

Heritage Advisory Committee
August 22, 2012

TO: Chair and Members of the Heritage Advisory Committee



SUBMITTED BY:

Brad Anguish, Director of Community and Recreation Services

DATE: August 13, 2012

SUBJECT: 2011 Annual Report for the Heritage Property Program

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Annual report to the Heritage Advisory Committee on the Heritage Property Program.

BACKGROUND

In 2011, a report prepared by HRM's Auditor General on Corporate Grants, Donations and Contributions recommended that HRM publically report on an annual basis all transactions relating to grants, donations, contributions and sponsorships. To date this comprehensive report has not been produced; however, this report documents all financial transactions relative to the Heritage Property Program as enabled by the *Nova Scotia Heritage Property Act*.

Additionally, this report outlines the activities and achievements of the Heritage Property Program for the past year, and future initiatives for the coming year. This is the second year an annual report has been prepared.

Heritage Property Program

The Heritage Property Program is staffed by two heritage planners who are responsible for its administration. The purpose of the Program is to advise Council on the conservation of significant heritage resources including buildings, streetscapes, sites, areas, and conservation districts that reflect the rich heritage in local communities throughout the entire region.

Governance

The work of the Heritage Property Program is governed by the *Nova Scotia Heritage Property Act* and HRM's Heritage By-law (H-200). The *Heritage Property Act* authorizes the Municipality to establish a registry of buildings, streetscapes, sites, conservation areas and conservation districts of municipal significance through the adoption of a heritage by-law: By-law H-200. The HRM Heritage Property Program maintains the Municipal Registry of Heritage Properties, which includes those buildings, sites and areas reflecting the rich heritage of the communities which make up the Halifax Regional Municipality.

DISCUSSION

The work performed by Heritage staff falls under 9 categories of activities as outlined below:

1) Heritage Incentives Program (Residential & Commercial)

The aim of the Heritage Incentive Program is to encourage the conservation of privately owned municipally registered heritage properties for residential and commercial purposes. The program has an annual budget of \$100,000 and provides matching grants of the total value of work to be completed up to \$10,000 for eligible exterior conservation work.

In 2011, HRM received 21 applications for grant assistance and the range of work included:

- 9 projects for roof repair/replacements;
- 5 projects for window repair/replacement;
- 3 projects for masonry repairs/restoration;
- 2 project for front door repair/replacement; and
- 2 projects for re-shingling and/or painting.

Of these 21 applications, 5 were ineligible as they did not meet the requirements of the grant program. Of the remaining 16 applications, fourteen were able to be supported within the annual budget of \$100,000. These approved grants leveraged an additional \$221,051 in private investment into these heritage properties.

Of the 16 approved applications, only one was for work on a commercial project located at 1877 Hollis Street, which involved the replacement of a roof, and repainting of masonry.

2) Barrington Street Heritage Incentives Program

The Barrington Street Heritage Incentives Program offers grants and tax credits for heritage building restoration and renovation within the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District. The program came into effect in October 2009 upon establishment of the Conservation District with an annual grant budget of \$200,000. The program received funding approval from Council for 5 years in the amount of \$1 million in grants and \$2 million in tax credits.

In September of 2011, a staff report outlining three applications for approval under the Barrington Street Heritage Incentives Program was submitted to Regional Council. These three applications were approved and consisted of:

- a) The Carsand Mosher building located at 1559 Barrington Street;
- b) Brander-Morris building located at 1566 Barrington Street; and
- c) G. M. Smith building located at 1717 Barrington Street.

The following chart illustrates an overview of the budget and approved funding commitments for the Barrington Street Heritage Incentives Program:

	Grants	Tax Credits	Combined Total
Overall Program Budget	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$3,000,000
2009 commitments	\$200,000	\$696,138	\$896,138
2010 commitments	\$200,000	\$1,018,686	\$1,218,686
2011 commitments	\$119,750	\$102,110	\$221,860
Total commitments '09-'11	\$519,750	\$1,816,934	\$2,336,684
Balance (at end of fiscal '11/'12)	\$480,250	\$183,066	\$663,316

Uptake on the program continues to be positive, but the actual progress of work has been slow. So far, only one small project (storefront restoration and new boiler system in the Colwell building) has reached completion. Two larger projects, the Freemasons Hall, and the Carsand

Mosher Building, are about 90% complete. Due to complexities in the accounting of the Freemason's Hall project, it is anticipated that carry over of funds into the next fiscal year will be required. The Carsand-Mosher building will also require carry over to complete the last 10% of work.

On July 6, 2010, Regional Council approved a grant of \$100,000 and tax credit of \$376,625 for the redevelopment of the NFB property. After some changes to the scope of the work, the owner has requested carryover of the funding and it is anticipated that the project will commence this year. Additionally, the owner of the Green Lantern building has indicated his project will not move forward and will, therefore, withdraw his application.

The total value of private investment represented by all of the approved projects is in the order of \$13.3 million. The total cost to HRM to date is \$2,336,684.

3) Registrations

One of the purposes of *Heritage Property Act* is to provide for the designation of buildings which impart our historic, architectural or cultural value. The Act outlines the process by which heritage registrations may occur, and in accordance with Sections 14 & 15, HRM may include a building into the Municipal Registry of Heritage Properties. In 2011, staff prepared reports for the Heritage Advisory Committee on three proposed heritage registrations:

- a) 1141 Cartaret Street, Halifax;
- b) 5720 Inglis Street, Halifax; and
- c) Halifax Memorial Library, Spring Garden Road, Halifax.

The first two applications received approval from Council and are now part of the Municipal Registry of Heritage Properties. The third registration request has been deferred by Council until such time as the long term future of the existing Halifax Library on Spring Garden Road has been determined. At present, staff are in the process of determining the municipal interests and options for the property and identifying the associated costs and benefits for each option. Following the completion of this exercise, Council may then consider whether the matter of heritage registration.

Due to the cost of the heritage research study that is required to back-up the requests for heritage designation, heritage staff had to turn away 4 requests for registration until the approval of the 2012/13 fiscal budget. All of the four requests have been submitted for approval under the 2012/13 budget.

4) De-registrations

Under Section 16 of the Act, Council may de-register a municipally registered heritage property. In 2011, Council de-registered only one building and that was the Wanderers Dry Canteen (a municipally owned building) located at 5755 Sackville Street due to deterioration of the building and the cost to restore it to a safe condition.

5) Demolitions

Under Section 17 of the Act, Council may approve the demolition of a municipally registered heritage property. In 2011, HRM there were no heritage property demolitions. One demolition application was received for the former Bloomfield House on Fuller Terrace but it was withdrawn after heritage staff worked with the property owner regarding options for adaptive re-use of the building. The owners are presently preparing plans for a substantial alteration at the rear of the building which will require review by HAC and approval by Regional Council.

6) Substantial Alterations

Section 17 of the *Heritage Property Act* also permits Council to consider the substantial alteration of a municipally registered heritage property. Section 17 states that a “Municipal heritage property shall not be substantially altered in exterior or public-building interior appearance or demolished without the approval of the municipality.” The Act also states that a “substantial alteration means any action that affects or alters the character-defining elements of a property.”

For heritage staff, this requires careful investigation of the effect of the proposed alteration on the character-defining elements and the heritage values of the property. If a proposed alteration constitutes a substantial alteration in accordance with the *Heritage Property Act*, Council is therefore required to approve the alteration. As each property has unique heritage values, it is difficult to state that one type of building change will always constitute a substantial alteration. In general, building additions, removals of portions of a building constitute a substantial alteration. Staff’s role is to forward such requests to the HAC for review and recommendation to Regional Council to make a decision on the appropriateness of the alteration. Non-substantial alterations are handled by staff through the permitting process.

In addition to those reviews which resulted in the issuance of building permits, Certificates of Appropriateness, site plan approvals or those associated with planning or subdivision applications, heritage staff reviewed an additional 50 requests for alterations which were determined to not constitute a substantial alteration to the heritage property and therefore did not require Regional Council approval.

7) Permits/Certificates of Appropriateness

In 2011, heritage staff reviewed 100 building and development permits. These included small projects such as signage permits and larger projects involving additions to buildings. Much of this work would be within the Downtown Halifax plan area and requires staff review the Building Conservation Standards as well as Section 4 of the Downtown Plan and By-law, and often the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation By-law.

In 2011, heritage staff was involved with 24 planning and subdivision reviews, the majority of the work supported the planning application review process. Planning application reviews include requests for development agreements, discharge of development agreements, and requests for site plan approval. This work includes reviewing alterations to the heritage property to determine if it constitutes a substantial alteration, but also reviewing heritage policies in HRM Municipal Planning Strategies, most specifically the Downtown Halifax Plan. The subdivision

reviews include both subdivision applications for heritage properties, and those applications where there is an adjacent heritage resource or registered heritage property.

Additionally, staff have reviewed 4 applications for Certificates of Appropriateness (under the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District) resulting in the issuance of a Certificate for all 4 applications.

8) Planning Applications

Heritage staff is routinely involved in planning applications when applications directly affect a municipally registered heritage property. The most significant cases are briefly described below:

- TD Bank Tower: an addition to the existing TD Bank tower at the corner of Barrington, Duke, and Granville Streets which involves a substantial alteration of the Macara-Barnstead building fronting on Granville Street. The substantial alteration consists of the demolition of the entire Macara-Barnstead building except for its front facade which will be retained, restored, and incorporated into the new tower addition. The substantive site plan approval application was approved by the Design Review Committee on September 8, 2011.
- 10 Kirk Road, Halifax: the negotiation of a development agreement to redevelop the 3.5 acre property into a 14 unit bare land condominium. The development agreement was approved by Chebucto Community Council on July 4, 2011.
- CD Plus Building: an application to demolish the existing building located in the Barrington Street HCD and replace it with a new building. The demolition was approved by Halifax Regional Council on May 22, 2012, and the substantive site plan approval application was approved by the Design Review Committee on March 8, 2012.

9) Citizen Inquiries & Communication

Staff estimates that heritage staff responded to an average of 2-3 inquiries by phone, and 2 inquiries by email each working day. Additionally, they have undertaken approximately 60 site visits to provide advice relative to building permit and Certificate of Appropriateness applications, heritage incentives grants, alterations to a heritage property (no building permit required), heritage gas installations, and heritage registration or development agreement requests.

Inquiries typically relate to the following:

- Potential purchase of registered heritage properties,
- Heritage Incentives Programs,
- Regulations regarding alterations or potential new registrations,
- Student inquiries regarding heritage related projects,
- Internal inquiries, including HRM owned heritage properties,
- Inquires from the general public regarding heritage related redevelopments, and
- Other municipal units and organizations from across Canada.

Canadian Institute of Planners – Winning Nomination for the Hydrostone District as a Great Place in Canada

“Great Places in Canada” is a new annual program sponsored by the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) that seeks out places in the country that citizens feel warrant special recognition. The mandate is to engage the public in a dialogue on what makes them proud of this particular location. Nominations can be made in three categories: Streets, Neighbourhoods and Public Spaces.

Nominations were accepted from December of 2010 until May 2011. During this time people were invited to nominate and vote for well-designed memorable streets, public spaces, neighbourhoods, or other places of interest that come to mind anywhere across the nation. Locally, one nomination was made for the Hydrostone area under the category of Neighbourhood.

On May 16th, 2011 the finalists were selected and the top three winners in the Neighbourhood category were: 1) Le petit Champlain, Old Quebec City; 2) Hydrostone, Halifax North End; 3) Snaw-Naw-As, Lantzville, BC. An award was presented to the Mayor and area Councillor in October of 2011.

New Organizational Structure

On April 1, 2012 HRM implemented a restructuring of various business units and divisions to improve efficiency and service delivery. This resulted in dividing the long term community and regional planning policy functions from the development functions as follows:

The Planning and Infrastructure business unit, under the Planning division, is tasked with the Regional Plan Review, Social Heritage Strategy, Heritage Functional Plan and the creation of further Heritage Conservation Districts.

The Community and Recreation Services business unit, under the Development Approvals’ division, is tasked with administering all aspects to the Heritage Property Program including registrations, heritage incentives, de-registrations, demolitions, substantial alterations to registered heritage buildings, and permits and certificates of appropriateness.

Upcoming Projects – 2012

In regard to heritage policy projects in 2012, the Planning and Infrastructure Department is moving forward on two projects:

1) Heritage Conservation Districts – Old South Suburb (South Barrington)

The major focus of staff in 2012 will be continuation of work started in 2011 aiming at the establishment of a Heritage Conservation District for the southern end of Barrington Street, known as the Old South Suburb. This area was identified as a priority under the Downtown Halifax Plan.

Presently, staff are compiling background research required to complete the background studies required by the *Heritage Property Act* – Heritage Conservation District Regulations. Once

background information has been created for all of the almost 100 properties in the proposed South Barrington HCD, staff will begin in depth analysis of this information.

It is anticipated that this project will unfold in 2012, with the analysis outlined above and public consultation towards the establishment of a Heritage Conservation District Plan & By-law for South Barrington.

2) RP + 5 (Regional Plan Review)

As part of the first five year review of HRM's Regional Plan, staff will participate in the review and provide input on heritage policies in the existing plan, and make recommendations for changes which may improve the effectiveness of the heritage protection offered by the Regional Plan.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications associated with this report.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Project and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Project and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community engagement process is consistent with the intent of the HRM Community Engagement Strategy. The level of community engagement is information sharing achieved through public accessibility to the Heritage Advisory Committee meeting and associated reports.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

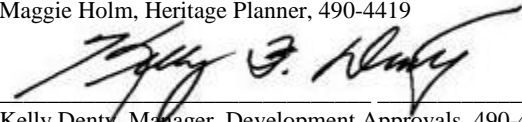
No concerns identified.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/cc.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.

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