ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY STANDING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

March 7, 2013

- PRESENT: Councillor Barry Dalrymple, Chair Councillor Jennifer Watts, Vice Chair Deputy Mayor Reg Rankin Councillor Darren Fisher Councillor Steve Craig
- REGRETS: Councillor Lorelei Nicoll Councillor Bill Karsten
- STAFF: Mr. Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Mr. Joshua Judah, Solicitor Mr. Richard MacLellan, Manager, Energy and Environment Mr. Gord Helm, Manager, Solid Waste Resources Mr. Peter Stickings, Manager, Real Estate & Land Management Mr. Julian Boyle, Manager, Strategic Energy Policy Mr. Ted Aubut, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. in the Dartmouth Chamber at 90 Alderney Drive, Dartmouth.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 7, 2013

MOVED by Councillor Fisher, seconded by Councillor Watts that minutes of February 7, 2013 be approved, as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETION

Additions:

- 9.1 Councillor Watts Update on Implementation of Solar City
- 9.2 Councillor Watts Update on National Zero Waste Council Teleconference of March 4, 2013

The Standing Committee agreed to discuss item 7.1.1 immediately following item 5.1 and 9.1, following 6.3.3.

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Craig that the agenda be approved, as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Status Sheet Update

No updates were provided or requested.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

5.1 Supplementary Information Report dated January 10, 2013 regarding Blue Mountain Birch Cove Regional Park and Birch Cove Lakes Watershed Study Projects

The Supplementary Information Report dated January 10, 2013 was before the Standing Committee.

Deputy Mayor Rankin noted that many residents believe that the project is stalled given that the public information meeting was held almost one year ago. He wished to know when a final report on this matter would be coming to Regional Council. Mr. Peter Stickings, Manager of Real Estate and Land Development, indicated that HRM has continued to negotiate with landowners and just last night the results of the Birch Cove Lakes Watershed Study were presented to the public. He believed that the report would be ready for Council in two or three months at which point staff will be in a better position to update Councillors on land negotiations.

Councillor Watts asked staff to comment on the Birch Cove project relative to the Regional Plan, which will be going to public consultation this spring, and to clarify the difference between a watershed study and a functional plan.

Mr. Stickings replied that a watershed study is site-specific, in this case specific to Birch Cove, while a functional plan is broader in scope to support the management of strategic initiatives. To Councillor Watts' first point, he indicated that the Birch Cove project and the regional planning process (RP+5) go hand in hand, as evidenced by map 13 of the draft regional plan. He also believed that Blue Mountain Birch Cove Park was in keeping with greenbelting, which is identified in Chapter 2 of the draft plan.

To accommodate the public, the Standing Committee then proceeded to discuss item 7.1.1.

Councillor Fisher exited the meeting at 1:15 pm.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Staff Reports

7.1.1 Recommendation Report dated February 26, 2013 regarding Waste Strategy Public Consultation Process

The following documents were before the Standing Committee:

- The Recommendation Report dated February 26, 2013
- Correspondence from the Community Monitoring Committee dated March 5, 2013

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Watts that the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee defer discussion of the Waste Strategy Public Consultation Process until the next meeting in order for the Community Monitoring Committee to provide input.

Deputy Mayor Rankin indicated that his motion comes at the request of the Community Monitoring Committee (CMC) of Otter Lake, which wishes to review and make recommendations on the staff report before the Standing Committee reaches its decision. As CMC only received the report on March 4th, he felt they had not had sufficient time to review it and make sure the consultation process will be meaningful. Deputy Mayor Rankin then explained the make-up and responsibilities of the CMC, which are outlined in a contractual agreement. He noted that public consultation is a pillar of the solid waste strategy, and for this reason, it is necessary that CMC be provided with the opportunity to comment on the staff report before it is voted on by the Standing Committee and Regional Council. He called for an open, transparent and accessible consultation process that engages CMC from the very beginning.

Councillor Fisher returned at 1:20 pm.

Councillor Craig explained that as former Chair of the Highway 101 landfill close-up committee he understood the importance of public consultation on waste issues. He had no issue deferring discussion of the report to the next meeting.

Mr. Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, indicated that staff is looking for feedback and direction from the Standing Committee on the proposed consultation process. As for the role of the CMC, he noted that it is staff's intent to engage them at the front-end of the process, as indicated on page 3 of the report.

Councillor Craig noted that the report clearly states that the CMC will be involved in the consultation process. However, the correspondence received seems to suggest that CMC also wants to be involved in the preparation of the report on the consultation process. He wished to know if that was correct.

Deputy Mayor Rankin indicated that there are a number of pieces missing from the proposal, including the style of consultations and whether they will be facilitated by staff, third parties or even the CMC. He was disappointed that Councillors had not been invited to comment on the consultation process before the report was issued.

Mr. Labrecque explained that the staff report is simply a proposal. Regional Council, not staff, is responsible for selecting the style of consultation. If approved, then the plan would be implemented. Feedback received at the consultations would be brought back to the Standing Committee and Regional Council in July or August 2013.

Councillor Watts felt it was wise to defer the matter in light of concerns raised by the CMC and the Councillor for the area. She asked that the CMC outline their concerns in a letter to be received in advance of the Standing Committee's April meeting. She remarked that the style and format of public consultations is evolving dramatically, and hoped that HRM would consider a diversity of models, including those involving third party facilitators.

Deputy Mayor Rankin confirmed that the CMC could provide comment or an alternate proposal before the next meeting.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence

6.1.1 Presentation Request from the Ecology Action Centre

An Information Report dated February 27, 2013 outlining the Ecology Action Centre's request was before the Standing Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Craig that the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee accept the presentation request and invite the Ecology Action Centre to the meeting of April 4, 2013. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6.1.2 Presentation Request from the Electronic Recycling Association

An Information Report dated February 27, 2013 outlining the Electronic Recycling Association's request was before the Standing Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Fisher that the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee direct staff to meet with the Electronic Recycling Association. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6.1.3 Correspondence from S.M. Mandaville

A report dated February 21, 2013 was before the Standing Committee.

The Standing Committee acknowledged receipt of the report.

6.2 Petitions - NONE

6.3 **Presentations**

6.3.1 JDA MacKenzie Architects regarding HRM's Geothermal Site at Alderney Landing

Mr. Foster MacKenzie of JDA MacKenzie Architects explained that his client, Queen Square Development Limited, is interested in accessing HRM's geothermal site at Alderney Landing, Dartmouth. His client submitted a draft contract to this effect as early as 2008, which resulted in a meeting with HRM staff in 2010. In 2011, communication ceased all together when his client's contact at HRM retired.

Mr. Mackenzie indicated that his client is pursuing development along the Dartmouth Waterfront and remains interested in accessing excess heating and cooling capacity to reduce the development's carbon footprint. He wished to know if this opportunity could be made available to his client.

Councillor Watts asked staff to comment on Mr. Mackenzie's request.

Mr. MacLellan indicated that the geothermal site has been operational for three years, albeit with a few glitches. He suggested that staff prepare an update on the geothermal project and, as part of this report, explore the possibility for external stakeholders to tie into it.

The Chair asked that the report be prepared in a timely manner, given that the request dates from 2008.

Mr. MacLellan indicated that it would be brought to the Standing Committee in April or May 2013.

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Fisher that the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee direct staff to prepare a report on the status of the geothermal site and the possibility for external stakeholders to access heating and cooling capacity.

Councillors Craig and Fisher expressed concern regarding the delay in responding to this request, with the latter wondering if HRM needed a legislative change to sell excess energy.

Mr. MacLellan explained that HRM has the legislative authority to sell heat to a neighbour if it so wishes. At issue is whether the operation is sustainable and has enough capacity.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6.3.2 QUEST regarding the Municipal Role in Community Energy Projects

Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Caucus Chair for Nova Scotia, thanked the Standing Committee for the opportunity to present and introduced her colleague, Mr. Jim Simmons, an engineer with Stantec. She explained that QUEST stands for Quality Urban Energy Systems of Tomorrow and is a national organization that promotes collaboration among energy stakeholders to optimize Canadian energy investments. It was established in 2007 and is led by Mike Harcourt, former Mayor of Vancouver and Premier of British Columbia.

Ms. Donovan noted that QUEST brings together a wide range of stakeholders, including levels of government, utilities, developers, consumers and members of the NGO and academic community. She then listed a number of its Nova Scotia partners, such as HRM, Heritage Gas, the Department of Energy, various consultants, and Dalhousie University, which participates both as an academic partner and as a large consumer of energy.

Mr. Simmons briefly outlined QUEST projects underway in Nova Scotia, including:

- A study on compressed natural gas delivery infrastructure with a particular focus on how to connect rural and remote communities;
- A study on barriers to district energy projects; and
- Several active transportation projects.

He indicated that QUEST has secured \$200,000 in the last 18 months to support these and other projects.

Ms. Donovan observed that energy is often absent from HRM's priorities even though the municipality has a clearly defined corporate and community role in this area. HRM holds many assets for which it must make responsible energy choices. It also has the tools to affect the energy choices of residents as a leader, enabler, regulator and innovator.

Ms. Donovan reminded the Standing Committee that HRM has the legal authority to work in this area as the HRM Charter authorizes energy expenditures. In fact, Nova Scotia municipalities have a long history of providing or supporting energy projects, including Halifax which in the 1920s funded Nova Scotia Power's first generating facility. This is true even today as six Nova Scotia municipalities, including Lunenburg, run their own utilities.

Ms. Donovan indicated that energy is critical to the economic health of the municipality, and on this basis, should be integrated into HRM's economic strategy. Referencing a Hydro Québec study on power rates across North America, she noted that HRM has the highest residential rate in Canada and the second highest small business rate.

Ms. Donovan believed that the implementation of an energy strategy, like those undertaken by Cumberland County and the City of Summerside, would allow HRM to save money, diversify revenue streams, and to provide leadership by example. At issue is not whether HRM has an energy mandate. It does. The real issue is how Regional Council balances municipal priorities.

Councillor Watts thanked Ms. Donovan and Mr. Simmons for their presentation and agreed that energy must be discussed within the context of economic development. She hoped that HRM would begin to see itself as a generator of the energy sector in much the same way as it sees itself as a generator of the cultural sector. In both cases, HRM has the potential to take on a leadership role in order to strengthen quality of life and diversify revenue streams. Councillor Watts was disappointed that energy had not figured prominently in Regional Council's discussion of strategic priorities for 2013. However, it has won the attention of other stakeholders, like the Chamber of Commerce and the public at large. In HRM's citizenship survey, respondents rated energy as an issue of high importance. Excitement over the Solar City project is further evidence of this. She concluded by asking staff if the energy file could be advanced by way of the Regional Plan.

Mr. MacLellan indicated that the Chamber of Commerce has an Energy Advisory Committee on which HRM is represented. As for regional planning, he noted that staff will bring forward proposed revisions to the Community Energy Plan within the next two months with the intent of adding the changes to next year's fiscal plan. Finally, on whether energy is a priority for HRM, he reminded the Standing Committee that Solar City has been launched, the East Port Energy project is being examined, and the LED streetlight project is going ahead.

Councillor Watts asked that energy be prioritized in the budgeting process so that energy projects, like those listed, are adequately supported.

Mr. Labrecque explained that the final budget draft will detail key deliverables across all business units, including Planning & Infrastructure.

Councillor Fisher echoed Councillor Watts' concerns all the while recognizing that important steps have been taken in the last few years. Solar City, the LED streetlight program and other initiatives is evidence that HRM is catching on.

Mr. Simmons agreed that HRM and Nova Scotia are well positioned but can do more to control energy usage and rates. After all, controlling energy consumption would reduce budgetary pressures. He pointed out that the energy industry is very dynamic. For HRM to maintain its leadership position, it will need to keep abreast of technological changes.

Councillor Watts indicated that HRM has much to be proud of but reminded colleagues of the struggles along the way. She believed that one of the challenges moving forward will be to keep pace with innovation in the energy sector. She asked that the Standing Committee be kept informed of technological trends so that it can make timely recommendations to Regional Council.

The Chair noted that presentations from industry will be helpful in this regard. He thanked Ms. Donovan and Mr. Simmons for their appearance before the Standing Committee.

6.3.3 Solar City Townsville (Australia) and IBM's Smart City Challenge

Mr. Jason Lange explained that he works on watercycle issues for Townsville, a small municipality in Queensland, Australia. Townsville is a coastal community with a population of 200,000. It is one of five participating communities in Australia's Solar Cities program, which aims to trial new, sustainable models for electricity supply. The program has been such a success that Townsville won IBM's Smarter Cities Challenge.

Mr. Lange indicated that the Solar City program is built on a partnership between local government, local energy providers, and state government. Through this partnership, Townsville has launched varied projects to promote and install LED lighting, solar panels and white roofs. Solar City has been especially embraced by residents of Magnetic Island National Park. Here, 500 solar panels have been installed and 1,300

homes have received smart meters. The combination of technology and behavioural change has resulted in a 40% reduction in energy demand during peak periods, like 6:00-9:00 pm.

Mr. Lange went on to explain that Townsville offers a number of free training seminars, runs a district cooling system, has a fleet of cars powered by solar panels, and maintains a solar charging station at the airport.

Moving forward, the biggest challenge facing Townsville is water conservation. Mr. Lange noted that Townsville uses three times more water than the average Australian town, and that water-related expenses represent 70% of the municipality's energy costs. If water consumption is part of the problem, so too is water loss due to infrastructure inefficiencies. To better understand how and when residents use water, Townsville has begun to install smart meters on homes to collect water consumption data that is analysed by IBM. From this, Townsville will be able to formulate concrete commendations to help residents reduce water and energy consumption. He suggested that HRM take a similar approach, that is, to integrate water management into the Solar City program.

Councillor Watts thanked Mr. Lange for his presentation. She agreed that there are lots of opportunities to improve energy efficiencies in the water service, and wondered if he had met with the Halifax Water Commission. She also wished to know more about Townsville's partnership with IBM and its public consultation process.

Mr. Lange explained that Townsville won the IBM Smart Cities Challenge and since that time has relied on the company to manage data and put it into a useable database. As for public consultation, he noted that residents were keen to participate in the project, and for this reason, many community meetings were required. He believed that people are genuinely interested in reducing their carbon footprint but do not always have the know-how or financial resources to do so. For these reasons, it is important for local government to step in to make these projects possible.

A brief discussion ensued about photovoltaics. To this, Mr. Lange replied that Townsville's solar panel project has been so successful that it now has too much energy on the grid. If the municipality were to redo the project, it would look at ways to concentrate solar generation in the urban core where people work. A second project which has been successful, but has garnered less attention, involves painting roofs white.

Councillor Craig expressed interest in learning about strategies to reduce energy consumption at peak times. He wished to know if homes have storage capacity or if excess energy goes back into the grid.

Mr. Lange explained that energy is limited during the day in order to maximize the investment.

Councillor Fisher recommended that a letter be sent to Townsville Municipal Council thanking them for sharing best practices with HRM.

The Chair thanked Mr. Lange for his presentation and invited staff to provide an update on HRM's Solar City project.

9. ADDED ITEMS

9.1 Councillor Watts - Update on Implementation of Solar City

Mr. Julian Boyle, Manager of Strategic Energy Policy, indicated that the project is moving along nicely. Two additional staff have been hired, vendor agreements are in place, and the first round of installations, scheduled. Just as importantly, public interest remains strong, with over 300 residents attending Solar City Open Houses. He indicated that a full report would be forwarded to the Standing Committee in the spring.

Councillor Watts suggested that the Solar City team work with Corporate Communications on a public relations piece to promote the installation of the first solar panel.

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS (CONTINUED)

6.3 **Presentations (CONTINUED)**

6.3.4 Ecology Action Centre regarding Nova Scotia's Mining Policies

Ms. Jennifer West, Geoscience Coordinator for the Ecology Action Centre, thanked the Standing Committee for the opportunity to share key findings of "On Solid Ground: Community Voices for Changing Nova Scotia's Mining Policies." The report identifies ways to improve community consultation and industry practices in preparation for the Province's review of the *Mineral Resources Act* – a review in which municipal participation will be important.

Ms. West provided an overview of the mineral development cycle, noting that every step has its own regulations and guidelines. Proposed mines and quarries of more than four hectares automatically trigger an environmental assessment and public consultation. Currently, there are fifteen mines in Nova Scotia, including the world's largest gypsum mine located near the Stanfield International Airport.

The Ecology Action Centre, in collaboration with the Sierra Club of Canada reached out to communities near mines in order to formulate recommendations in advance of the *Mineral Resources Act* review. Ms. West indicated that the most common concern voiced by communities is that they do not have the power to reject mining projects. Mine projects exceeding four hectares are rarely halted at the environmental assessment stage. The debate over the Fall River quarry shows that even for smaller projects, there

is no mechanism to stop them from going forward. Ms. West believed that the Act should be changed such that it acknowledges democratic rights.

The second major concern identified was the lack of community consultation before the environmental assessment stage and during the operation of a mine or quarry. Ms. West noted that residents do not feel that their concerns are being heard or are being incorporated into exploration plans or activities. Given this, the Ecology Action Centre is recommending that the Act include a consultation framework for all stages of mining activities, and would include timelines and a public registry.

Residents also worried about environmental standards applied to quarries. Under current legislation, a quarry that is less than four hectares does not require an environmental assessment. Ms. West noted that it should come as no surprise that most quarries in Nova Scotia are below this threshold, which means that significant environmental impacts are being overlooked. To overcome this problem, she recommended that quarries be included in the Act and that the four hectare threshold be eliminated.

To these three, residents added a fourth related to the closure of mines and the rehabilitation of lands. Ms. West pointed out that reclamation is not defined in the *Mineral Resources Act* or in the *Environment Act* and as a result of this gap there is much confusion around what ought to be done and what role the community ought to play. The Ecology Action Centre recommends that the Act define, regulate, and develop a consultation framework for reclamation projects.

Ms. West indicated that the Ecology Action Centre has developed 28 recommendations around these four main concerns. She encouraged the Standing Committee to read the full report and to consider submitting input to the Province when the *Mineral Resources Act* review process opens. She similarly asked HRM to consider changing its by-laws to strengthen mining standards.

Councillor Watts thanked Ms. West for her presentation and asked Councillor Dalrymple to comment on his experience dealing with mining issues in the Fall River area.

Councillor Dalrymple was pleased with the recommendation to extend environmental assessments to quarries of less than four hectares. He felt that this is important because there are more quarries in Nova Scotia than there are mines. Moreover, companies strategically develop their sites four hectares at a time in order to circumvent the environmental assessment requirement. He encouraged Councillors to visit one of the many mines and quarries in HRM, such as the gypsum quarry near Elmsdale.

Councillor Watts requested that Ms. West contact the Clerk when the *Mineral Resources Act* review opens as the Standing Committee may wish to participate.

8. MOTIONS - NONE

9. ADDED ITEMS (CONTINUED)

9.2 Councillor Watts - Update on National Zero Waste Council – Teleconference of March 4, 2013

Mr. Gord Hem, Manager of Solid Waste Resources, provided a brief overview of the inaugural teleconference of the Steering Committee of the National Zero Waste Council, which brought together government and private sector stakeholders. Over the next six months, the Steering Committee hopes to lay the groundwork for stewardship and extended producer responsibility models that would be implemented by the National Zero Waste Council.

Mr. Helm recommended that HRM join the Steering Committee so long as the latter recognizes that diversion capabilities vary considerably across municipalities. To this, he added that HRM's Councillor-delegate to the Steering Committee could count on the support of his solid waste resources team.

Deputy Mayor Rankin explained that he had attended the national round table on zero waste in 2012, which sparked the creation of the National Zero Waste Council. The latter is an initiative of Metro Vancouver and does not have particular standing under FCM. He was unsure of the level of support nationally for this initiative.

The Chair wished to know if the Steering Committee requires a Councillor appointee or if staff representation would suffice.

Mr. Helm confirmed that the Steering Committee has asked for a Councillor appointment, not a staff appointment. Currently, the retail sector, particularly from British Columbia and Ontario, is well represented on the Committee. In terms of expenses, he noted that most meetings will be held by teleconference. However, in the coming months, HRM's delegate will be required to travel to Ottawa twice for meetings held in conjunction with FCM events.

Deputy Mayor Rankin recommended that Councillor Walker or Councillor Karsten be chosen as HRM's delegate because they will be present at FCM meetings.

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Craig that the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee:

- Recommend that Regional Council accept the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' invitation for HRM to become a member of the Steering Committee of the National Zero Waste Council; and
- Nominate Councillor Karsten or Councillor Walker to be HRM's delegate to the Steering Committee

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

10.1 Councillor Watts

"Take notice that at the next regular meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee, I intend to introduce a motion requesting staff to recommend a policy to Regional Council to ensure that all new HRM corporate buildings are built "Solar Ready" for the future."

11. NEXT MEETING DATE - April 4, 2013

The Standing Committee agreed to hold the next meeting in Council Chambers at City Hall.

12. IN CAMERA - NONE

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:26 pm.

Ted Aubut Legislative Assistant