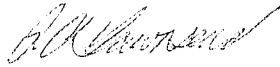


Environment and Sustainability Committee
January 6, 2011

TO: Chair and Members of Environment and Sustainability Committee

SUBMITTED BY:



Phillip Townsend, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management

DATE: December 17, 2010

SUBJECT: FCM Sustainable Communities Conference

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

This report originates from Staff.

BACKGROUND

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) offers an annual Sustainable Communities Conference. This year's conference is in Victoria, BC, from February 8th to 10th. Information on the conference can be viewed at: <http://www.fcm.ca/scc/>

The Chronicle Herald inquired about the Conference on December 16th and subsequently reported staff's intention to attend. There was a minor error in the figure reported: the hotel costs \$139 per night, not \$1,393.

Staff deemed it important to provide information on the conference to this committee.

DISCUSSION

Upon receiving the invitation from FCM, the Manager of the Sustainable Environment Management Office (SEMO) decided to attend and make a presentation on HRM's use of the Green Municipal Fund, and hopeful use with the Solar City initiative. In return for the presentation, there is a discounted conference rate.

Staff and two councillors attended the 2010 Conference in Ottawa. The conference was extremely rewarding. It resulted in a number of funding and grant sources being identified, and learning of some best management practices and opportunities to emulate. After attending the 2010 Conference, and debriefing with the councillors that attended, the Manager of SEMO found the opportunity profound. The plan is to take key staff to the 2011 conference for focused impact in lieu of funding another wave of broad corporate environmental training.

An example of a profound session that was attended was on Community Energy Mapping hosted by the Canadian Urban Institute. The learnings from that session will impact staff's work on the Community Energy Plan and lead to collaboration between Dalhousie University and the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) on a Master Energy Plan project. (We will be participating in their planning project, with the intent to learn from them and emulate on a municipal scale.) The session at the conference showed a cost effective way to progress energy planning.

After reviewing the program offered, it was deemed that there would be exceptional value in considering to send:

- The Manager of Corporate Fleet Services to learn from the sessions on greening the fleet;
- A Supervisor from Planning Services to learn about Brownfield/Greyfield opportunities and suburban issues; and
- The Manager of Strategic Transportation for the Measuring Sustainable Transportation Initiatives.

The costs for the conference and travel would be paid from operating budget D948, SEMO Sustainable Communities Project. The impacts of their work and the related content of the program, is germane to the Environment and Sustainability Committee policy work. This conference provides an excellent opportunity to impact and support these key influencers to service delivery and policy development in the organization. It will also enable the participants the opportunity to seek key funding opportunities to support the municipal initiatives.

Among other opportunities, the Manager of SEMO will be meeting with the Director of the Green Municipal Fund to hand deliver the funding application for the Solar City initiative, should Regional Council approve staff soliciting funding in January.

Staff will provide a summary of the 2011 Conference to the Committee in March, including the gained funding opportunities, key contacts made, and lessons learned.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Costs will be approximately \$1,500 per attendee for the conference and are identified in the approved 2010/11 Sustainable Communities Reserve funded operating budget D948. Funding availability has been confirmed by Financial Services.

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

None

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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