


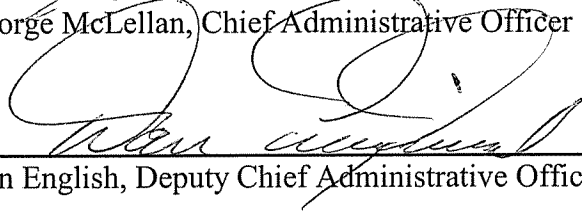
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Halifax Regional Council
February 10, 2004

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer

Dan English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: January 22, 2004

SUBJECT: Request by Charitable Irish Society: "St. Patrick's Green"

ORIGIN

The initial request by the Charitable Irish Society, was to rename all municipal lands on George Street, between Lower Water Street and Bedford Row, as St. Patrick's Square.

Through staff discussions with the Charitable Irish Society, the municipality is proposing to rename that portion of municipal land in the immediate vicinity of the Celtic Cross as "St. Patrick's Green."

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council approve the proposal to rename that portion of the municipally-owned lands immediately adjacent to the Celtic Cross as "St. Patrick's Green."

BACKGROUND

In early 2003 a request was made by Charitable Irish Society to ask Council to rename the municipally owned land at the foot of George Street between Bedford Row and Water Street as St. Patrick's Square. The matter was referred to Park Planning staff for review. Park Planning staff met with the applicants and were moving the matter forward in a timely way until Hurricane Juan arrived. At the request of Park Planning staff the file was transferred to Recreation, Tourism and Culture

Staff of the Culture and Heritage Unit conducted historical research and presented this research to the applicant. A number of alternatives were proposed and communicated to the applicant through the Office of the Mayor, by letter of November 12, 2003. By letter of December 5, 2003 the Charitable Irish Society has communicated that they concur with the alternative proposed by staff.

DISCUSSION

Halifax Regional Municipality is a region defined by more than 10,000 years of settlement history. This year Nova Scotia and HRM celebrate 400 years of Acadian settlement. In 1999 HRM celebrated 250 years of settlement by Great Britain. One of the communities to commemorate this significant anniversary was the Charitable Irish Society. This society, which was established in 1786, erected a stone monument in the shape of a "Celtic Cross" on municipal land abutting George Street to commemorate 250 years of Irish Settlement in Halifax. At the time of the commemoration, the Parks Department was the lead business unit. The primary interest was site maintenance.

In July 2000 when Council approved the Heritage Tourism Strategy, the lead unit became Tourism and Culture. The five heritage tourism principles included in the HT Strategy serve as reference points for consideration of requests such as that of the Charitable Irish Society.

- **Focus on authenticity and quality:** A request for commemoration must be supported by the historical record - in a place like HRM where there are many layers of history, there is a responsibility to create an awareness of past layers of history when new layers are added.
- **Preserve and protect the cultures in a community.** Cultural contributions to a community, such as the placement of the Celtic Cross by the Charitable Irish Society, helps to define our cultural history. Where this action is supported for one culture it should be for all.
- **Guide visitors through an experience** with volunteers, interactive displays and the Internet. When HRM is asked to officially rename a place, we need to ensure that the previous names are recognized through brochures and interpretive panels that bring the site alive.
- **Ensure that any action taken is respectful of local traditions and beliefs,** and supported by the local community. HRM needs to ensure that commemorative actions are supported by the communities of interest that make requests and the citizens of the community that become responsible long after the commemoration is held;

- **Collaboration is essential- success depends on partnerships** that broaden the experience. Showcasing Irish heritage in one place, such as Lower Water Street, tells only part of the story, links to Irish institutions, such as St. Patrick's Church, need to be developed to encourage visitors to travel to many communities..

When a public body, such as HRM, is asked to commemorate a special place with a plaque, monument or name change it is important to assess the cultural, architectural and historical associations with the place. In this way the municipality can determine if the place has significance for more than one culture, community or community of interest. This ensures that commemorative actions, sanctioned by the municipality, will recognize all layers of history and the cultural contributions of all people associated with a site.

Research Findings :

Research shows that Market Square was the centre of municipal life in Halifax prior to 1888. Market Square was the location of some of the earliest piers in Halifax, including the King's Wharf, the historical landing place of Edward Cornwallis in 1749. The first Town Hall was sited in 1820 on the north corner (at the park where the overpass starts). It included municipal offices, courts and a lock up and fronted on Market Square. This Town Hall later become the first City Hall (when Halifax was incorporated in 1841).

Market Square was also the centre for cultural exchange. Rural farmers and fishers exchanged produce with town dwellers from the "urban core" of Halifax. This exchange brought together the rural peoples of Preston Township (African Canadians) and Lawrence Township (United Empire Loyalists). The predominately German settlers of the South Shore, particularly Lunenburg and St Margaret's Bay exchanged fish with English, Irish, Scottish and American citizens, government and military procurement officers and visitors.

These research findings suggest that as an alternate to naming the whole area as St. Patrick's Square, it would be more authentic to name a portion of the space as "St. Patrick's Green on Market Square". This option is supported by staff for two reasons: (1) the name respects the long tradition of the site history and the role of the site as the public marketplace for Halifax; and (2) many cultures traded in the municipal markets, naming a portion of Market Square for the Irish is more acceptable.

The Executive of the Charitable Irish Society concurs with staff that the name "St. Patrick's Green" on "Market Square" is more appropriate. Should Council accept the recommendation of this report the name of a portion of the Square will be officially dedicated on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 2004.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The recommendation to promote to erect interpretive signage to identify the municipally owned Market Square site will be considered and prioritize in the context of the Council approved 2004-2005 Operating Budget and Capital Reserves.

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

All parties have reached consensus; no alternatives are required.

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Dan Norris, Manager, Culture & Heritage

Report Approved by: _____
Lew Rogers, Director, Recreation, Tourism & Culture