

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE 2001/02 BUDGET MINUTES MARCH 8, 2001

PRESENT:

Mayor Peter J. Kelly
Councillors: Steve Streach
Gary Hines
Keith Colwell
Ron Cooper
Harry McInroy
Brian Warshick
Condo Sarto
Jim Smith
John Cunningham
Dawn M. Sloane
Sue Uteck
Sheila Fougere
Russell Walker
Diane Whalen
Linda Mosher
Stephen D. Adams
Brad Johns
Robert P. Harvey
Gary G. Meade

ABSENT:

Deputy Mayor Blumenthal
Councillors: Bruce Hetherington
Len Goucher
Reg Rankin

STAFF MEMBERS:

Mr. Dan English, Deputy CAO
Mr. George McLellan, Deputy CAO
Ms. Betty MacDonald, General Manager, Financial
Planning Services
Ms. Maria Medioli, Research Associate, Financial
Analysis Services
Ms. Lynne Le Boutillier, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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Mayor Kelly called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m.

Councillor Walker, referring to the tentative schedule for budget deliberations, suggested that if the items on Friday's agenda were finished early, could a review of the parking lot items be conducted. Mayor Kelly felt this could be an option if all the information is available.

Ms. MacDonald provided copies of an updated budget binder to Council. She noted that the Parking Lot Wish List is included in the binder. She reviewed the items to date on the Wish List and noted that the list of Operating Budget items total \$643,500 and Capital Budget items total \$2,128,000.

It was requested that staff be advised of any errors or omissions.

Mayor Kelly recalled the subject of Green Cart Collection Frequency had been referred to the Solid Waste Advisory Committee and their report may result in a further addition to the Parking Lot List.

Councillor Cooper raised the issue of the principle that if you want to add something to the budget, something has to be taken out. He argued that he did not believe this principle should apply at this stage to an unapproved budget. Mr. McLellan agreed with Councillor Cooper that Council should be able to take the budget in any direction up to the setting of the Tax Rate.

1.0 **CONTINUATION OF 2001/2002 OPERATING BUDGET DELIBERATIONS**

PARKS AND RECREATION

Referring to page 153 and reference to the CRS mandate to focus on target groups, Councillor Cooper felt some members of the younger population to be at risk. Staff confirmed that there is not an overall, long-term recreation strategy dealing with youth. Councillor Cooper felt this to be a very important issue and Council should receive a report.

During review of expenditures related to the cost of brochures, etc. Councillor Warshick felt Recreation should be looking at reducing their cost of advertising by generating revenue by soliciting outside advertising and seeking sponsorships. This suggestion will be looked into by staff.

Concern was expressed by Councillor Warshick re the cost of Conferences and Travel having increased by 22%. Ms. MacTavish, Director, Parks and Recreation Services

indicated that there had been no increase in conference expenditures and she suspected another line item may be included. She will provide a report to Council.

Councillor Smith referred to Priority 10, Page 11, Walkways of the Capital Priority List. He questioned whether walkways associated with Albro Lake were included in this upgrade. Mr. Blakeney indicated that in early spring staff will estimate the work to be done and a breakdown will be given.

Councillor Smith sought cost sharing from HRM to rejuvenate an existing park on Gloria Avenue. He noted that \$25,000 has already been committed; \$20,000 from the landfill fund and \$2,000 from a community group, plus materials.

MOVED BY Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Stretch that \$25,000 be put in the Parking Lot for Gloria Avenue for this purpose. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Fougere, Chairman of the Bikeways Task Force, noted that a lot of the items in the Capital Budget are not being supported in the Operating Budget. She was particularly concerned with the issue of trails. She noted there is no staff person to coordinate the work and there is some question regarding the six Trail Coordinator positions. Mr. Blakeney noted that for every dollar the HRM contributes, the HRDC matches by a 1 to 4 ratio. HRDC are hesitant to contribute money towards the six positions unless HRM makes a significant contribution. Councillor Fougere referred to the surveys indicating that access to trails is the number one outdoor recreation preference. Loss of two or three Trail Coordinators will have a significant impact.

Reference was made by Mayor Kelly to today's handout entitled "Status Update on Regional Trails System".

MOVED BY Councillor Fougere and seconded by Councillor Uteck that \$41,000 of operational money be added to the Parking Lot for the Trails Budget related to Trail Coordinators position specifically. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Walker questioned if the Purcell's Cove Board Walk was included on the list of priorities. Staff advised it was included on the list of trail opportunities in the future. Councillor Walker asked for an estimate of costs by the March 19th meeting. Mr. Blakeney noted that the estimate would be very conceptual.

In order to shorten the process, Mr. McLellan suggested that if a telephone call would suffice to staff rather than a report, the Councillors should consider this option.

Councillor Walker questioned staff on whether Flemming Park was on the list for upgrading playgrounds. Staff confirmed it was on the list, but the list has not been prioritized. A prioritized list will be presented to Council following completion of a Playground Survey. Councillor Walker sought an estimate of costs for the upgrades by tomorrow's meeting, as Councillor Mosher may wish to add it to the Parking Lot.

Councillor Whalen questioned how much community sponsorship there is of parks. Staff assured the Councillor that there are numerous initiatives in this area. Councillor Whalen suggested this number might be further increased if an active program was pursued to invite the community to become involved. Mr. Blakeney agreed this is something to consider for the future.

MOVED BY Councillor Warshick and seconded by Councillor Cooper that \$100,000 be added to the Parking Lot for the building of a Beazley Baseball Fieldhouse. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

With the arrival of Brian Smith, an Information Report entitled "Green Cart Collection Frequency", was circulated. The report was generated by the Solid Waste Resource Advisory Committee at the request of Council. The report contained the following two options:

1. Weekly collection of organic carts during July and August, throughout HRM, at an estimated cost of \$650,000 to \$800,000.
2. On demand service for Collection Areas 1 (Halifax) and 2 (Dartmouth) only, at an estimated cost of \$390,000.

MOVED BY Councillor Walker and seconded by Councillor Cunningham that an amount of \$800,000 for additional green cart collection during the months of July and August, as detailed in Option No. 1, be placed in the Parking Lot.

During debate the following was noted:

- C When a service was offered to Halifax residents last year by the private sector for a second green cart pick up, only 10% requested it.
- C Complaints related to green cart pick ups were reduced last year.
- C A lot of complaints were heard by some Councillors during the days leading to the election.
- C Is there still a commitment to the strategy, ie. residents take ownership of materials which can be composted for two weeks?

It was noted by Councillor Sloane that a lot of residents of District 12 have no access to a backyard to store the green carts and don't have the money to pay for a second pick up. She questioned how much it would cost for a weekly pick up in District 12.

Councillor Walker indicated he wished to amend his motion to refer to an amount of \$650,000 versus \$800,000. The seconder of the motion did not support this amendment.

Without a vote being taken on the motion on the floor, the following motion was placed.

MOVED BY Councillor Walker and seconded by Councillor Sloane that an amount of \$650,000 for additional green cart collection during the months of July and August, be placed in the Parking Lot. MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.

2.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m. to go in camera, after which the intention was to resume the review. The meeting did not resume, due to the length of the In Camera meeting.

Lynne Le Boutillier
Assistant Municipal Clerk