

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES

December 5, 2006

PRESENT:

Mayor Peter J. Kelly
Deputy Mayor Sue Uteck
Councillors: Krista Snow
David Hendsbee
Harry McInroy
Gloria McCluskey
Andrew Younger
Bill Karsten
Becky Kent
Jim Smith
Mary Wile
Patrick Murphy
Dawn Sloane
Sheila Fougere
Russell Walker
Debbie Hum
Linda Mosher
Stephen Adams
Brad Johns
Robert Harvey
Gary Martin
Reg Rankin
Gary Meade

REGRETS:

Councillor Steve Streach

STAFF:

Mr. Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Jan Gibson, Municipal Clerk
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Chrissy White, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kelly called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - October 24, November 7 & 14, 2006

MOVED BY Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councillor Hum that the minutes of October 24, November 7 & 14, 2006 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOVED BY Councillor Adams, seconded by Councillor Karsten that the Committee of the Whole move directly into Regional Council if discussions are completed prior to 5:00 pm.

Mayor Kelly advised that the Committee of the Whole session will be recorded by Eastlink and broadcast at 6:00 pm.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. COUNCIL FOCUS AREAS

- An Information Report dated November 30, 2006 was before Council.
- The Council Focus Area Discussions 2007/8 document dated December 5, 2006 was before Council.
- A copy of the PowerPoint presentation was circulated at this time.

Mr. Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer, assisted by Mr. Marc Scarfone, Business Plan Coordinator, Director's Office, Business Planning & Information Management, presented an outline and background for the Council Focus Areas presentation. Mr. English explained that the twelve Council priority areas, identified in September/October 2005, have been consolidated into the following four themes: Taxation, Public Safety, Community Development and Infrastructure. He advised that the tax reform initiative is underway and will not be included as part of this presentation. Immediately following the presentation on the three remaining priority areas: Public Safety, Community Development and Infrastructure, staff will seek strategic direction from Council which will be incorporated into the 2007/08 business planning budget process. A year end update will be provided in May 2007 along with performance indicators to better judge the impact of the investments approved in the June 2006 budget.

Mr. English advised Council of the revised presentation schedule indicating that Community Development will be presented first, followed by Infrastructure and Public Safety.

(ii) Community Development

- A copy of the PowerPoint presentation was before Council.

Mr. English introduced Mr. Paul Dunphy, Director, Community Development, who provided the following highlights during his presentation on Community Development:

- The four theme areas are implementation of the Regional Plan, Community Building, Community Spaces/Facilities and Youth.
- The Regional Plan is now in effect and is also a framework for ongoing work, such as functional/infrastructure plans, urban design and community visioning/planning, some of which will require new policies and/or strategic investment/infrastructure.
- A primary change in the approach to youth has been to adopt a youth engagement model to determine what programs/services the youth would like to have available. Disengaged youth are more likely to become involved in illegal activity therefore it is important to ensure a contribution to society rather than a draw on societal resources. There will be increased focus on disengaged youth aged 10 - 13 years.
- A stronger coordinating role for HRM with other departments/agencies (community building) is the fundamental strategy for youth initiatives as HRM cannot provide all youth programs identically throughout the region. The goal of community building is to have as many youth service providers come together as possible.
- A Request For Proposal (RFP) will soon be released as part of the community consultation process review. To be successful, as many tools as possible are needed to engage the public.
- Community spaces, facilities and street scapes also establish character for an area. A full review of all facilities and their condition/accessibility is planned in order to establish predictable priorities in regard to funding. There may be a requirement for strategic investment for facilities.
- Integration opportunities with other agencies/government levels that will permit HRM to partner, prioritize and coordinate facilities will be considered.

Councillor Murphy entered the meeting at 2:37 pm.

The following comments/concerns were raised by Council during the ensuing discussion:

- Knowing what the community wants/needs and working with the community for the betterment of HRM is an excellent strategic endeavour.
- Initiatives are there but a large portion of the money goes toward administrative costs. More of the funding has to go to the programs.

Deputy Mayor Uteck entered the meeting at 2:41 pm.

- A stronger partnership with other agencies, programs and services will avoid service duplication and will streamline the process for the public.
- The street scape designs (Herring Cove Road/Main Street/Sackville Drive) have to be implemented in a reasonable amount of time. Move forward with those projects already in queue before commencing another.
- A response from staff on the Marketing Levy Report is still outstanding. A hosting events strategy, major facilities and the cultural plan initiatives cannot move forward until it is determined what will be done with the marketing levy dollars.
- Members of Council requested a status update on the Canal Greenway plan.
- Engaging neighbourhoods in community outdoor parks is important as residents want to become involved with such initiatives.

- Transportation should be a priority consideration for all youth initiatives as local and rural transportation is a challenge, particularly for youth. The recent Youth Festival was successful due to the efforts of Metro Transit in providing transportation to and from the event.
- Youth programs should be redefined to educate pre-teens as it is important to engage/stimulate/involve pre-teens as early as possible. In regard to the youth initiative, the age should be lowered from ten (10) to age eight (8).
- HRM, along with other agencies, will have to be creative to attract the 14-20 year age group as they are the most challenging.
- Members of Council requested an update to the indoor facility maintenance plan.
- A parenting course was suggested as an initiative to address future youth issues as at risk youths will not go to HRM programs.
- Utilizing the willingness of community organizations to support initiatives/activities to make communities better will certainly engage citizens. HRM may not be able to own the facilities but will be able to work with the volunteer groups/agencies by providing them with some ownership.
- Local libraries are an important resource and an opportunity to engage youth and families.

Deputy Mayor Uteck assumed the Chair at 2:55 pm.

- The human context/community history has to be considered in terms of trends and current policies. Increasingly, in the older areas of the city, facilities are deteriorating due to a demographic shift. Churches/schools/auditoriums are considering closure due to the age (deterioration) of the facilities and the shrinking populations. Third party facilities for recreation and community meetings should be considered.
- In response to Councillor Fougere, Ms. Cathie O'Toole, Acting Director, Finance Services, advised that information on what affect the provincial assessment cap may have on the municipal budget will be brought to Council in early January during the presentation of the fiscal framework.
- HRM should be moving in unison with the Commonwealth Games in regard to legacy/infrastructure by preparing a multi-year financial strategy.
- A Vacant Building By-Law could address how communities look.
- The Community Visioning initiative has been very successful with some communities inquiring if it will return next year as well.

Councillor Mosher entered the meeting at 3:15 pm.

Mayor Kelly resumed the chair at 3:16 pm.

- HRM should be developing a contributions plan and working toward recapitalization of community facilities.
- Technological upgrades have to be considered in order to remain in touch with citizens.
- Infrastructure is also the people, the volunteers, whose commitment, optimism and energy for their communities is to be recognized and appreciated.

MOVED by Councillor Hum, seconded by Councillor McCluskey that Regional Council approve the following recommendations as outlined on slide 16, page 3 of the slide presentation:

- **Regional Plan: Continue Implementation.**
- **Youth: Partnership especially in regard to disengaged youth.**
- **Community Building: Partnerships, Review HRM's community engagement practices.**
- **Community spaces and facilities: Recapitalization, Facility Condition Survey, Strategic Priorities, Capital District Project Delivery, Service Exchange, Joint Use Agreements.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

As per the revised agenda, the next item for discussion was item (iii) Infrastructure.

(iii) Infrastructure

- A copy of the Council Focus Area 2007/08 Infrastructure PowerPoint presentation dated December 5, 2006 was circulated to Council at this time.

Mr. Mike Labrecque, Director, Transportation and Public Works, presented the information.

MOVED BY Councillor Meade, seconded by Councillor Sloane that Regional Council:

- 1. Approve the five (5) year approach for Infrastructure Recapitalization Planning and Capability Planning.**
- 2. Endorse Asset Management as an approach for better capital planning.**
- 3. Recognize that staffing capacity and alignment will be key to effectively deliver the five year plan.**

The following comments/concerns were raised by Council during the ensuing discussion:

- A substantial increase for new paving of roads outside the core area was requested as it is more expensive to maintain gravel roads.
- Concern was expressed that the human element was missing from the current ranking system for resurfacing roads. It was suggested that staff perhaps set a precedent and review each matter on a case by case basis and obtain a collective response by thinking outside the box and involve the community in regard to traffic calming measures instead of relying solely on statistics and figures.
- An annual update on the focus areas was requested.
- The Armdale Rotary/traffic circle matter is to be fully converted and funds allocated in the budget with the work to be completed by September 2007.
- It is important for HRM to be pro-active in regard to land acquisition for future and current arterial road work such as the multi-phased St. Margaret's Bay Road project.
- Councillor Hendsbee advised that a number of strategic properties will have to be

- acquired for transit service along Highway 107 and that staff should take a strong approach to the acquisition of parkland/future transportation corridors.
- Concern was expressed that projects are not progressing due to a lack of staff resources. For example, the Herring Cove Road project had money budgeted two years ago but no progress has occurred due to a lack of staff resources. Mr. Labrecque acknowledged the project delivery issue has to be improved so that once money is placed in the budget it will be spent within that time frame.
 - Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF) projects were requested to be added to the list of projects. It was further requested that the project work be done closer to the first part of the five year plan.
 - Concern was expressed that existing deficiencies affecting Metro Transit (core service) must be addressed prior to adding new routes.
 - A Metro Link Express Bus service from Clayton Park would be a critical component of the transportation strategy as it would alleviate the impact on the current street infrastructure.
 - Areas outside the urban core require Metro Transit service. This matter should be addressed closer to the first part of the five year plan.
 - Councillor Kent requested that Cow Bay/Eastern Passage be considered for rural transit.
 - Ms. Jennifer Church, Coordinator, Intergovernmental Affairs, responded to Councillor Kent that clarification has not been received in regard to the two year extension of the MRIF program.
 - Concern was expressed with the delay in the physical construction of the new Central Library project as the current facility is deteriorating and may not last another five years.
 - Sidewalk repairs must be completed earlier in the five year plan.
 - In regard to fire stations, Mr. Labrecque advised that Fire Services are reviewing the rationalization of fire stations.
 - In response to Councillor Hendsbee, Mr. Brad Anguish, Director, Environmental Management Services, advised that the Eastern Passage Sewage Treatment Plant is in the planning stage. The project will be defined by the Regional Plan with an update provided to Council in regard to the design. Councillor Hendsbee suggested the project coincide with the Highway #7/Main Street widening so that pipes may be installed while the road work is progressing.
 - Public Safety should be a consideration for all new community facilities in the event that Emergency Measures have to be enacted.
 - Deferred maintenance should not be longer than five years.
 - Councillor Younger suggested the province be encouraged to finish the Highway #107 widening and that the Main Street widening not be included in the plan as the narrowness is actually helping the traffic situation.
 - Geothermal heat and green buildings should be considered as a means to reduce oil/gas/heating costs.
 - Staff should consult with the Greater Burnside Business Association's Transportation Committee in regard to the transportation functional plan for Burnside in regard to future expansion plans and how traffic will be moved in and out of the area. Transportation planning of the industrial parks is essential as tenants will not move in if there are difficulties manoeuvring their trucks in and out. Transit Routes will also have

- to be planned to service the industrial parks.
- A transportation plan entering/exiting Dartmouth is required. Mr. Labrecque responded that in regard to transportation, there has to be some coordination at the provincial level as well. The CAO and the Joint Transportation Committee are working together on this matter.
- Existing community buildings/facilities have to be better utilized such as the Dartmouth North Community Centre.
- Mr. Labrecque responded to Deputy Mayor Uteck and Councillor Adams that further detail in regard to the proposed central library and Sambro Loop transit will be available during the budget plan presentations.
- Mr. Labrecque will compile information for Councillor Adams on how many capital projects are yet to be completed including the total value of those projects.
- Mr. Labrecque responded to Councillor Wile that sidewalks for the Bayers Lake Business Park are included as part of the capital allocation. He will provide information as to the total amount in the Business Park Reserve fund and what percentage will be used for maintenance and sidewalks.
- Concern was expressed with the deterioration of City Hall. Mr. Labrecque commented that there may be some opportunities for improvements over time.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

(i) Public Safety

- A copy of the PowerPoint presentation was before Council.

MOVED BY Councillor Kent, seconded by Councillor Karsten that agenda item (i) Public Safety be deferred to the next Committee of the Whole session due to time constraints. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Jan Gibson
Municipal Clerk