

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES September 10, 2002

PRESENT:

Mayor Peter J. Kelly
Deputy Mayor Robert P. Harvey
Councillors: Stephen Streach
Gary Hines
Keith Colwell
Ron Cooper
Harry McInroy
Brian Warshick
Condo Sarto
Bruce Hetherington
Jim Smith
John Cunningham
Jerry Blumenthal
Dawn Sloane
Sue Uteck
Sheila Fougere
Russell Walker
Diana Whalen
Linda Mosher
Stephen D. Adams
Brad Johns
Len Goucher
Reg Rankin
Gary Meade

STAFF MEMBERS:

Mr. George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Wayne Anstey, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Jan Gibson, Deputy Municipal Clerk
Ms. Patti Halliday, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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Mayor Kelly called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES - NONE**
2. **APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

MOVED by Councillor Cunningham, seconded by Councillor Hetherington, that the Order of Business be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **SNOW RELATED ISSUES - WINTER PARKING/SNOW REMOVAL**

- C An information report prepared for David McCusker, HRM Traffic Authority, regarding the overnight winter parking ban, dated September 3, 2002, was before the Committee for its information.
- C An information report prepared for Rick Paynter, A/Director, Public Works and Transportation Services, regarding sidewalk snow removal - Halifax area, dated September 5, 2002, was before the Committee for its information.
- C An information report prepared for Paul Dunphy, Director, Planning and Development Services, regarding Seniors Snow Removal Program Update, dated September 6, 2002, was before the Committee for its information.

With respect to sidewalk snow removal, Mr. Rick Paynter, Acting Director, Public Works and Transportation Services, advised that staff recently received Council's approval to perform sidewalk snow clearing in District 15 - Fairview/Clayton Park, and staff is currently in the process of making operational changes and preparing the tender to facilitate this directive of Council. He stated the service will be set up on a trial basis and the costs for this service will be monitored. Mr. Paynter stated there will need to be further discussion on sidewalk snow clearing in the municipality, and he suggested when all the tenders come up for renewal next year, that would be the time to have a comprehensive review of this issue.

Responding to questions of Council, Mr. Paynter made the following points:

- C If additional sidewalk clearing is to be added in the Halifax area in the future, a discussion will have to take place as to whether or not it will be funded through an area rate or another approach.
- C The costs of sidewalk snow clearing in District 15 will be calculated to form the basis of the area rate, whether the service is done in-house or contracted out.
- C If HRM agrees to take on certain areas of snow removal within the municipality, then residents in those areas would be relieved of the responsibilities under the current

Streets By-Law with respect to snow clearing and salting and this can be clarified to the residents in the form of a letter or other type of communication. At some point, an amendment to the By-Law may need to be considered.

C The 2 kms of sidewalks along major arterial roads, referred to in the staff report, run along residential and commercial properties, and how the snow clearing costs for these sidewalks will be recouped will have be addressed at a future point in time. The exact areas included in this 2 km have not yet been finalized, but once they are, the affected Councillors will be notified.

C Staff will be determining the costs for all areas where sidewalk snow removal is provided by HRM.

C Staff will reissue the letter sent in 2001 to the Halifax Regional School Board, copied to its members, within the next week or so, to remind them of their responsibilities with respect to snow removal. Councillor Uteck requested an addendum to the letter stating if the HRSB is having difficulty contracting this service out, a dialogue can be initiated with HRM whereby HRM will charge them for the service.

Councillor Walker stated he would like to meet with staff to review the routes in District 15 and how they are going to be done to ensure that the residents are not paying twice for the service.

Mr. Paynter responded that he had no problem with this.

Councillor Sloane stated she would like to have a public meeting to discuss this issue in her District after the completion of the one year trial in District 15.

At this time, Mr. David McCusker, Manager, Traffic and Transportation Services, made a presentation to the Committee regarding the overnight winter parking ban. In his presentation, Mr. McCusker stated staff is recommending the following modifications to the overnight winter parking ban:

C A flexible start and end date, determined by weather conditions, which should reduce the duration of the ban.

C A comprehensive communications plan, targeted to the needs of different citizen groups (ie. citizens without off-street parking, university students, etc.)

Mr. George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer, noted this was a multi-disciplinary report involving Police Services, Fire Services, etc., and not just the Traffic Authority or Public Works and Transportation.

Following his presentation, Mr. McCusker and Mr. Paynter responded to questions of Council making the following points:

- C There were 14-15 tow trucks available to HRM last year for the removal of vehicles in violation of the winter parking regulations, and these trucks were used consistently during snowfall events.
- C It was not staff's intent to provide a negative report. Staff believed that, from an operational perspective, it was their responsibility to try to outline to Council the problems that were encountered over the last few winter seasons without a winter parking ban.

In discussing the staff report, members of Council made the following comments:

- C The staff report before the Committee offered no positives or alternatives and contained only negatives.
- C HRM did nothing consistent in the enforcement of the MVA restrictions.
- C Tickets were issued in District 15 at 1:00 a.m., yet the street was not plowed until 4:00 p.m. the next afternoon. Other tickets were issued at 9:00 a.m., yet the snow removal crews were not called out until two hours later.
- C The Snow Line was not mentioned in the staff report.
- C Enforcement during daytime hours was not an issue when the ban was in place, yet it became a concern when the ban was lifted, creating two sets of standards.
- C Another example of two sets of standards was cited as being when the ban was in effect, it did not go into effect until 4:00 a.m. in the downtown whereas other areas it was 1:00 a.m.
- C There should have been a policy in place to deal with the encroachment of snow banks into the street.
- C 16,000 tickets were issued when it did not snow, and 63 were issued when it did snow.
- C There were not enough tow trucks available in HRM.
- C Cars in violation should have been towed immediately and not ticketed.
- C Some discretion should be used in ticketing when special events are being held at schools, churches, etc.
- C On streets where there are no sidewalks, pedestrians were forced to walk in the middle of the street due to the snow banks being so far out in the street.
- C Businesses in downtown Dartmouth were affected by vehicles parking on the streets during the daytime and getting tickets. Therefore, people avoided the downtown when it was snowing.
- C Each district has a list of streets that become a problem during the winter season, and these streets could be posted as "no parking" when the ban goes in place.
- C A lot of the zoning areas do not permit the rental of parking spaces, yet this takes place every winter.
- C In the South End Peninsula area, there will be an additional 1700 cars that will need to find parking spaces for the next year due to the construction of parking garages

for the QEII and the IWK. To impose the winter parking ban now would be an undue hardship on these people.

C More people have moved into the downtown area since the winter parking ban has been lifted and they will now need to find off-street parking.

C Most people own one or more vehicles which require off-street parking, and this is of particular concern on the Peninsula due to older housing stock and the lack of driveways. Also, there are many university students in the area who share houses and, as a result, there can be several cars and not enough off-street parking. In many cases, it is cheaper for students to get a series of winter parking tickets than to pay for regular off-street parking.

C Snow removal work cannot be scheduled.

C Reinstating the parking ban would provide stability for everyone.

C Common sense has to be used in the issuance of tickets.

It was agreed that this matter be referred back to staff for a supplementary report in three weeks to address the following:

C The “no parking” sign policy and when the signs go up for one-way streets.

C The residential parking process and if it is possible to use municipal parking lots at night for residential parking for those with parking passes.

C If the parking ban is reinstated, can staff provide a list of available parking locations, and their rental prices?

C Has the use of a flat bed truck for towing been examined?

C Is it feasible to utilize a “no parking” on one side of the street model?

C How much money was used for advertising regarding winter parking before and after the ban was lifted and what was its effectiveness?

C Towing lots should be close to the area from where the cars are towed to make it more effective.

C Why has no one been deputized to issue tickets in place of the police?

C The report should contain alternatives, including realistic price tags, so Council knows exactly what it is considering and can provide a balance between permitting Public Works staff the opportunity to good a do job and providing a workable situation for the residents.

C If possible, can staff provide some type of assessment as to the cost of the ban compared to the present system?

C How can flexibility and consistency in the enforcement of ban be implemented at the same time?

C It was requested that the staff report explain why District 15 - Fairview/Clayton Park is treated differently than Lakeside/Timberlea, Lr. Sackville, and Colby Village, where the overnight parking ban is not enforced.

Mayor Kelly thanked staff for their presentation. Mr. Paynter indicated a staff report to address the concerns raised could come back to Council in three weeks.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Jan Gibson
Deputy Municipal Clerk