

**Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee
December 5, 2013**

TO: Chair and Members of Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Jane Fraser, Director, Planning & Infrastructure

DATE: November 14, 2013

SUBJECT: QUEST Solar Recommendations

ORIGIN

Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee (ESSC), October 3, 2013.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

QUEST Nova Scotia presented ESSC with ten (10) recommendations for municipal action related to solar energy. Of the recommendations, HRM has legislative authority on some and does not have legislative authority on others.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the ESSC refer both the QUEST Solar Subcommittee Recommendations and the Nova Scotia Home Builders Association comments, to the Community Energy Plan project.

BACKGROUND

At the October 3, 2013, ESSC meeting, QUEST Nova Scotia presented a report and ten recommendations with respect to municipal action on solar energy. Following the presentation, the committee approved the following motion: that the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee request a staff report examining all 10 (ten) recommendations outlined in the QUEST Solar Committee report.

On November 13, 2013, following submission of written dissent to some of the recommendations, Nova Scotia Home Builders Association presented their input on the recommendations.

DISCUSSION

Overview of QUEST Recommendations:

Recommendation	NSHBA Input	Initial Staff Comments
Lead by Example	Concur	Reflects recommended objectives of Community Energy Plan presented to ESSC on November 13, 2013, in Information Report (Update, Community Energy Plan).
Require rural properties to adopt passive solar orientation	Dissents on regulation; Agrees on Education	With agreement on Information, appears to be opportunity to collaborate on an information activity. A legislative solution would require more discussion. With dissenting views, a regulation would be a challenge to progress prior to the fulsome Community Energy Plan. Will be further examined in Community Energy Plan.
Start in depth solar planning now	Dissent	Not clear on the specific activities. Community Energy Plan will define activities for recommendation to ESSC and Regional Council.
Define Solar Ready	Dissent	Not Municipal Mandate/Authority/Expertise. NRCan has a Solar Ready definition.
Encourage Solar Ready through Incentives	-	Not municipal mandate with Efficiency Nova Scotia and Department of Energy Demand Side Management and policy based incentive programs.
Resource appropriately	Dissent	Staff will resource to meet Regional Council priorities.
Energy Labelling	Concur	Not municipal mandate. Provincial authority. Community Energy Plan will help define municipal input.
Solar Ready By-Law	Dissent on regulation; Agrees on Education	With agreement on Information, appears to be opportunity to collaborate on an information activity. A legislative solution would require more discussion. With dissenting views, a regulation would be a challenge to progress prior to the fulsome Community Energy Plan. Will be further examined in the Community Energy Plan.

Nova Scotia Solar Act	Dissent	Not municipal mandate. Provincial authority. Community Energy Plan will help define municipal input.
Solar Vision for HRM	Concur	Logical part of the Community Energy Plan.

Overview of Community Energy Plan revision Project:

On May 2, 2013, ESSC approved a Project Framework for the revision of the Community Energy Plan. On June 6, 2013, and November 13, 2013, ESSC received updates on the activities and project progress, which included identification of four desired outcomes:

1. For HRM businesses to reduce cost of business;
2. For HRM businesses to have economic opportunity in the energy sector;
3. For HRM residents to have increased energy choices; and
4. For HRM to demonstrate community leadership.

Following steps in the project, which include Opportunities Assessment and Development of an Action Plan, will readily receive the input from the QUEST Solar Subcommittee project and NSHBA comments. Further examination on a regulatory or educational approach on alternative energy solutions, is required and inclusion in the engagement process and plan development will help present ESSC and Regional Council with strong options for consideration.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no impacts to the 2013/14 Operating or Project Budget from the recommendation of this report. Various recommendations from QUEST would have financial implications that would be more rigorously examined prior to recommendation to Regional Council.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This report resulted from a community group making a presentation to ESSC.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Opportunities to improve energy efficiency and uptake of renewal energy solutions have a positive environmental impact.

ALTERNATIVES

ESSC may choose to direct staff to develop a Solar Orientation and/or Solar Ready By-Law independent of the Community Energy Plan and contrary to the input of the homebuilding industry. This is not recommended as there is dissent on the subject and, without the fulsome

options of the Community Energy Plan, it would be difficult for staff to provide Committee or Regional Council a full suite of options and alternatives to achieve the desired outcomes.

ATTACHMENTS

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.html> 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: Original Signed

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