

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES March 20, 2003

PRESENT:

Mayor Peter J. Kelly
Deputy Mayor Harry McInroy (10:35 a.m.)
Councillors: Stephen Streach
Gary Hines
Keith Colwell
Ron Cooper
Brian Warshick
Condo Sarto
Bruce Hetherington
Jim Smith
John Cunningham
Jerry S. Blumenthal (a.m. only)
Dawn M. Sloane
Sue Uteck
Sheila Fougere
Russell Walker
Diana Whalen
Stephen D. Adams (a.m. only)
Brad Johns
Robert P. Harvey
Len Goucher
Reg Rankin

REGRETS:

Councillors: Linda Mosher
Gary G. Meade

STAFF:

Mr. George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Wayne Anstey, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Patti Halliday, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

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

Before continuing with budget deliberations, Mayor Kelly noted there were a couple of additional concerns regarding Public Works and Transportation that several Councillors wished to raise.

Councillor Blumenthal submitted a letter from a resident regarding bus passes for students outside the School Board transit boundary. The Councillor stated that students in the Bayers/Westwood area have to walk 2.56 kms to St. Pat's High School. The Councillor requested that this matter be examined by staff.

Councillor Blumenthal requested that a pedway from Novalea Drive to Seaview Park be referred to staff for consideration in next year's budget. Mr. McLellan indicated that staff would come back to Council with an information report regarding the costs of this project.

With respect to sidewalks, Councillor Blumenthal stated he has a list of 30+ sidewalks with 85%+ deficiency. Mr. Paynter stated the sidewalk budgets are prepared on the basis of the deficiency ratings. He noted that currently there are about 376 sidewalk sections in the database that are 80% deficient or higher, and they will be worked through the budget process as capacity permits.

Councillor Adams requested that a concrete curb and gutter along Leiblin Drive be considered in next year's budget. The Councillor also inquired about the status of the guard rail for Ferguson's Cove Road. Mr. Paynter stated it is becoming a potentially serious situation and noted there is some funding left over from last year's capital budget program. Mr. Paynter stated he will be coming back to Council in a few week's time regarding this item with a recommendation that a section of this road be done using that funding.

Councillor Adams noted that all references to J41 - Storm Sewers in Leiblin Park in the budget book should state District 18, not District 17.

With regards to sidewalk renewals, Councillor Cooper inquired if there is any progress being made with the program. Mr. Paynter responded that progress is being made but there is still a lot of work to be done. Councillor Cooper suggested staff should examine ways to increase the progress next year.

2. 2003/2004 OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

Recreation, Culture and Heritage

Mr. Lew Rogers, Director, Recreation, Culture and Heritage, presented the 2003/04 Operating and Capital Budgets for Recreation, Culture and Heritage to the Committee and responded to questions of Council. During the discussion, the following requests were raised:

- C Councillor Adams inquired if there is any chance of providing some funding to assist the Ketch Harbour Residents Association in their takeover of the former federal wharf in that area. Mr. Rogers responded that staff will come back to Council for approval of the actual programs and criteria for the heritage incentives for community owned sites and at that time it can be determined if the wharfs would be appropriate for this program. Councillor Adams stated he would provide Mr. Rogers with some contact information.
- C Councillor Blumenthal stated he would like to see Isleville Park become an accessible playground.
- C Councillor Blumenthal requested that lighting for the Hydrostone Park be put in the parking lot for consideration. Mayor Kelly stated this could be referred to staff for costing information and Council could then decide how to proceed with it.
- C Councillor Sloane requested that the reinstatement of the Prince Edward walking tour be considered.
- C Councillor Sloane requested that staff look at ensuring the George Dixon after school program is on line at the commencement of the school year. Ms. Karen MacTavish cautioned that recreation not be viewed as a daycare service but she stated staff could look at this while keeping a balance with the commercial day care facilities in the area.

Councillor Uteck expressed concern with the lack of accessible boat lifts in HRM and put forth the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Uteck, seconded by Councillor Fougere, that an accessible boat lift for the waterfront at a cost of \$50,000 - \$70,000 be put in the parking lot. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

(Deputy Mayor McInroy took his place at the meeting at 10:35 a.m.)

- C On behalf of Councillor Meade, Councillor Uteck requested that the insurance situation being faced by the Prospect Ratepayers Association in its takeover over of the government wharf be examined by staff.
- C Councillor Uteck requested that staff examine funding opportunities for the Peggy's

Cove Conservation District, such as imposing a \$1.00 fee on bus tour tickets.

C Councillor Uteck inquired about the relationship between Destination Halifax and the World Trade and Convention Centre (Events Halifax). Mr. Rogers responded that a report could be brought back to Council regarding this.

C In response to a question of Councillor Uteck regarding an inventory of monuments and public art pieces, Mr. Rogers stated staff will be coming to Council with a cultural policy and art will be one of the pillars and through this policy Council can set priorities. Mr. McLellan noted the policy will be quite dependent on partnering with community groups and other levels of government.

C Councillor Uteck requested that staff examine the problems with respect to retaining walls around historical places in HRM, in particular, the North West Arm.

(Mayor Kelly left the meeting at 10:45 a.m. and Deputy Mayor McInroy assumed the Chair.)

Councillor Goucher stated festivals and civic events are critical to HRM and put forth the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Goucher, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that an increase of \$42,000 for Festivals and Civic Events be put in the parking lot. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

C Councillor Goucher expressed concerns relative to playground equipment upgrades and replacements and requested that this area be expanded in future years.

C Councillor Hetherington inquired about a safety assessment of the playground equipment at South Woodside School. Mr. Labrecque agreed to follow up on this and report back to the Councillor. Councillor Hetherington also requested confirmation that there is money left over from last year's capital budget for the linear park on Marvin/Chadwick/Renfrew Streets.

C In response to a question of Councillor Hetherington regarding funding for lawn bowling facilities, Mr. Labrecque stated he will confirm with Mr. Blair Blakeney that the intent is to keep them operational with the money allocated.

C Councillor Whalen requested that the business plan for Destination Halifax be provided to Council.

C Councillor Rankin requested that in recognition of some subdivisions raising money themselves for parks that this be recognized to the extent possible within the funding

envelope if they come forward with some equity.

- C Mr. Labrecque agreed to confirm with Councillor Smith whether or not a program for Northbrook security is included in the parks maintenance budget.

(Mayor Kelly returned to the meeting at 11:20 a.m. and assumed the Chair.)

- C Councillor Cooper stated there is a large untapped business opportunity in tourism for the Preston area and suggested this should be examined. Councillor Colwell requested that a meeting be held to discuss ideas how the community could be convinced that tourism is a good investment.

- C Councillor Warshick suggested the issue of an agreement for school access for recreation be raised with the School Board representatives and if money is owed to HRM it should be taken from money granted to the School Board. The Councillor requested that an information report be brought to Council regarding the status of the reciprocal agreement.

- C Councillor Colwell stated Mineville has agreed to put forth 50 percent of the funding for a skateboard park, and he requested that this be moved up the list.

- C Councillor Colwell asked that staff consider the possibility of obtaining a small piece of property for a future playground in North Preston due to the lack of outdoor facilities in that area.

- C Staff agreed to do an assessment of Nathan Green Square, Sackville Landing, regarding tree maintenance as per a request of Councillor Sloane.

- C Mr. Rogers agreed to provide Councillor Warshick with the budget amount for Canoe to the Sea.

- C Mr. Labrecque agreed to report back to Council regarding the locations of the 200 trees in H31.

- C Mr. Labrecque also agreed to get back to Councillor Warshick regarding future funding for repairs or a major overhaul for Beazley Field.

- C Councillor Whalen requested information regarding the breakdown of the \$500,000 for administration for Recreation, Culture and Heritage.

- C Councillor Warshick requested that an east Dartmouth recreation centre and replacement of the Woodlawn Library be kept in mind as priorities for District 6 in

future years.

RECESS

The Committee recessed at 12:00 p.m. and reconvened at 1:25 p.m. with the following members absent with regrets: Councillors: Blumenthal, Mosher, Adams, Rankin and Meade.

Environmental Management

Ms. Dale MacLennan noted an error in the budget book on Pages 108-110 in that account Y493 - Pesticide Enforcement should read Y493 - Community Standards.

Mr. Brad Anguish, Director, Environmental Management Services, presented the 2003/04 Operating and Capital Budgets for Environmental Management Services to the Committee. Mr. Anguish and members of his staff responded to questions of the Committee. During the discussion, the following questions were raised:

- C Councillor Sarto inquired about discrepancies on Pages 108 and 109, Account R201 - Administration Wastewater, and it was agreed that staff would get back to the Councillor with a clarification.

Councillor Warshick raised concerns with respect to the survey regarding green bin collection and put forth the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Warshick, seconded by Councillor Walker, that \$96,300 be put in the parking lot for a one time trial period for summer weekly green bin pick up for Halifax and Dartmouth.

Councillor Warshick requested that the tonnage collected be monitored during the trial period to see if participation has increased.

During debate of the motion, some Councillors expressed concern that not all areas of HRM were included in the motion.

Councillor Colwell requested that the Mover and Seconder consider including the former Halifax County area in the motion. The request was denied.

Councillor Walker stated he would be agreeable to putting on an area rate for this service in Halifax rather than putting the item in the parking lot. The Councillor noted Dartmouth could also be included if so desired. Mayor Kelly noted a public hearing would be required to implement an area rate.

Mr. McLellan noted the area rate guidelines state HRM does not impose area rates for general residential services.

MOVED by Councillor Streach, seconded by Councillor Colwell, that the motion be amended to include all of Halifax Regional Municipality. MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.

Following further discussion on the main motion, the vote was taken.

MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.

Councillor Walker inquired what process is left to pursue this if an area wants this service and is willing to pay for it. Mr. McLellan responded staff will examine the issue further and come back to Council with a recommendation in light of Council's policies.

C In response to concerns expressed regarding the cost of earlier than anticipated cell closures at Otter Lake, Mr. McLellan stated staff will examine this issue and come back to Council with a long term capital projection.

C Councillor Sloane submitted written questions regarding the green carts to staff for a response to the Solid Waste Resource Advisory Committee at its next meeting.

C Councillor Streach requested a report on the MIRROR equipment life spans and replacement schedules.

(Mayor Kelly left the meeting at 2:55 p.m., and Deputy Mayor McInroy assumed the Chair.)

C Councillor Fougere requested that Council be apprised of the progress of the Climate Protection Program.

(Mayor Kelly returned to the meeting at 3:00 p.m. and assumed the Chair.)

MOVED by Councillor Goucher, seconded by Councillor Hetherington, that \$70,000 be removed from Account D940 and D945 and put into the parking lot.

Councillor Goucher suggested HRM should be working with the pesticide industry and that the companies be licensed through HRM to deal with permitting.

Following a lengthy debate, the vote was taken.

MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.

Mr. McLellan advised Council that staff will commence work on the parking lot items this evening. He inquired if Council was in a position to provide staff with some direction as to how to proceed with respect to the tax rate. Mayor Kelly noted the options are to maintain the status quo, reduce the tax rate, or something in between. It was the general consensus of Council that the status quo be maintained.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m. It was agreed to continue budget deliberations on March 21, 2003 commencing at 10:30 a.m.

Patti Halliday
Legislative Assistant