

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

TAX REFORM COMMITTEE MINUTES September 6, 2007

- PRESENT: Mr. David Grace, Chair
Dr. Mark Gilbert, Vice-Chair
Deputy Mayor Sue Uteck
Councillor Linda Mosher
Councillor Reg Rankin
Ms. Giselle Kakamousias
Mr. Andrew Murphy
- ABSENT: Councillor David Hendsbee
Councillor Brad Johns
Councillor Andrew Younger
Mr. Robert Grace, with regrets
Ms. Janice Malay, with regrets
- STAFF: Mr. Bruce Fisher, Manager, Fiscal & Tax Policy, Finance Services
Mr. Andre MacNeil, Financial Consultant, Finance Services
Ms. Shannon Bennett, Tax Reform Analyst, Finance Services
Mr. Daniel St. Onge, Research Student, Finance Services
Ms. Carolyn Wiper, Administrative Assistant, Finance Services

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 11:24 a.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - August 2, 2007

MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Giselle Kakamousias, that the Minutes of August 2, 2007 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

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

The Order of Business was approved without a formal motion.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Service NS - Workshop

The Chair requested that the workshop with Service Nova Scotia, requested by the Committee regarding Assessment, be discussed.

Bruce Fisher, Manager of Fiscal and Tax Policy, informed the Committee that Service Nova Scotia will be inviting the Committee to a workshop to discuss provincial assessments with the Assessment Services group.

4.2 Meeting with CMHC and Greater Halifax Partnership

The Chair asked that the Committee discuss having a workshop with CMHC, Greater Halifax Partnership and the Real Estate Board to help attract young professionals.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

5.1 Verbal Report on Core Services - in August 2nd package

5.1.1 Tax Structure Model

Andre MacNeil, Financial Consultant, gave a presentation to the Committee on Halifax Regional Municipality Tax Structure Model, detailing how the tax bill of a typical single family home in HRM is spent on municipal services.

The Committee agreed that this breakdown was very useful in helping the Committee understand how the municipal tax dollars are spent. They felt that this model or a similar model should be used at the next round of public consultations.

The Committee asked that staff provide an additional column showing the Commercial Tax bill breakdown.

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS

6.1 Written Submissions on Tax Reform

Written submissions on Tax Reform were received by the Committee.

6.2 Letter from the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

The Committee received a letter from the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations with respect to Tax Reform.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Survey Update

7.1.1 Survey Results

Shannon Bennett, Tax Reform Analyst, gave the Committee a summary on a recent telephone survey conducted by Corporate Research Associates Inc. on behalf of HRM's Tax Reform Initiative.

Giselle Kakamousias, Committee Member, suggested that the next survey should include commercial as well as residential tax rate questions. These questions could ask residents how they feel about commercial tax, how it relates to residential tax and what should commercial tax cover.

The Committee thought that additional questions should be surveys fairly soon in order to be meaningful to the project. Questions should be submitted to Shannon Bennett and a quote will be obtained.

7.2 Verbal Update on replacement member for TRC

The Selection Committee is meeting on September 13th. Staff gave the Selection Committee a list of people who are still interested in sitting on the Committee.

It was suggested that an individual be selected to represent young professionals.

7.3 Schedule Update

Andre MacNeil, Financial Consultant, handed out a Summer-Fall 2007 schedule to the Committee.

7.4 Transportation Utility Fees: Policy Considerations - Presentation

The Transportation Utility Fees: Policy Considerations Report will be distributed when

received.

Bruce Fisher, Manager of Fiscal and Tax Policy informed the Committee that he is getting them a copy of two reports. 1. San Luis Obispo, Budgeting and Fiscal Policies, 2005-2007 User Fee Cost Recovery Levels and 2. Oregon Report re: Road Fees.

The Committee asked staff to arrange a workshop with Service Nova Scotia, discussed earlier in the meeting, to discuss Assessment.

Staff will try to arrange a workshop on September 27th. Staff will confirm.

8. ADDED ITEMS - none

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting has been set for Thursday, September 20, 2007 from 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m .

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Mark Gilbert, that the meeting adjourn at 12:35 p.m.

Carolyn Wiper
Administrative Support Assistant