

# HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

---

## HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

November 20, 2001

### PRESENT:

Mayor Peter J. Kelly  
Deputy Mayor Robert P. Harvey  
Councillors: Steve Streach  
Gary Hines  
Keith Colwell (1:50 p.m.)  
Ron Cooper  
Harry McInroy  
Brian Warshick (1:40 p.m.)  
Condo Sarto  
Bruce Hetherington  
Jim Smith (1:40 p.m.)  
John Cunningham  
Jerry Blumenthal  
Dawn Sloane  
Sue Uteck  
Sheila Fougere  
Russell Walker  
Diana Whalen (3:10 p.m.)  
Linda Mosher (3:15 p.m.)  
Brad Johns (2:35 p.m.)  
Reg Rankin  
Gary Meade

### ABSENT:

Councillors: Stephen Adams  
Len Goucher (regrets)

### STAFF:

Mr. George McLellan, Acting Chief Administrative Officer  
Mr. Wayne Anstey, Municipal Solicitor  
Ms. Vi Carmichael, Municipal Clerk

Ms. Julia Horncastle, Assistant Municipal Clerk

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CALL TO ORDER .....	03
2.	APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS .....	03
3.	NATIONAL CALIBRE SPORTS VENUES (Continuation from Nov. 13) .....	03
4.	STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL/ROOMING HOUSE OCCUPANCIES .....	04
5.	BY-LAW ENFORCEMENT PRESENTATION .....	06
6.	ADJOURNMENT .....	06

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

The agenda was adopted as circulated.

**3. NATIONAL CALIBRE SPORTS VENUES (Continuation from Nov. 13)**

- Correspondence from Mr. Patrick L. Doyle, Chief of Staff, Office of the Secretary of State, dated October 16, 2001, on the above noted, was before Council.
- Correspondence from Mayor Kelly to the Secretary of State for Amateur Sports, dated August 19 and September 19, 2001, on the above noted, was before Council.

In response to Councillor Sarto, Mr. Bigelow, Manager, Parks and Recreation, advised the intention of the report was to highlight those facilities that had the potential to host national events.

Councillor Blumenthal suggested current recreational facilities be built up so that they can be used by all HRM residents.

Councillor Hines suggested staff and teams investigate the possibility of obtaining corporate sponsors. In response, Mr. Bigelow advised corporations are often asked to participate and they do so noting, staff will be examining this over the next year.

Councillor Sloane stated the “phasing in” is a good idea and staff should be looking at obtaining corporate sponsorship.

Councillor Fougere stated it is important that the focus is on improving existing facilities and look at better practices for maintaining these fields and facilities. Examining the expansion of what is currently in place is also important as there has been an increase in participation in sports activities. Maintaining and improving the facilities is important from a quality of life and from a business perspective, not only in terms of the participants but also in terms of people who utilize that as their entertainment from a spectator point of view. She stated distance is not an issue for those who participate in sports as people play sports over a hugely expanded area and this should not be discounted in determining a field location. The Councillor noted focus should be placed on multiple field complexes.

Mayor Kelly thanked staff for their presentation.

**4. STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL/ROOMING HOUSE OCCUPANCIES**

- Memorandum from Patricia Richards, Community Co-ordinator, Community Action on Homeless, dated November 6, 2001, on the above noted, was before Council.
- A copy of the slide presentation on the above noted was before Council.
- Staff report prepared for Mr. George McLellan, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, dated October 2, 2001, on the above noted, was before Council.
- Correspondence from the Minister of Community Services, Peter G. Christie, dated November 14, 2001, in response to correspondence from Mayor Kelly, dated October 29, 2001, with respect to this item, was circulated to Council.
- Correspondence from the Minister of Community Services, Peter G. Christie, dated November 14, 2001, in response to correspondence from Mayor Kelly, dated October 21, 2001, with respect to this item, was circulated to Council.

Mr. Jim Donovan, Planning and Development Services, outlined the staff report and recommendations contained therein noting:

- The reasons behind this initiative;
- the process that was followed in developing the draft By-law on residential occupancy standards;
- who the participants were and their respective roles;
- what is meant by residential occupancy standards (formerly referred to as minimum standards);
- background on enabling authority;
- what areas are covered and are not covered by the proposed By-law;
- aspects of enforcement;
- enabling policy.

On question from Councillor Walker as to what is considered a rooming house and what is not considered a rooming house, Mr. Donovan advised the By-law defines a rooming house as a dwelling unit that has three or more rooms with a proprietor noting, this is for purposes of licensing.

Mayor Kelly asked if it would be possible to define a rooming house on the number of persons that are renting a particular property as well as the number of rooms. Mr. Donovan advised it was not possible to regulate by the number of people.

In response to Councillor Walker, Mr. Donovan advised this By-law is at two levels, one establishes a minimum standard for residential occupancies across the board so it applies to every dwelling unit in HRM in theory, and then there is a specific set of standards related to rooming and lodging houses. One aspect identifies sleeping rooms as having a minimum

floor area of 50 sq. ft. per occupant where occupied by more than one person. That speaks to issues of overcrowding as well as how many people can safely inhabit a house noting, this does not necessarily apply to rooming houses.

Councillor Walker referenced page 5 where it indicates relationship to land use regulations and asked if this meant HRM was going to enforce regulations regarding illegal in-law suites. In response, Mr. Donovan stated the intention here is to allow the property owner to rectify an illegal situation through a development agreement or rezoning if possible. Failing that, staff would take legal recourse to rectify the situation.

Councillor Sloane stated that for every ten people that live in a house there has to be a washroom and asked if there could be some kind of similar regulation dealing with rooming houses. In response, Mr. Donovan advised one of the requirements for the licensing is that the applicant would have to, as part of their application, identify how many rooms, how many people and disclose what amenities are available.

In response to Councillor Sloane, Mr. Donovan advised there would be a need for three full time inspection staff as well as someone who would coordinate the efforts of that group to respond to these complaints. Mr. Donovan stated that it is the intention of staff that this could be accommodated within the existing resources but may not meet the expectation of addressing all issues; therefore, it would be a reactive rather than a proactive approach.

Mr. McLellan, Acting CAO, stated that staff should report back on this matter and provide all the implications.

Councillor Warshick suggested the Fire Chief provide a report on the function of the fire inspectors and what their duties may consist of. Mr. McLellan advised he would have the Chief provide this report directly to any Councillor interested in receiving the information.

Councillor Warshick suggested staff examine what is being done in other cities with regards to cosmetic or aesthetic conditions of buildings noting, the By-law will not deal with that. Mr. McLellan advised staff will come back with a report on how this effort will be resourced and any issues raised can also be addressed in that report.

In response to Councillor Smith, Mr. Donovan advised that if there is an apartment building that was built under a previous code and it met the requirements of that code, then the intent is not to go and retroactively address that situation. There is a general duties and obligations section of the By-law which says that the owner of a building built subsequent to the coming into force of this By-law shall maintain the building to the standard to which it was required to be built in the first place.

Councillor Fougere stated that the "revisit" provision should be addressed in the operational

section as it is as important as the first visit so that matters are followed up. The Councillor noted that one of the first priorities would be to remove illegal residential occupancies and asked what consideration has been given to doing that such that it does not leave people homeless. In response, Mr. Donovan advised the HRM strategy would be to work with the social housing and community service agencies to find alternative housing.

Councillor Fougere suggested this should be a strategy to be developed first as it may not be as easy as it looks when things such as a fire happens and suddenly people are homeless noting, with a strategy in place, then there would be a method to deal with this when it happens.

Councillor Uteck suggested the section of page 4 entitled "Areas Not Addressed in the Proposed By-law" be inserted directly before "discussion". The Councillor noted there are some residences where the landlords are paid directly by the Province and the tenants are forced to live in filth because if they complain they are evicted.

Councillor Uteck suggested a copy of the lease would have to be provided stating how many people are actually renting and how the format of the rent is being carried out.

In response to Councillor Hetherington, Council was advised a supplementary report would be provided at a subsequent meeting in two weeks.

Councillor Hetherington suggested there should be an annual fee for licensing and prior to the license being renewed there has to be an inspection of those properties.

Mayor Kelly thanked staff for their presentation.

## **5. BY-LAW ENFORCEMENT PRESENTATION**

This item was deferred to the next meeting due to time constraints.

## **6. ADJOURNMENT**

Due to scheduling of meetings, Council adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Vi Carmichael  
Municipal Clerk