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Item No.
North West Community Council
November 17, 2014

TO: Chair and Members of North West Community Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original signed

Brad Anguish, Director, Parks & Recreation

DATE: November 4, 2014

SUBJECT: Jack Lake, Marsh Lake Sandy Lake Park Proposal

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

September 15, 2014 – North West Community Council passed the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Outhit, seconded by Councillor Whitman that North West Community Council request a staff report in response to the Sandy Lake Park petition that was received on September 15, 2014 and include an update on all previous studies in the area.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Charter: Part VIII, Planning & Development

61 (1) The Municipality may acquire and own property granted or conveyed to the Municipality either absolutely or in trust for a public or charitable purpose.

Halifax Regional Plan;

Pg 28; HRM intends to create additional Regional Parks at various locations throughout HRM including the Blue Mountain - Birch Cove Lakes, Feely Lake, Jacks Lake, Second Lake, and Porters Lake.

Policy E-12 - HRM shall prepare a Greenbelting and Public Open Space Priorities Plan to protect and preserve connectivity between natural areas and open space land, to enable their integration into sustainable community design, to help define communities, to benefit the municipality's economy and physical health of its people and to reflect and support the overall purposes of this plan.

BACKGROUND

The petition and accompanying letter from the Sandy Lake Conservation Association (SLCA) requests the Municipality to consider expanding the park lands at Sandy, Marsh and Jack Lake to create an enlarged park/wilderness area within the Sackville River Watershed.

The Regional Plan calls for the development of a Regional Park at Jacks Lake. The park would be based on the 1000 acres that HRM currently has assembled around Jack, Marsh and Sandy Lake.

The Regional Plan also calls for a Greenbelting and Open Space Plan which will, among other objectives, examine requirements for public open space and the protection of key wildlife and environmental corridors within the municipality.

A watershed study for the Sandy Lake area was initiated by Regional Council. The study has been drafted and has been reviewed by the Regional Watershed Advisory Board. It is expected to be brought forward to North West Community Council in the coming months.

DISCUSSION

As per Council's direction under the approved Regional Plan Five Year Review, staff is currently undertaking the Greenbelting and Open Space Plan. The results, if approved by Regional Council, will guide the municipality as to the direction for the parks and open space system through development regulations, land acquisitions and park development. The Sackville River corridor, which includes the Sandy Lake/Jack Lake/Marsh Lake regional park lands, has been identified as one of several major corridors for examination within that exercise. The possibility may exist to create a recreation and environmental linkage from Bedford Basin to the Pockwork Watershed. Jacks Lake Regional Park is a key element along the potential corridor. Therefore, the request by the SLCA to initiate exploration of the ideas contained in the petition is already underway. The completed plan will be subject to the approval of Regional Council.

As the McCabe Lake area is currently an active rural development area with a number of pre-regional plan development approvals, staff will also be continuing to acquire high value lands in this area through the development process. These will be aimed at contributing to Council's open space objectives of recreation service provision, protection of valued cultural/natural heritage assets and shaping and connecting communities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications at this time related to this petition. The Greenbelting and Open Space Plan is being conducted through capital funding approved by Regional Council as part of the 14/15 Capital budget under account CDG01283.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Greenbelting and Open Space Plan affords the general public and stakeholders the opportunity to be part of the process through public meetings, submissions and focus groups. The letter from the Sandy Lake Conservation Association which accompanied the petition offers to share their thinking on the matter. Staff will ensure that the SLCA will have an opportunity along with other stakeholders to generally engage on the broad matters pertaining to the open space plan but also on this particular corridor early on in the process.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The Greenbelting and Open Space Plan is aimed at contributing to Regional Council's environmental protection objectives.

ALTERNATIVES

None

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – General Map of Sandy Lake area with HRM holdings indicated.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.php> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Peter Bigelow, Manager, Parks Planning, 902-490-6047

6/18/2014



Image © 2014 DigitalGlobe

Google earth

1816 m

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Imagery Date: 6/18/2014 44°44'58.35" N 63°42'20.59" W elev 29 m eye alt 8.26 km