



**SPECIAL EVENTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
April 8, 2015**

PRESENT: Councillor Steve Craig, Chair  
Deputy Mayor Lorelei Nicoll  
Councillor Brad Johns  
Mr. Vishal Bhardwaj  
Mr. Stuart Jolliffe  
Mr. Jeff Ransome

REGRETS: Councillor Steve Adams  
Mr. Jason Bremner  
Ms. Laurie Sauers  
Mr. Leon N'da

STAFF: Ms. Elizabeth Taylor, Manager of Culture & Events  
Mr. Paul Forrest, Civic Events Coordinator  
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 the Committee are available online: <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/seac/SEACAgendasMins.php>*

*The meeting was called to order at 9:00 p.m. and adjourned at 11:46 p.m.*

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Councillor Craig, Chair called the meeting to order in Halifax Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax. Members of the committee provided brief introductions.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 28, 2014**

**MOVED by Mr. Jolliffe, seconded by Mr. Ransome that the minutes of May 28, 2014 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

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

Additions:

8.1 Councillor Johns - Membership update/recruitment

**MOVED by Councillor Johns, seconded by Mr. Ransome that the agenda be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES**

**5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE**

**6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS**

**6.1 Correspondence – NONE**

**6.2 Petitions – NONE**

**6.3 Presentation – NONE**

**7. REPORTS**

**7.1 STAFF**

**7.1.1 Staff Presentation – Orientation for Committee Members**

The following was before the committee:

- *Special Events Advisory Committee Orientation Package dated March 2015*
- *A presentation dated April 8, 2015*
- *A staff report dated April 3, 2014 (for information only)*

Councillor Craig noted that the main reason for the meeting is to provide an orientation and overview for new members as well as a refresher for returning members.

Mr. Paul Forrest, Civic Events Coordinator provided a brief presentation respecting the orientation policy and gave an overview of the work which is undertaken by the Special Events Advisory Committee (SEAC).

Councillor Johns clarified that the Summer Festival grant was initially established as a \$50,000.00 grant, and noted a motion of Council approved several years ago which directed that \$25,000 from the original Summer Festival envelope to fund the South Shore Exhibition. He advised of conversations which have

been taking place regarding funding the South Shore Exhibition through an alternate source and requested further clarity on the matter.

Mr. Forrest commented that he would look in to the matter and advised that the original intent of the Summer Festival program was to provide funding rural events in the former county of Halifax.

Councillor Johns commented that it is important that the minutes of the meeting as well as the overview of the program appropriately reflect the information which is provided. He commented that the Summer Festival Grant was created for the former County of Halifax in lieu of grants for special events in the Halifax and Dartmouth areas.

Deputy Mayor Nicoll inquired if a group in a rural area were to apply for funding for a summer event, would the request automatically be considered under the Summer Festival Grant program.

Mr. Forrest noted that small scale general events would be directed under the C760 event program regardless of geography. He advised that the Summer Festival Program is typically for larger events for the former County areas.

Deputy Mayor Nicoll advised that a new event policy (Administrative Order) for HRM will be considered by Committee of the Whole in the near future.

Councillor Craig noted that the committee will continue in the same fashion until further direction is provided by Regional Council.

Mr. Ransome stated that it would be beneficial to have a breakdown of how the Summer Festival grants resources were allocated over the past several years to provide better understanding for the committee.

Mr. Forrest referenced the April 3, 2014 staff report provided to the committee (attachment 2) and gave an overview of the festivals which received funding.

Councillor Craig requested that a similar breakdown of the Annual Event grant program be provided.

Councillor Johns added that SEAC does not directly impact annual grants noting that Regional Council makes the final decision on which groups receive funding based on the advice provided by the committee. He advised that the committee can make a recommendation to Regional Council to add or subtract from the grant.

Mr. Forrest provided further information with respect to the C760 event grant program and noted that it is funded from general tax revenue. With respect to the Marketing Levy Special Events Reserve (MLSER) he noted that a program was created to allow for a tax or levy on hotel beds to assist in funding events as a way to market the municipality.

Councillor Johns commented that the MLSER was created in large part to fund events in the downtown to spur economic development in the area.

Mr. Jolliffe noted that events that are supported by the MLSER are based on their economic impact, and are not entirely driven by geographic location.

Mr. Ransome commented that rating criteria are applied to determine events which receive funding from the MLSER. He advised of a great deal of robust discussions among the committee to determine funding for events.

Mr. Jolliffe commented that in 2005, the amount which was available in the MLSER fund was \$650,000 which has now grown to \$1.2 million. He advised that the municipality as well as its partners within the hotel industry and Destination Halifax were tenacious in ensuring that the drive of the program is focused

toward economic benefit and tourism. He advised of further benefits to restaurants, shops, stores, and taxis, from the trickle down impact of the fund.

Councillor Johns agreed with Mr. Jolliffe's assessment and noted that funds within the MLSER are not used to offset HRM's operating costs but rather to spur new events and create economic opportunities in the municipality.

Mr. Ransome commented that the committee must ensure that the money from the MLSER account is being re-absorbed into the local economy and that the funds are being allocated in a proactive manner which will encourage economic growth. He commented that there have been difficulties in some instances where monies provided by the municipality are used by event organizers to offset municipal service costs.

Ms. Elizabeth Taylor, Manager of Culture and Events commented that in some instances municipal service costs for events can be costly. She provided the example of the Bluenose Marathon and advised that the municipal services cost associated with the holding the event are almost equal to the amount provided in the grant given its location and the resources required of the municipality to ensure safety and access. She commented that event organizers have to assume the costs associated with holding the event in the areas in which they are held.

Deputy Mayor Nicoll commented that in some areas of the municipality, particularly the areas policed by the RCMP, event costs are absorbed within the police contract and stated that there are no added costs to the event organizers.

Ms. Taylor agreed with Deputy Mayor Nicoll's assessment and remarked that events could be held in the more rural areas by organizers but commented that some events are planned in the downtown for a specific purpose.

Councillor Johns requested further information with respect to the municipal costs associated with the Bluenose Marathon. Mr. Forrest noted that he would obtain the information.

In response to a follow up question from Mr. Bhardwaj, Ms. Taylor noted that the Bluenose Marathon has been traditionally funded by the municipality as a Hall Mark Event.

Mr. Forrest provided an overview of the Hallmark Event Grant process.

Mr. Jolliffe commented that there was a time when the municipality absorbed services costs. He stated that in many instances the direct costs for policing were not clear and were not fully factored in to the costs of holding events. He commented that in the out years, a better understanding of policing costs required for some downtown events were determined which have a significant impact on some event organizers.

Councillor Johns commented that the Sackville Patriot Days event was supplemented with volunteers in some instances where police officers were not required. He commented that a report was prepared on the matter and noted that it should be brought back to the committee.

Ms. Taylor noted that both the municipality and Halifax Regional Police are willing to work with event organizers to assist in offsetting municipal service costs when possible. She advised that staff will provide a breakdown of the municipal service costs pertaining to the Bluenose Marathon for the committee.

Mr. Jolliffe expressed his opinion that staff needs to determine a better way to absorb municipal service costs to assist in the expansion of Hallmark events.

Councillor Johns commented that the Hallmark event grants are reviewed every year. He stated that organizations are required to provide feedback to ensure that budgets are being adhered to and the events are growing rather than becoming stagnant.

Ms. Lyall, Destination Halifax, commented that some of the events have matured over time stating that financial situations can change over time.

Ms. Taylor advised that staff keeps a clear watch on the events and commented that a final submission from the group is required after the event takes place to be considered again for future funding. She commented that if an issue with a group arises, than it is brought to the attention of the committee.

Mr. Forrest provided further commentary with respect to the grant application process.

Councillor Craig noted the importance of the commitment that is required of the committee given that there are many organizations which rely on its decisions to hold their events. He requested that members do their best to inform in advance if they are unable to attend a meeting.

Councillor Johns agreed with Councillor Craig's comments and suggested that a meeting schedule should be established to provide further clarity of meeting dates. It was agreed by consensus that a meeting schedule will be determined in the near future.

Mr. Jolliffe advised of a typo within the committee's Terms of Reference noted that the word "versus" in the statement of purpose should be changed to "and". He requested further information pertaining to the \$ 1 million ceiling on the MLSER which is noted in the business case. He further advised that the Business case should also clarify provisions restricting the funding of competitions which is common place.

Mr. Forrest commented that he would follow up with HRM's Finance department with respect to the ceiling on the MLSER reserve. He further advised that an updated policy document (Administrative Order) respecting the Special Events Grant process will be before Council in the near future which will address redundancies within the policy.

At the request of Mr. Jolliffe the committee had a discussion pertaining to declaring when members may have a conflict of interest with respect to the advice provided to Regional Council on special events grants. The Legislative Assistant provided further information to the committee respecting the declaration of a conflict of interest which is outlined in section 5.7 of HRM's Public Appointment Policy and referenced other pieces of legislation such as the Municipal Government Act which provides further context respecting conflict of interest rules for elected officials which can be used as a guideline for non-elected officials. He advised that it is the responsibility of a committee member to declare whether or not they have conflict of interest as part of a decision which they have input on.

Councillor Craig provided further advice respecting the declaration of a conflict of interest noting that it is a personal decision. He commented that in his own experience, if he feels as though he is in a conflict of interest he would declare it. He further advised that if there is a perceived financial interest or person gain to himself or a family member, he would definitely recuse himself from the decision making.

Deputy Mayor Nicoll agreed with Councillor Craig's assessment and provided further commentary on the difference between bias and a conflict of interest.

Councillor Johns provided commentary respecting the difference between a personal financial benefit and other perceived benefits. He noted that he would not take part in decision which would involve a financial gain for himself or a family member but would take part in a decision which may benefit his community that he represents.

Further discussion ensued.

## **7.2 COMMITTEE UPDATES – NONE**

## **8. ADDED ITEMS**

**8.1 Councillor Johns – Updated Membership/Recruitment**

Councillor Johns advised that SEAC has operated well in the past because of the community partners and industry representatives that are a part of the committee. He suggested that staff look at recruiting more representatives and expanding the committee by adding a member from the Halifax Chamber of Commerce as well as the Greater Halifax Partnership. He advised that for continuity purposes the Chair of the committee should be elected every two years as opposed to each year. He commented that the terms of reference would likely need to be revised to do so and noted that the election of a Vice-Chair should also be included.

Councillor Craig commented that a representative from the Greater Halifax Partnership has been determined and noted his intention to attend the meeting but was ill. He commented that his appointment will be confirmed by the Municipal Clerk's Office and that he will likely be in attendance for the next meeting.

The Legislative Assistant commented the Chair of SEAC is selected from the Membership of the Audit & Finance Standing Committee. He advised that an update would be provided on this matter. He further advised that the committee would likely be able to select a Vice-Chair by a motion of the committee and commented that he would confirm this for the next meeting.

Further discussion ensued.

**9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – April 29, 2015**

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 11:46 a.m.

Liam MacSween  
Legislative Assistant