

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

April 5, 2001

PRESENT:

Mayor Peter J. Kelly
Deputy Mayor Jerry Blumenthal
Councillors: Gary Hines
Keith Colwell
Harry McInroy
Brian Warshick
Condo Sarto
Bruce Hetherington
Jim Smith
John Cunningham
Dawn Sloane
Sue Uteck
Sheila Fougere
Russell Walker
Diana Whalen
Linda Mosher
Len Goucher
Reg Rankin
Gary Meade

ABSENT:

Councillors: Steve Streach (Regrets)
Ron Cooper (Regrets)
Stephen D. Adams
Brad Johns
Bob Harvey (Regrets)

STAFF MEMBERS:

Mr. Ken Meech, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Wayne Anstey, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Patti Halliday, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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Deputy Mayor Blumenthal called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m.

1. **CONTINUATION OF 2001/2002 OPERATING BUDGET DISCUSSIONS:**

Public Works and Transportation Services

Mr. Kulvinder Dhillon, Director, Public Works and Transportation Services, provided some general comments regarding the Public Works and Transportation Services' budget. He noted the snow and ice control budget is \$4.5 - \$5 million over budget from last year. With the use of reserves, the budget is still short \$1.5 million. Mr. Dhillon noted other Business Units' year end statements are being examined for additional funding. However, he requested that \$750,000 for snow and ice control be put in the parking lot.

MOVED by Councillor Cunningham, seconded by Councillor Goucher, that \$750,000 be added to the parking lot for snow and ice control. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOVED by Councillor Goucher, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that on behalf of Council and the residents, a motion of thanks be extended to the staff of Public Works and Transportation and Shared Services for their work this year. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Dhillon noted Council has added additional service to sidewalk renewal for the back part of the property as per a motion two weeks ago. Mr. Dhillon noted this was not budgeted for in the preparation of the budget for next year. If it is Council's intention to have this service area rated, then no adjustments will need to be made to the budget. However, if it is Council's intention to have it added to the budget, staff will have to come back with costs.

With respect to the sewer lateral account, Mr. Dhillon asked that Council add an additional \$650,000 to the parking lot. If this is not done, Mr. Dhillon stated an increase will be requested in next year's budget. Councillor Walker suggested the amount should be increased to \$800,000 to include the costs of the plumber and video camera. The Councillor stated this item does not have to go to the parking lot as the money will be redirected from the waste water reserve account to this account.

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Goucher, that \$800,000 be put in the budget for the sewer lateral account.

Mr. Dhillon suggested the item be put in the parking lot to be discussed at that time.

Councillor Walker, and the seconder, agreed to refer it to the parking lot.

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Goucher, that \$800,000 be put in the parking lot for the sewer lateral account.

Councillor Hetherington expressed concern with the process being followed at this meeting, and staff requesting that items be put in the parking lot. The Councillor suggested reports from senior staff should be requested to justify these extras. Mr. Ken Meech, Chief Administrative Officer, agreed with Councillor Hetherington, and suggested the issues be tabled at this time. He noted that when the parking lot items are discussed, staff will be providing explanations as to how they can be financed.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Deputy Mayor Blumenthal expressed concern with the poor condition of streets and sidewalks throughout the Municipality.

MOVED by Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Sarto, that \$2 million be put in the parking lot for streets and sidewalks.

Councillor Hetherington expressed concern with the number of items being added to the parking lot and how they will affect the tax rate. Councillor Cunningham suggested the matter should be referred to staff for a report rather than moving it to the parking lot.

Mr. George McLellan, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, advised Council that the parking lot items, which now total over \$5 million, will come back to Council next week. At that time, staff will provide its recommendations with respect to these items. Mr. McLellan advised Council that if items are to be added to the budget, the proposed tax rate cut will be eroded. However, he noted the decision will be up to Council.

MOVED by Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Warshick, that the motion be referred to staff for a report. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Shared Services

Ms. Geri Kaiser, Director, Shared Services, responded to a question of Councillor Walker, stating there is an increase of .5 FTE in the call centre this year.

Councillor Warshick suggested the recorded message received at the Call Centre should be changed to reflect the new extended hours and what services they provide.

Tourism, Culture & Heritage

Mr. Lew Rogers, Director, Tourism, Culture and Heritage, advised Council that Alderney Landing has indicated the need to add \$75,000 to the subsidy currently provided by HRM. **MOVED by Councillor Cunningham, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that \$75,000 be added to the parking lot for Alderney Landing. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

(Councillor Rankin took his place at the meeting at 10:15 a.m.)

Mr. Rogers responded to questions of Councillors Sloane and Warshick regarding heritage issues and the hotel tax.

Mr. Dan Norris, Manager, Culture and Heritage, responded to a question of Councillor Sarto regarding possible future locations for the Dartmouth Heritage Museum

Responding to a question of Councillor Meade regarding the Peggy's Cove Conservation Area, Mr. Norris stated staff is looking at, as part of the tax incentive program, having grants available for conservation districts. Mr. Norris suggested the Councillor meet with him directly to discuss this further. Councillor Meade suggested that, for next year, money could be budgeted for co-publishing of community history books.

Councillor Warshick inquired about the possibility of berthing some cruise ships on the Dartmouth side of the harbour if the Coast Guard lands are acquired. Mr. Rogers stated staff can provide technical information in terms of berthing needs, breadth of piers and services.

Councillor Smith suggested the front line staff of hotels/motels should be provided with more information on tourist sites throughout the Municipality.

Responding to a question of Deputy Mayor Blumenthal, Mr. Rogers stated staff is looking at the hotel tax revenue for a contribution to a special events reserve fund.

(Councillor Colwell took his place at the meeting at 10:35 a.m.)

In response to a question of Councillor Warshick regarding the World Hockey Championships, Mr. Rogers stated there will be costs associated with this event that will come in the following year's budget.

Responding to a further question of the Councillor regarding the Discovery Centre, Mr. Rogers stated it is staff's intention to come back to Council with a recommendation as to whether or not it should approve the Centre's business plan and budget. Mr. Rogers stated financial

information is part of the regular Board process, and it could be distributed to satisfy the Councillor's questions.

As there were no further questions, Deputy Mayor Blumenthal thanked Mr. Rogers for his comments.

At this time, Councillor Walker stated he would like to add three items to the parking lot, and put forth the following motions:

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Whalen, that \$75,000 be added to the parking lot for the Councillors' Support Office. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Rankin, that \$75,000 be added to the parking lot for the St. Margaret's Bay Rink. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Rankin, that \$38,000 be added to the parking lot for the Tax and Grants Program. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

RECESS

At this time, a ten minute recess was taken at 10:45 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 10:55 a.m.

Following the recess, the meeting schedule was discussed and it was agreed that a Committee of the Whole meeting would be held on Wednesday, April 11th at 9:00 a.m. to discuss the parking lot items.

2. CAPITAL BUDGET

Building Management Services

Councillor Hetherington noted there is a scenario currently under review between a private developer and Recreation staff. The developer will develop two soccer fields this year, one adult and one youth, for an approximate cost to HRM of \$55,100. The Councillor suggested if this was approved, the \$1.1 million for the artificial surface field could be taken out of the parking lot and reconsidered next year.

MOVED by Councillor Hetherington, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that \$55,100 be added to the parking lot for two soccer fields, and that \$1.1 million for the artificial surface field be taken out of the parking lot and reconsidered next year.

Councillor Walker expressed concern with removing items from the parking lot before they are reviewed by staff. Therefore, the Councillor stated he could support the addition of the \$55,100 but not the removal of the \$1.1 million. Councillor Warshick agreed, stating it is his understanding that one of the proposed fields would not be accessible for three years. The Councillor requested that the motion be split.

Councillor Hetherington agreed to withdraw the part of the motion dealing with the artificial field. The Secunder agreed, and the motion now read as follows:

MOVED by Councillor Hetherington, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that \$55,100 be added to the parking lot for two soccer fields. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

(Councillor Mosher took her place at the meeting at 11:10 a.m.)

Community and Property Development

As the staff of this department were not present, it was agreed to defer this item until later in the meeting.

Heavy Equipment

There were no questions regarding this department.

Light Equipment

Mr. Mike Eddy, Chief Director, Fire Services, responded to a question of Councillor Hetherington regarding the Opticom system.

Fleet

Mr. Paul Beauchamp, General Manager, Fleet Services, responded to a question of Councillor Colwell regarding the mid-life ferry refit, stating the work will likely be done in Halifax or Lunenburg.

Industrial Parks

Mr. Kulvinder Dhillon, Director, Public Works and Transportation Services, responded to questions of clarification from Councillors Goucher and Whalen.

Information Technology

Responding to a question of Councillor Sloane, Mr. McLellan stated the LIS system will replace CityView and will mesh with a lot of the GIS civic addressing technology that has been updated in the past year.

Parks and Playgrounds

Responding to a question of Councillor Smith, Mr. Blair Blakeney, Regional Coordinator, Parks and Recreation Services, stated some playgrounds are complete replacements while others are just resurfacing, etc.

(Mayor Kelly arrived at the meeting at 11:25 a.m. and assumed the Chair.)

Responding to a further question of Councillor Smith, Mr. Blakeney stated there is an alternative site on Jackson Road for the tot lot being removed from Primrose Street. The cost of a playground on a new site starting from scratch would be approximately \$35,000 - \$55,000.

With respect to the Don Bayer sportsfield, Mr. Blakeney stated the preliminary analysis of this site is just being conducted, and staff will come back at a later date with recommendations as to what needs to be done at this site. In the meantime, he cautioned taking any money from this budget.

MOVED by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Cunningham, that \$50,000 be put in the parking lot for the Jackson Road playground. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Responding to a question of Councillor Warshick, Mr. Blakeney stated there is no formal lease in place for the playground located on the St. Thomas More Church property, and staff will probably recommend, at a later date, that HRM purchase this property from the reserve account. In response to a further question of the Councillor regarding the Beazley field track, Mr. Blakeney stated if there was a threat of serious damage to the track, staff would come back to Council to have it dealt with. However, based on the current level of use of this facility, Mr. Blakeney stated assured Council the track will be fine until next year. Mr. McLellan noted staff can indicate what their priorities are for future years, and it is his understanding that staff has done this with respect to this facility.

Councillor Rankin requested that consideration be given to the Greenwood Heights playground in the amount of \$32,000 and stated he would contribute the remaining \$16,000 from his district capital allocation.

MOVED by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Goucher, that \$32,000 be added to the parking lot for playground equipment for Greenwood Heights. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councillor Goucher expressed concern with the number of children living in the Oceanview Drive area and the lack of a tot lot. Mr. Blakeney stated staff can look into this matter and report back to the Councillor in a couple of weeks. Councillor Goucher also expressed concern with the poor condition of the tennis courts in Bedford, and inquired if there is a minimal level of work that can be done to maintain the surface of these courts. Mr. Blakeney stated he would have to have staff look in this matter and report back.

MOVED by Councillor Goucher, seconded by Councillor Whalen, that \$10,000 be added to the parking lot for development of the Oceanview playground, and \$15,000 for the tennis courts. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councillor Sarto inquired about possible upgrading of the Main Street playground and the vacant asphalt pad. Mr. Blakeney indicated the cost to install a basketball net at each end of the pad would be approximately \$3,500.

MOVED by Councillor Sarto, seconded by Councillor Cunningham, that \$3,500, to be cost shared with the Councillor's discretionary funding, be added to the parking lot for basketball nets at the Main Street playground. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councillor Sloane inquired about possible upgrading of lights at Victoria Park. Mr. Blakeney stated staff would have to assess this situation and report back to the Councillor.

Councillor Colwell noted he contributed \$5,000 last year from his discretionary capital fund to put money towards the Lake Echo playground, and the contractor has agreed to put more money towards it. The Councillor stated he would like to add some money to the parking lot for this playground, and noted he will be adding further funding to it this year.

MOVED by Councillor Colwell, seconded by Councillor Sarto, that \$15,000 be put in the parking lot for the Lake Echo playground. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Streets

Councillor Sarto stated he would like to add money to the parking lot for paving of Guysborough Avenue, and put forth the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Sarto, seconded by Councillor Rankin, that \$85,000 be added to the parking lot for the paving of Guysborough Avenue, from Shawinigan to Spikenard. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Solid Waste

Mr. Brian Smith, Director, Solid Waste Resources, presented the Solid Waste capital budget.

Responding to a question of Councillor Rankin regarding Cell 3, Mr. Brian Smith, Director, Solid Waste Resources, stated that staff has asked, in developing the Cell 3 cost, that the cost of the lagoon be built at the same time. Mr. Smith noted it is still identified in the budget as a holding lagoon for a future year, but the lagoon itself will be part of Cell 3. He stated there are some economies in building it together with the bigger project. Councillor Rankin recommended that staff be permitted to bring this piece of business forward to Council to allow the construction to proceed on or before May 30, 2001. Mr. Smith clarified there is a price estimate built into the budget for getting the cell constructed this year. He suggested if there is any delay in getting the overall budget approved, this item should be approved separately. Mr. Smith stated Councillor Rankin is suggesting that this be brought forward to Council separately, and noted that staff will develop this over the course of the next couple of days. Mayor Kelly stated if Council agrees, it can move forward.

MOVED by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Hetherington, that it be recommended to Council that the portion of the Capital Budget that pertains to the construction of Cell #3 at Otter Lake be approved by Council in advance of the overall Capital Budget for 2001-2002, in order to avoid added expense if the construction start date is delayed. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

In response to a question of Councillor Whalen, Mr. Smith stated Solid Waste Resources will be buying the new green bins and providing them to Youth Live to store and distribute. Councillor Whalen questioned the number of bins being purchased stating it appears to be above the growth in population. Mr. Smith responded that staff have examined the issue to determine the number being purchased, and he stated staff can report back to Council with the details.

Councillor Sloane inquired about the possibility of using different sizes of green bins. Mr. Smith responded that this issue has been previously examined. The Councillor stated she would like to be provided with some information on this matter.

RECESS

A lunch recess was taken at 12:15 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 1:30 p.m.

Community and Property Development

Mr. Austin French, Regional Coordinator, Planning and Development Services, presented the Community and Property Development budget.

In response to a question of Councillor Hetherington regarding some recovery being built into the over-sized streets and sewers, in particular the Portland Estates area trunk sewer, Mr. Dan English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, stated it was his understanding there was not, but stated staff can look into this matter.

Major Facilities

Mr. English presented the budget for the Metro Centre and responded to questions of Councillors Hetherington and Cunningham.

Reserves

Ms. Dale MacLennan, Director, Financial Services, presented the Reserves budget. There were no questions of Council regarding this issue.

As there were no further questions, the meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Patti Halliday
Assistant Municipal Clerk