

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

April 22, 2008

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

REGRETS: Councillors: Steve Streach
Gloria McCluskey

STAFF: Mr. Wayne Anstey, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Julia Horncastle, Acting Municipal Clerk
Ms. Melody Campbell, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee of the Whole was called to order at 1:14 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - April 1, 2008 and April 8, 2008

MOVED by Councillor Harvey, seconded by Councillor Snow, that the minutes from April 1, 2008 and April 8, 2008, as presented, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. REGIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM

C A presentation, HRM Regional Trails, dated April 22, 2008, was before Council.

C A staff report, Regional Trails Program, dated March 25, 2008, was before Council.

Mr. Peter Bigelow, Manager, Real Property Planning, and Mr. Warren Irvine, Chair of Halifax Regional Trails Association, provided the presentation to Council. Mr. Bigelow advised that Representatives and Chairs of the various trails groups, Provincial representatives and HRM trails staff are in attendance for the presentation.

In response to a question by Mayor Kelly, Council was advised that there are currently over 200 trails and that number is growing. Mayor Kelly advised it would be beneficial to have an idea of the dollar investment of the volunteer time. The Mayor advised that it may be feasible to have an appeals process for trails with possibly Council being the arbitrator.

MOVED BY Councillor Meade, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee, that Halifax Regional Council:

- 1. Recognize the Halifax Regional Trails Association (HRTA) as the principle partner to plan, develop and operate HRM's regional trail system;**
- 2. Approve funding criteria and disbursement process for trails maintenance funds.**
- 3. That ATV users not to be excluded from use of the trails in rural areas.**
- 4. Develop a Community Appeal process to Regional Council.**

Mr. Bigelow advised that there is no exclusion of maintenance funding of ATV groups at this time. ATVs are permitted on some trail areas.

In response to a query by Councillor Snow, Council was advised there was approximately \$750,000 budgeted for trails in last year's budget. Councillor Snow stated that HRM should be distributing the money deciding where it goes. She noted that volunteers are taxed. The Councillor suggested that the money should be equally divided, then if there is any left at the end of the year, it is put back in the pot. Mr. Bigelow advised that some areas require more maintenance than others. Councillor Snow stated she does not support the recommendation.

Councillor Rankin advised he supports part 1 and 2 adding that HRTA serves his community well. The Councillor was under the understanding that the maintenance funding is for active transportation. He noted that ATVs can cause substantial damage requiring an extra level of maintenance. There is a requirement for community decision making as it relates to ATVs on trails. Type of use has to be determined. Mr. Bigelow advised that the Province and Municipality are engaged in discussion on these issues. Staff are aware that different trails require different uses. This will be brought back to Council based on particular communities requirements.

Councillor Karsten noted that he supports the recommendation. The Councillor inquired what can be done in the event that the volunteers on these groups burn out. Mr. Bigelow advised that HRM monitors the boards/committees and takes steps to ensure capabilities are continuing. If a problem arises, staff will continue the work in the interim.

Councillor Murphy inquired as to the status of the bridge that was removed to accommodate changes to the approaches for the MacKay Bridges at Seaview Park. Councillor Murphy advised that this a connectivity issue. Mr. Bigelow replied that this is not in this years capital budget. The engineering has been done, and actual conceptual design has been done, the issue now is funding.

Councillor Hendsbee advised that there should be no exclusion of ATVs. In response to the Councillors questions, Mr. Bigelow replied that the Shearwater Trail will be added to the map but Bluewater Run did not join the HRTA. Gift contributions of individuals or groups can be accepted, and staff will have this facilitated. Councillor Hendsbee added that HRM could be a leader by providing different surface materials on trails, roofing shingles as an example. Staff advised there is current experimentation on different binding agents on the BLT trail using recycled material. Staff are currently working with the Province to meet with ATV groups around policies as it relates to HRM.

In response to a question by Councillor Mosher, Mr. Bigelow advised that funding is primarily for HRM trails approved by Council, as it relates to the Regional Trail Plan and Active Transportation Plan. Staff have worked with the province in changes to the legislation which will permit HRM to contribute to other trails. The Councillor advised that there should be public consultation if HRM moves forward with the Chester Spur Line. She

added that if this project goes forward, it should go to Chebucto Community Council before it comes to Regional Council.

Councillor Uteck noted that trail concerns that arise can be addressed by the area Councillor; not brought forward as an appeal to Council for decision.

Councillor McInroy noted that some areas in HRM need ATV restrictions. ATV usage can cause trail damage.

Councillor Hum noted that she supports, in principle, Items 1 and 2. In response to Councillor Hum's question, Mr. Bigelow advised that if a Councillor used discretionary funds for trail maintenance, the funds would be allocated to the area requested by the Councillor.

Councillor Fougere stated that there should be further information supplied and additional discussion on Item 3 which could come back to a future Committee of the Whole. The Councillor added that trail concerns should be addressed by the area Councillor.

In response to Councillor Wile's queries, pathways or trails in parkland areas do not permit motorized vehicles. Staff advised HRTA is not responsible for parkland area trails or pathways, they are responsible for linear trails that link neighbourhoods and communities that are primarily off road.

Councillor Harvey supports Items 1 and 2 but does not support 3 and 4. ATV uses does not fit with active transportation. Item 4 can be dealt with by petition.

Councillor Hendsbee questioned if easement fees are being paid. Mr. Bigelow will discuss this issue with the Province. In response to a question by the Councillor, Mr. Irvine, Chair of HRTA, advised the main objective of the association is to build trails. If a group wanted to join, the group's criteria would be presented to HRTA for consideration. Also a main concern of HRTA is active transportation. Councillor Hendsbee added that wider sidewalks would be beneficial to active transportation.

Mr. Bigelow advised in response to Councillor Walker, that the \$165,000 will be split among nine groups now eligible for maintenance funding. The group would make an application to HRTA and funds would be allocated according to need in consultation with staff. Trail building would fall under capital.

Councillor Barkhouse inquired if there is a priority list for trail maintenance. Mr. Bigelow advised that when applications are received, they are put on a list. Trail safety is a top priority and these issues are dealt with in an expedient manner.

Councillor Rankin stated that any concerns brought forward should not come to Regional Council. They should be addressed at Community Council.

Councillor Snow questioned whether there are any other boards that make decisions on where monies are dispersed. Ms. Cathie O'Toole, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management, replied that the only type of funding that goes to recreation related facilities with community boards. Four trail staff sit on the HRTA bringing HRM perspective, although they are not voting members.

**MOVED BY Councillor Fougere, seconded Councillor Sloane by that Item #3 be referred to a future Committee of the Whole in approximately two months.
MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

The question was called for on Items 1, 2, and 4 at this time.

MOVED BY Councillor Meade, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee, that Halifax Regional Council:

- 1. Recognize the Halifax Regional Trails Association (HRTA) as the principle partner to plan, develop and operate HRM's regional trail system;**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED BY Councillor Meade, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee, that Halifax Regional Council:

- 2. Approve funding criteria and disbursement process for trails maintenance funds.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED BY Councillor Meade, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee, that Halifax Regional Council:

- 4. Develop a Community Appeal process to Regional Council.**

MOTION DEFEATED.

MOVED BY Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor Walker that should HRM take over the former Chester Spur Rail Corridor there shall be local citizen representation from the affected districts on the committee, and further that

Chebucto Community Council oversee the public consultation process.

Councillor Rankin raised concern that this process may be precedent setting.

Without a vote being taken on the motion on the floor, the following motion was placed.

MOVED BY Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Younger that the motion be deferred to a future Committee of the Whole in approximately two months.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

Ms. Julia Horncastle
Acting Municipal Clerk