009, as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

4. **APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

The Committee agreed to address item 7.1 - Property Matter: Former Musquodoboit Harbour Elementary School, 7962 Highway #7, Musquodoboit Harbour - Amended Recommendation and Proposed Terms of Conditions of Sale - Clarification as the first order of business and then deal with Item 5.1 - HRM Community Facility Partnership Fund.

Councillor Jennifer Watts and Mr. David Woo entered the meeting at 1:08 p.m.

**MOVED BY Mr. Andrew Higdon, seconded by Councillor Peter Lund, that the order of business, as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**7.1 Property Matter: Former Musquodoboit Harbour Elementary School, 7962 Highway #7, Musquodoboit Harbour - Amended Recommendation and Proposed Terms of Conditions of Sale - Clarification**

- A copy of an email from Ms. Laurie Cook, on behalf of the Old School Gathering Place Development Team, to Ms. Peta-Jane Temple, Team Lead, Grants & Contributions, dated November 30, 2009, with attached Old School Gathering Place Initial 6 month Cash Flow statement, was before the Committee.
- A staff report dated August 27, 2009 was before the Committee.

Ms. Peta-Jane Temple, Team Lead, Grants & Contributions, provided an update to the Committee. She noted that staff has sent a letter to the proponent to confirm if they still have an interest in the property. The proponent has been instructed to respond as to whether they wish to proceed or withdraw.

Ms. Temple advised that an environment assessment should be done on the property under the terms and conditions prior to acceptance.

It was indicated by staff that a building assessment may have been done but not a soil assessment.

Councillor Jim Smith entered the meeting at 1:12 p.m.

Ms. Temple asked the Committee whether they had a time frame in mind to provide early occupancy to the proponent. Ms. Carla Thistle, Real Estate Officer, Transportation and Public Works, advised she has had no response in this regard. She suggested making a condition that would attach to the occupancy permit.

Ms. Temple asked whether the Committee is willing to give an extension should the proponent not be able to meet the conditions before June 2010.

**MOVED BY Mr. Andrew Higdon, seconded by Councillor Barry Dalrymple, that the HRM Grants Committee recommend that Regional Council:**

- 1. Accept the offer of \$1 for the purchase of the property located at 7962 Highway #7, Musquodoboit Harbour;**
- 2. Approve early occupancy by the group in advance of the closing date of sale**

effective the date the Occupancy Permit is issued and subject to proof of applicable insurance coverage; further, that any Agreement of Purchase and Sale include specific conditions, intended to reduce certain risks to HRM, be met by the end of June 2010. Such conditions would include but are not limited to:

- a) **Environmental Assessment;**
  - b) **Formal registration as a non-profit organization and submission of constitution and by-laws for same;**
  - c) **Confirmation of the organization's financial capacity to cover the following immediate costs:**
    - building and liability insurance**
    - basic utilities ie. power, water, heat**
    - well and septic inspection**
    - building inspection**
    - permit fees as applicable**
    - cost of sale expenses (legal fees, survey, deed migration)**
    - confirmation of initial capital financing**
- 3. Agree that if the proponent is unable to meet the conditions as of June 30, 2010, then the matter would come back to the HRM Grants Committee for review; and**
- 4. Set a date for a public hearing.**

Ms. Temple confirmed that a minimum heat level would be kept on in the building but the lights would remain off.

Mr. Higdon asked who is responsible for paying the insurance. Staff advised that HRM is responsible at this time but upon early occupancy, the proponent would obtain their own insurance. This would be included in the Purchase and Sale Agreement.

During the ensuing discussion, it was noted that the environmental assessment will ensure protection for both the proponent and HRM. The Committee requested that staff clarify the impact of early occupancy.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**5. DEFERRED BUSINESS**

**5.1 HRM Community Facilities Partnership Fund (Verbal Update by Staff)**

- A copy of the presentation was circulated to the Committee.

Ms. Peta-Jane Temple, Team Lead, Tax, Grants and Special Projects, delivered the presentation to the Committee. She noted that the original recommendation provided that if Council wanted multi-year funding, it would be contingent on a tax increase. The issue is the source of the funds over the next four years. The proposal is to come forward as part of the 2010/2011 budget. Ms. Temple advised that the source of the funding for a multi-year budget has not been confirmed. She noted that it does not negate multi-year funding awards but the Committee would have to add a caveat, subject to future funding. Ms. Temple noted that staff have received several telephone inquiries from interested parties looking for information and updates, however, she noted that most of the groups were not ready to submit an application at this time. She suggested the Committee chose a date to hear the presentations, should they wish to do so.

Ms. Temple provided an overview of the four applications.

Staff believe that the Saint Patrick's Church Restoration Society, Halifax/Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation is ineligible due to the total budget being \$3 million, of which \$2 million is related to the restoration of the Church. Artifacts such as stain glass windows, statutes and murals do not meet the technical qualifications of the Parish's collection. If the Committee decides to include heritage restoration as a category, independent of the collection, the policy would have to be amended. Staff will provide feedback to the applicant and the applicant will have the option to reapply. It was noted that the Church hall is a registered heritage property.

Ms. Temple advised that the Nova Scotia College of Arts and Design of Halifax, would like to relocate the library into the mall, making it an active feature of the mall. They would also like to redevelop the Duke Street property which presently holds the library. It is staff's perspective that the redevelopment of the lower two floors for commercial leasing would not be funded by the Committee. It was noted that the Committee must be careful not to set a precedence.

Ms. Temple advised that the overall intent of the Shubenacadie Canal Commission, Dartmouth/Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources is as follows:

- Opening up the Canal for greater recreational use;
- Aspire to National Registered Heritage status as a National Historic site as a waterway

In regard to school auditoriums and school premises, Ms. Temple advised that question has been raised whether a grant would contradict or be inconsistent with a clause in the supplementary education funding, that sets out that the Halifax Regional School Board would not ask for additional funding. She noted that Legal Services has confirmed that there is no contradiction or conflict with the contract. She noted that through discussions,

it seems to be consistent with other sources of funding to school playgrounds and fields. The Education Act requires that any additional alterations or improvements to school properties would require the Minister's approval. This approval would have to be added as a caveat or condition to the funding.

Ms. Temple expressed the importance of the Committee having the ability to answer questions as to why each of the applications was or was not accepted. She noted that in 2001 there was no program of this kind and the source of funding came from the proceeds of sale, which is not applicable in this instance. She indicated that the HRM Grants Policy requires that the Committee have a minimum of 50% of the money confirmed and an indication of the remaining balance.

Councillor Dalrymple asked whether any of the applicants have done any fundraising.

Ms. Temple indicated that staff is trying to get an understanding of how the information was presented and whether or not the Committee and staff have interpreted the application/information correctly. Ms. Temple advised that staff will provide copies of the information to the Committee members. Should the Committee decide to entertain presentations, this could be done at the January meeting. It was noted that staff would be doing a review of the four applications this week.

Councillor Smith suggested having an executive summary done for each of the four applications, which the Committee could discuss at the January meeting.

In response to questions raised by the Committee, Ms. Temple advised that the maximum contribution is up to 25% of the cost. She noted that part of process is looking at a break down of costs and whether they are eligible costs. The minimum contribution is five hundred thousand (\$500,000). Ms. Temple advised that the Committee could recommend the grant of five hundred thousand (\$500,000) this year and the 70% or above could be carried forward for consideration in the next year. She noted that the policy provides that if the Committee had a large number of submissions of high merit and did not have enough money to fund them all, it could carry the application forward for consideration at a later date, subject to the budget capacity, without being seen as retroactive consideration.

Ms. Byrne suggested the Committee review staff's score cards to see how staff rated the each application. Ms. Temple advised that the supplementary information report would show the Committee how staff came to their decision.

During the ensuing discussion, it was noted that the Committee has the option to make a request to Council, should the Committee agree to fund more than one applicant.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Watts, Ms. Temple advised that the Committee could not make a decision in regard to multi-year funding due to the fact that the budget has not been set by Council. A recommendation could be made to Council, but would be pending the budget approval.

It was agreed that staff will provide a full report and synopsis relative to the four applications to the following Committee members who requested it. The remaining Committee members will receive a synopsis of each application. A copy of the full reports are on file with the Clerk for the Committee's reference.

## **6. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES**

### **6.1 STATUS SHEET**

#### **6.1.1 Partial Tax Exemption for Homes Destroyed by Fire**

- An extract of Regional Council Minutes dated October 27, 2009 was before the Committee.
- A report to Regional Council dated October 5, 2009 was before the Committee.

Councillor Walker advised that the Committee needs to determine whether or not it will recommend a 2007 commencement date for this program. Councillor Walker noted that the homeowner must make the request to the assessment department, the Councillor can not do it on their behalf. Councillor Walker indicated that he had checked on Councillor Hendsbee's two properties and both should be fully taxed to date.

Bruce Fisher, Manager, Fiscal & Tax Policy, suggested that when the Committee comes back with the by-law and programs, the Committee may want to consider setting a date for discussion. He noted that there could be house fires for which staff would have difficulty receiving the assessment information. He advised that he will check on the status of the Administrative Order. Mr. Fisher suggested bringing this matter back to the February meeting. He also suggested asking Councillor Hendsbee for his input on this matter, to which the Committee agreed.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Lund, Mr. Fisher noted that for the time being, Councillors can refer citizens who have had a house fire to either himself or Andre MacNeil, Financial Consultant, Fiscal & Tax Policy.

Mr. Woo asked whether there was going to be a time limitation in terms of how long it would take an individual to apply. Mr. Fisher noted that staff will determine a deadline and advise the public appropriately.

Councillor Dalrymple indicated that he had contacted Gordon Roussel, Financial Consultant, Budget & Financial Analysis, regarding three house fires in his District and has received no response. Mr. Fisher advised that he would follow up on this matter.

#### **6.1.2 Community Grants Program 2010 -2011 - Eligibility of Community Gardens**

- Interpretation Bulletin #3 was before the Committee.
- A briefing report from Ms. Peta-Jane Temple, Team Lead, Grants & Contributions, dated November 17, 2009 was circulated to the Committee.



Ms. Temple advised that the purpose of the Interpretation Bulletin #3 is to clarify what groups qualify to receive grants. She noted that the HRM Grants Committee can not issue a grant to an individual. She suggested posting the Interpretation Bulletin #3 to the HRM Grants Committee website to assist in generating interest.

**MOVED BY Councillor Jennifer Watts, seconded by Mr. Andrew Higdon, that the Interpretation Bulletin #3 be posted to the HRM Grants Committee Web Page.**

Ms. Temple indicated that under the Community Grants Guideline, school properties are not eligible for funding.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Higdon, Councillor Watts advised that items inside a school are not eligible to be funded. Playground or other outside facilities to which the community has access would be eligible. Items such as playgrounds are seen as community assets. Mr. Fisher confirmed that the playground can be moved. He noted that schools in existence since 1981 are owned by HRM. He advised that HRM has the ability to own playgrounds in conjunction with schools built after 1981. Concern was raised that if HRM decided to fund certain School Board assets or items, there is a risk that the Department of Education would determine there is no longer a need fund those assets.

During the ensuing discussion, it was noted that HRM would be held accountable if an individual were to be injured on equipment owned by HRM.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**7. REPORTS**

**7.1 Property Matter: Former Musquodoboit Harbour Elementary School, 7962 Highway #7, Musquodoboit Harbour - Amended Recommendation and Proposed Terms of Conditions of Sale - Clarification**

This item was dealt with earlier in the Minutes, see page 4.

**7.2 Community Grants Program 2010-2011: Adjudication of Eligibility - Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia**

- A letter from the Mary Lou Crowley, President & Chief Executive Officer, dated November 30, 2009 was before the Committee.

Ms. Temple advised that under the Community Garden Grants Program, government owned facilities are not eligible to receive funding. She indicated that questions posed to staff included:

- Does the Committee make an exception to the policy? If the Committee were to remove the restriction on government owned housing projects, would it create more

issues? If it is done just for housing, would the Committee open it up for other sectors as well?

- If there is an increase in housing capacity, which is not used up in repairs, there is the potential to house more people.

Ms. Temple noted that providing funding in this instance would be precedence setting. The maximum capital grant that the HRM Grants Committee gives is approximately twenty-five thousand (\$25,000). She noted that this portion of the building would take approximately \$3 million to build. If the Committee were to take 50% of the capacity, it would represent less than 1% of the total project. It was noted that the building is government owned and would be government operated. She advised that the Committee would need a clear indication as to why they agreed or disagreed to fund the applicant when proceeding to Council.

Ms. Temple noted that the Department of Health is the owner of the asset and Capital Health is the operator.

**MOVED BY Councillor Peter Lund, seconded by Mr. David Woo, that the HRM Grants Committee uphold the existing policy that deems government owned property ineligible for a grant under the Community Grants Program. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**7.3 Non-Profit Tax Exemption (By-law T-200): Proposed Re-Design - Staff Update**  
*(Request for Staff Presentation and Budget Implications in 2010-2011)*

The Committee agreed to have the staff presentation at the February 2010 meeting.

**8. ADDED ITEMS**

**9. NEXT REGULAR MEETING DATE - January 11, 2010**

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:34 p.m.

Krista Tidgwell  
Legislative Assistant

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**Information Items**

1. Letter re: Request for Donation of Property Located at 2190 Barrington Street, Halifax