

**HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY**

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**GRANTS COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**August 5, 2009**

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

**ABSENT:** Mr. Geoff Baker  
Ms. Pamela Henley

**STAFF:** Ms. Peta-Jane Temple, Team Lead, Tax, Grants & Special Projects  
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 p.m. in the MacLennan Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Duke Tower, Halifax.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - June 1, 2009

**MOVED by Councillor Lund, seconded by Councillor Dalrymple, that the minutes of June 1, 2009, as presented, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

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

**Additions:**

- 7.1 Information Item 1 - By-Law T-200: Tax Exemption for Non-Profit Organizations 2009-2010 Budget Implications: Proposed Interim Process.
- 7.2 HRM Community Facilities Partnership Fund
- 7.3 New Staff

**Deletion:** Item 4.1 Less Than Market Value Sale Guidelines - Briefing Report - To be deferred to the next meeting.

Councillor Watts entered the meeting at 1:05 p.m.

**MOVED by Councillor Johns, seconded by Councillor Lund, that the order of business, as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

4. DEFERRED BUSINESS

4.1 Less Than Market Value Sale Guidelines - Briefing Report

- A copy of a Briefing Report was before the Committee

This item was deferred from the June 1, 2009 meeting. The Committee agreed during the approval of the agenda to defer this item to the next meeting.

4.2 Less Than Market Value Land Lease - Graham's Grove Park to Dartmouth Dragon Boat Association

- An extract of the May 11, 2009 Grant Committee minutes was before the Committee.
- A copy of the April 24, 2009 staff report was before the Committee.
- A copy of the Memorandum of Understanding was before the Committee.

This item was deferred from the May 11, 2009 meeting pending receipt of a financial statement.

Councillor Dalrymple commented that the financial statement presented had amounts with all zeros and noted that it was not an accurate statement. Ms. Peta Jane Temple, Team Lead, Tax, Grants and Special Projects, explained that the Dartmouth Dragon Boat Association (DDBA) was incorporated just last year so the financial statement was a budgeted statement.

Ms. Kathy MacKinnon, Area Coordinator, Findlay Community Centre, Community Development, explained that the DDBA offer a kids camp in return for being able to dock and store their equipment at the HRM location. DDBA also provide for an adult drop-in on Friday evenings. The DDBA have registered as a non-profit group, on the advice of HRM staff, in order to enter into the lease agreement with HRM.

Ms. Temple explained that a less than market value lease would require a decision by Regional Council but would not require a public hearing; a 2/3 majority vote of Council would be required.

Ms. Gina Byrne noted that the Dragon Boat Festival entry fee was fairly substantial for organizations/groups wishing to enter the festival. Ms. MacKinnon offered to follow-up on the entry fees charged by the group.

In response to Councillor Watts, Ms. MacKinnon advised that the relationship between HRM and the DDBA has been very positive with the DDBA going above and beyond in adopting the HRM Recreation philosophy of "*Recreation for All*". She explained that HRM was trying to avoid net zero lease situations by making it a dual process whereby the group would provide service in kind with a monetary value. She noted that HRM's Real Property staff had created a lease for the DDBA approximately two years ago.

In response to Councillor Smith, Ms. Tara Legge, Community Facility Service Delivery Coordinator, Community Development, explained that the DDBA was a Sub-Committee of a larger Board. She noted that they would have to be completely removed from the HRM property within forty (40) days due to the World Canoe Championships. There was no renewal option for the lease as HRM has plans for the location with the possibility of a building being erected. Ms. Temple added that Dragon Boat East is the business entity that runs festivals throughout Atlantic Canada.

**MOVED BY Councillor Smith, seconded by Mr. Andrew Higdon that the Grants Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council approve the staff recommendation to enter into a less than market value lease agreement with the Dartmouth Dragon Boat Association as per the Terms and Conditions set out in the Discussion section of the report dated April 24, 2009. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

In response to Councillor Watts, Ms. Temple explained that service in lieu of rent for non-profit groups can be problematic as the issue becomes rather fuzzy and the buildings suffer without the revenue to put back into maintenance.

Mr. David Woo noted that the group has already been at the location for five months and inquired if HRM would request that the money be paid if the motion did not pass.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF MINUTES - NONE**

**6. REPORTS**

**6.1 HRM Re-capitalization Assistance to Community Facilities: Arenas and Swimming Pools - St. Margaret's Centre**

- A Supplementary Report dated May 29, 2009 was before the Committee.

**MOVED BY Councillor Lund, seconded by Mr. Andrew Higdon that the Grants Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council approve a grant in the amount of \$80,000 from Capital Account CBX01146 - Capital Grants - HRM Owned Facilities to the St. Margaret's Centre for the purchase of an ice resurfacing machine. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**6.2 HRM Community Grants Program 2009-2010 - Appeals**

- A report dated July 5, 2009 was before the Committee.
- An extract of the June 16, 2009 Regional Council minutes was before the Committee.

Ms. Temple advised that the report included the appeal requests made by Council on June 16, 2009. Staff were recommending additional funding of \$5,000 to Scouts Canada for a total of \$9,000.

**MOVED BY Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Johns that the Grants Committee recommend an increase to the Ecology Action Centre's Bike Again Program of \$250 for a total award of \$1,250.**

Councillor Watts explained that assistance should be provided to encourage the efforts being made toward alternative methods of transportation.

In response to Mr. Woo, Ms. Temple advised that there were conditions in place by the Province in regard to the construction of the Icelandic Memorial Society's log cabin such as a requirement for a property survey. HRM could also place a proviso in the agreement

that if the log cabin were not constructed the funds would be returned to HRM.

Ms. Temple advised that the balance remaining, including the proposed \$250 increase to the Ecology Action Centre, would be \$919.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Discussion ensued as follows:

Councillor Smith noted that when a Member of Council requested an appeal at Council that Councillor was supposed to appear before the Grants Committee to speak to their appeal. He requested clarity on the process.

Ms. Temple explained that Council had been on break and that she had communicated with Councillors Johns, Harvey and McCluskey by e-mail in regard to their appeals. Staff had reviewed all the appeal files and followed up with the applicants.

Councillor Johns noted that the Special Events Advisory Committee has also adopted a similar appeals process and if the Councillor does not attend the meeting the appeal would be denied. Ample opportunity would be provided to the Councillor to present to the Committee prior to the decision being rendered.

Ms. Temple concurred that the Committee could decide that the appeal be deferred based on an incomplete appeal if the Councillor requesting the review did not attend the meeting.

Councillor Walker agreed that the Councillor should have to attend the Grants Committee meeting to explain the reasons for the appeal.

Mr. Andrew Higdon advised that when he read the report he was of the opinion that staff had reviewed the appeals and upon more information had made the decision to recommend the awards.

Councillor Watts also questioned where the information was coming from for the appeals as some of the appeals were from the groups themselves and others were from Councillors.

Councillor Dalrymple noted that the Grants Committee would have to enforce that the Councillor requesting the appeal at Council must attend the Grants Committee meeting as some of the groups who appealed put a lot of effort into presenting their case to the Committee and then a Councillor simply stands up at Council and says send it back. He noted that staff had ended up doing the work in regard to the appeals requested by the Councillors.

Ms. Temple advised that she had contacted the applicants in regard to the appeals put forward by the Councillors and found the situation a bit uncomfortable as the groups often were not even aware that the Councillors had requested an appeal. She advised that she would prepare some information on the appeal process for the Committee's review.

Councillor Johns requested that information on the Appeals process be sent to Andrew Whittemore, Manager, Community Development.

**MOVED BY Mr. Andrew Higdon, seconded by Ms. Gina Byrne that the Grants Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council approve the HRM Community Grants Program appeals as detailed in the discussion section of this report and as amended by the Grants Committee on August 5, 2009, for a total of 8 grants with a combined total value of \$38,770 from operating account M311-8004. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**7. ADDED ITEMS**

**7.1 By-Law T-200: Tax Exemption for Non-Profit Organizations 2009-2010 Budget Implications: Proposed Interim Process**

Ms. Temple advised that there was not enough money in the 2008/09 budget for all the renewals and new applicants.

During the ensuing discussion on the report, the Committee noted the following corrections/revisions:

- The Budget Implications Summary on page 6 - figures to be corrected in regard to the savings from properties removed from the By-law to show a net saving of \$14,450.55 not \$7,626.
- The Background section on page 2, Section b. Current Status and Budget Implications - to be corrected to show the number of applicants requesting an increase in current level of exemption to be five (5) not three (3).
- The effective date for the DASC Industries, page 11, Item 8, to be corrected to show April 1, 2010 not 2020.
- The Musquodoboit Harbour Lions Club request for tax exemption, Item 3, Attachment 2, page 10 - to be amended to reflect a Conversion from the Commercial tax rate to Residential rate for 2009-2010 and that it be reviewed further in 2010-2011 to confirm the operations of a food bank on site.
- The Dartmouth Work Activity, Item 6, page 11 - be amended to reflect that the level of exemption proposed be amended to a Conversion from the Commercial tax rate to Residential rate for 2009-2010. Any further increase to 75% exempt at the Residential rate be reviewed in 2010-2011 subject to program budget capacity.

Ms. Monica Jordan entered the meeting at 2:28 pm.

The Committee considered a late application from the Rocky Lake Development Association that was presented verbally by staff as an added item. The following comments/concerns were raised by the Committee during the ensuing discussion:

- Councillor Johns noted that, in regard to a payment plan for the arrears, there was nothing on the property to generate income.
- Councillor Dalrymple noted that applying for tax assistance was a confusing process especially considering that the application was being made by a volunteer board.

- Councillor Watts noted that the application was late and there were only four months remaining until they could apply again; other groups had met the deadline and were waiting.

**MOVED BY Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Johns that the Grants Committee decline the application by the Rocky Lake Development Association for tax assistance due to the late application and property tax arrears to HRM.**

Councillor Johns suggested that since the next application process was soon to commence (November 2009) that the Rocky Lake Development Association's application be carried forward for the upcoming program rather than have them reapply. He also suggested that HRM staff follow-up on why the assessment was at the commercial rate rather than the recreation rate.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Discussion ensued on the report as follows:

In response to Councillor Dalrymple, staff provided the following clarification on the Beaver Bank Kinsac Lions Club deferral to 2010, page 14, as follows:

- The property was acquired from a private owner and the assessment classification has not been revised from Residential to Commercial (based on use), therefore; the club would be taxed at the Residential rate in 2009.
- Unless providing alternate service delivery, a service club is usually awarded a Conversion from the Commercial to Residential tax rate.
- Any change in assessment classification shall be reviewed in 2010-2011 subject to program budget capacity.

Councillor Walker noted that the budget has to increase in order to accommodate the number of requests.

Councillor Johns advised that a criteria has to be defined to explain why the specific tax rate has been applied.

**MOVED BY Councillor Johns, seconded by Councillor Lund that the Grants Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council approve the proposed interim approach to the 2009-2010 program budget capacity shortfall identified in the Discussion section of the report dated June 8, 2009 and as amended by the Grants Committee on August 5, 2009 and direct staff to develop a report with proposed renewals, additions and deletions to advance through a public hearing process.**  
**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Councillor Dalrymple retired from the meeting at 3:17 p.m.

**7.2 HRM Community Facilities Partnership Fund**

Due to time constraints, this item was deferred to the next meeting.



**7.3            New Staff**

Ms. Temple advised that Mr. Peter Greechan has been hired as a Community Developer for the Grants Program.

**8.            NEXT REGULAR MEETING DATE**

The next meeting will take place in the Finance Boardroom, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Duke Tower, on September 14, 2009 at 1:00 p.m.

**9.            ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

Chris Newson  
Legislative Assistant