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**Halifax Regional Council**  
**March 6, 2007**

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Sharon Bond for  
Paul Dunphy, Director of Community Development

**DATE:** February 21, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Polling District Review Process

## INFORMATION REPORT

### ORIGIN

1. Requirement in *Municipal Government Act* that Halifax Regional Municipality review the polling districts and boundaries for the 2008 election.
2. June 21, 2004: Adjournment by the Nova Scotia Utilities and Review Board of an application by the Boundary Action Reversal Committee concerning Cherry Brook/Lake Loon, pending the HRM polling boundary review for the 2008 election.
3. August 1, 2006: Regional Council motion approving the recommendation in a July 20, 2006 staff report, concerning principles and a process for polling boundary review for the 2008 election, including a parallel process for Cherry Brook/Lake Loon.
4. November 28, 2006 Information Report to Regional Council session of December 5, 2006 providing revised time frame for Polling District Review Process.
5. December 20, 2006 Information Report to Regional Council session of January 9, 2007 outlining the results of a prehearing conference held on December 11, 2006, including a time line approved by the Board.

## **BACKGROUND**

On August 1, 2006 Regional Council approved principles and a process for a minor review of Polling District boundaries. As directed by the Nova Scotia Utilities and Review Board, this Review will also consider the boundary between Districts 3 and 4, further to an adjourned application by the Cherry Brook/Lake Loon Boundary Action Reversal Committee.

A December 20, 2006 Information Report to the Regional Council session of January 9, 2007 outlined the results of a prehearing conference held on December 11, 2006, including a time line approved by the Board.

Staff have examined available data sources for updating the number of voters in each Polling District, and the first two public meetings have been held.

## **DISCUSSION**

A lack of current data has posed major challenges to estimating voter variances for each polling district. Statistics Canada will be releasing the 2006 Census results at all standard levels of geography on Tuesday, March 13. This data will be crucial to Council's application to the Board for district boundary changes, as it will provide a recent, objective and consistent source of population growth and distribution throughout HRM which will be comparable to the 2001 census figures which were used to determine the district boundaries in 2003-04.

Staff has arranged to purchase and acquire this dataset on the day it is released. Mapping information has already been acquired, which will allow staff to incorporate the new population counts quickly.

Rather than going to the second set of public information meetings with poorly supported estimates, the Nova Scotia Utilities and Review Board (UARB) has agreed that these meetings should be postponed by two weeks, from the week before March Break to the week following (see Attachment A). This will enable staff to incorporate the 2006 Census data into their presentation at these meetings.

Consequently, the report to Regional Council will not be ready for consideration by Council until April 10th, which in turn postpones the filing date of the application to the UARB from April 5th to April 19th. To accommodate these changes, the UARB has rescheduled its hearing from May 30th to June 13th.

A comparison of the former schedule and the new schedule approved by the Board is provided as Attachment B. A copy of the advertisement for the second two Public Meetings is found in Attachment C.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Some staff overtime may be necessary to meet the proposed timeframe. This will be paid from existing Business Unit operating budget allocations.

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN**

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

**ALTERNATIVES**

None.

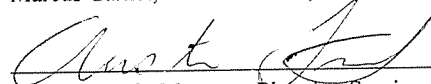
**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Letter from Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board dated February 19, 2007  
Attachment B: Adjusted HRM Polling District Review Process for 2008 Municipal Election  
Attachment C: Advertisement for second two Public Meetings

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/agenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by : Marcus Garnet, Senior Planner, 490-4481

Report Approved by:

  
Austin French, Manager, Planning Services, 490-6717

Attachment A

Letter from Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board dated February 19, 2007



**Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board**

*Mailing address*

PO Box 1692, Unit "M"  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3S3  
uarb.board@gov.ns.ca  
Web www.nsuarb.ca

*Office*

3rd Floor  
1601 Lower Water  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
902 424-4448

February 19, 2007

**Fax: 490-4232**

Ms. M. E. Donovan  
Director, Legal Services  
Halifax Regional Municipality  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 5251 Duke Street  
Halifax, NS B3J 3A5

Dear Parties:

**HRM - s. 369 of the Municipal Government Act - MB-06-ADM**

I acknowledge receipt of Ms. Donovan's letter of February 16, 2007, requesting an extension for filing HRM's application, in order to incorporate the 2006 Census data into the public information meeting presentations. Sara Knight has advised the Board that Ms. Johnston called upon receipt of that letter to advise that the Boundary Action Reversal Committee has no objection to the requested extension.

The Board agrees to extend the deadlines as set out in the timetable attached to the February 16<sup>th</sup> letter.

This will also confirm Ms. Knight's telephone call to this office today to clarify the first paragraph of the letter. She advised that it was originally the intention of HRM planners to use either the provincial voters list or the building permit data. However, because these two sources of data are not deemed reliable, it is now HRM's intention to rely on the data from the 2006 Census data, which will be available in March. She stated that this does not change the substance of the remainder of the letter, which is the need to incorporate reliable information for public information meeting presentations.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elaine Wagner".

Elaine Wagner  
Clerk of the Board

cc: Alma Johnston, Chair  
Boundary Action Reversal Committee

cc: The Honourable Jamie Muir  
Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

**Attachment B  
Adjusted HRM Polling District Review Process for 2008 Municipal Election**

ACTION	CURRENT DEADLINE	PROPOSED DEADLINE	NOTES
Publication of advertisement for first two public meetings	Jan. 13	No change	Completed
Public meeting in metro area	Jan. 22	No change	Completed
Public meeting in Cherry Brook	Jan. 25	No change	Completed
Publication of advertisement for second two public meetings	Feb. 17	Feb. 24	One week later
Release of 2006 Census data	New step	March 13	Critical to analysis
Second two public meetings, one in metro and one in Cherry Brook	March 5-8	March 19-22	Two weeks later to ensure credible data
Report to Regional Council recommending boundary adjustments	March 27	April 10	Two weeks later
Filing of HRM's application with Utility and Review Board (UARB)	April 5	April 19	Two weeks later
Proposed publication of hearing notices by UARB	April 10-11	April 25-26	Two weeks later
Filing of evidence with UARB by Boundary Action Reversal Committee; Deadline for requests by groups or individuals requesting formal standing	April 20	May 4	Two weeks later
Filing of evidence by groups or individuals seeking formal standing	April 27	May 11	Two weeks later
Filing of rebuttal evidence by HRM, if applicable	May 4	May 18	Two weeks later
Filing of witness lists by all parties	May 11	May 25	Two weeks later
Begin UARB Hearing	May 30	<b>June 13</b>	Changed by UARB

**Attachment C  
Advertisement for second two Public Meetings**

**PUBLIC MEETINGS  
REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICT BOUNDARIES**

Halifax Regional Municipality is reviewing the boundaries of polling districts in the Municipality in anticipation of the 2008 municipal election, as required by the Municipal Government Act.

The Municipality is drafting recommendations for possible adjustments, and is interested in receiving comments from the general public.

This is the second of two phases of public meetings. The first phase provided background information on existing Polling Districts and received suggestions for adjusting boundaries. The second phase (see schedule below) will present draft proposals for boundary adjustments, for further public comment.

Following these public meetings, staff will recommend boundary adjustments to Regional Council, which will then submit an application to the Nova Scotia Utilities and Review Board. Following this, the Board will hold a public hearing before finalizing the Polling District boundaries for the 2008 municipal election.

**Phase 2 Public Meetings: Draft Recommendations for Polling District Boundary Adjustments**

MEETING DATE	LOCATION	ADDRESS
Monday, March 19, 2007 at 7:00 pm	Halifax Hall	Halifax City Hall, 2nd Floor, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax, NS
Thursday, March 22, 2007 at 7:00 pm	Black Cultural Centre	1149 Main Street, Dartmouth, NS

Should you be unable to attend one of the above Public Meetings, the Municipality invites interested citizens to submit their opinions in writing. Submissions in writing should be directed to:

Municipal Clerk's Office, P.O. Box 1749, Halifax, N.S. B3J 3A5. Attention: Julia Horncastle, Legislative Assistant. Or by e-mail to: [horncaj@halifax.ca](mailto:horncaj@halifax.ca) Or by Fax to: 902-490-4208 Attention: Julia Horncastle

Submissions should be marked clearly with the title: District Boundary Review. The submissions should indicate the name and address of the citizen making the submission and the present polling district in which the citizen making the submission resides.

Comments should be submitted by **March 29, 2007**.

For background information, the existing Polling Districts can be viewed at <http://www.halifax.ca/municipalclerk/districtboundaries.html> or at HRM Customer Service Centres:

- Scotia Square Mall, Lower Level, 5201 Duke Street, Halifax, NS
- West End Mall, 6960 Mumford Road, Halifax, NS
- Alderney Gate, 40 Alderney Drive, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Dartmouth, NS
- Cole Harbour Place, 51 Forest Hills Parkway, Dartmouth, NS
- Acadia School, 636 Sackville Drive, Lower Sackville, NS
- Musquodoboit Harbour, Hwy 107 at Petpeswick Road, Musquodoboit Harbour, NS