

GRANTS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

September 14, 2009

PRESENT: Councillor Russell Walker, Chair
Councillor Peter Lund
Councillor Jennifer Watts
Councillor Barry Dalrymple
Councillor Jim Smith
Councillor Brad Johns
Ms. Gina Byrne
Mr. Andrew Higdon
Mr. David Woo
Mr. Geoff Baker

ABSENT: Ms. Pamela Henley
Ms. Monica Jordan

STAFF: Ms. Peta-Jane Temple, Team Lead, Tax, Grants & Special Projects
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m. in the MacLennan Room, 3rd Floor Duke Tower, Halifax.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - August 5, 2009

MOVED by Councillor Johns, seconded by Councillor Lund, that the minutes of August 5, 2009, as presented, be approved. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

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

Additions: 7.1 Information Item 1

MOVED BY Mr. Andrew Higdon, seconded by Councillor Lund, that the order of business, as amended, be approved. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

4. DEFERRED BUSINESS

4.1 Less Than Market Value Sale Guidelines - Briefing Report

- A copy of a Briefing Report was before the Committee

This item was deferred from the June 1, 2009 and August 5, 2009 meetings. Ms. Peta-Jane Temple, Team Lead, Tax, Grants and Special Projects, presented the Briefing Report.

Councillor Smith entered the meeting at 1:07 p.m.

Following discussion by the Committee, it was **MOVED BY Councillor Johns, seconded by Councillor Lund that the Grants Committee request a staff report for the October 5, 2009 meeting outlining the following:**

1. **Guidelines for less than market value sales;**
2. **Consideration of the potential to have a percentage of the less than market value sales redirected to the Grants budget;**
3. **Review of tax exemption status and costs to municipality;**
4. **Proposed property acquisition line item in budget allocation to clearly show the situation of expenditures versus expected revenue from property sales;**
5. **Include an historical record of funding to the property including tax rebates and any grants;**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Ms. Temple advised that a report on real property transactions from amalgamation to the present involving approximately sixty-six (66) properties would be brought to the Committee at a future meeting.

4.2 HRM Community Facility Partnership Fund: Proposed Amendments to Policy and Program Implementation Update

- A report dated July 2, 2009 was before the Committee.

The information was circulated for information purposes only. Ms. Temple advised that staff would bring forward the ineligible applications for the Committee's review following the September 31st program closing date. Once staff have completed their review of the eligible applications, a staff report, including recommendations for the Committee's consideration, would be brought forward.

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF MINUTES - NONE

6. REPORTS

6.1 Property Matter - Less Than Market Value Sale, 9 Spring Street Bedford - Hospice Society of Greater Halifax

- A copy of the August 4, 2009 staff report was before the Committee.

Ms. Temple presented the report.

Following discussion by the Committee, it was **MOVED BY Councillor Johns, seconded by Councillor Lund that the Grants Committee defer the matter to the October meeting pending a Supplementary Staff report clarifying the following:**

1. **Add a qualifier in Purchase and Sale agreement that the purchaser would accept the presence of the tennis court and playground and public access to same;**
2. **Revise Attachment 1 to indicate the location of the playground and tennis court relative to the building and abutting property (school);**
3. **Does the \$220,000 appraised price include the \$65,000 estimated cost to bring the building up to code or would the actual price be \$285,000?**
4. **Could a variance be applied for and the land subdivided in order to sell the building without the tennis court/playground portion thereby eliminating the need for a public easement.**
5. **Would it be possible to sell the building and lease the property;**
6. **Would it be possible to add the tennis court and playground area to the neighbouring school property;**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6.2 **HRM Community Grants Program 2009-2010 - Eligibility of Community Gardens**

- An Information Sheet was before the Committee.

Ms. Temple provided an overview of the issue.

The Committee concurred with the development of a set of guidelines/criteria for reviewing applications for funding of community gardens and suggested the following:

- that staff prepare an interpretation bulletin (similar to the one explaining what a comfort centre was);
- have staff who work with community gardens, such as Claudia Levy, present to the Committee or provide comment on community gardens;
- suggest that groups (applicants) obtain matching donations from local businesses;
- the \$50,000 environment grant budget would have to be increased to accommodate the addition of community gardens;

The Committee requested that the matter be added to the October 5, 2009 agenda.

6.3 **Partial Tax Exemption for Homes Destroyed by Fire**

- A report dated September 3, 2009 was before the Committee.

Mr. Bruce Fisher, Manager, Finance Services, presented the report.

Following discussion by the Committee, it was **MOVED BY Councillor Dalrymple, seconded by Councillor Lund that the Grants Committee request a Supplementary Report recommending Option 1 as outlined in the staff report dated September 3, 2009 and that the commencement date be for a fire that occurred on or after December 1, 2008. Staff are also to consider:**

1. **the inclusion of accessory buildings (garages);**
2. **provide examples of the implications for fires that would occur at different times of the year;**
3. **open up tax exemption to include floods, sewage backup, radon gas issues or storm surges;**
4. **that the assessment cap be maintained for those homes lost to fire;**
5. **provide ability for property owner to receive extension for rebuild time with proper documentation outlining why the rebuild time would have to be extended;**
6. **are commercial uses considered;**
7. **consider mobile homes as some lease the land but own the structure and some own both the structure and land;**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7. ADDED ITEMS

7.1 Information Item - Grants & Contributions Appeals - Current Practices

Deferred to the October 5, 2009 meeting due to time constraints.

8. NEXT REGULAR MEETING DATE - October 5, 2009

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:43 p.m.

Chris Newson
Legislative Assistant