

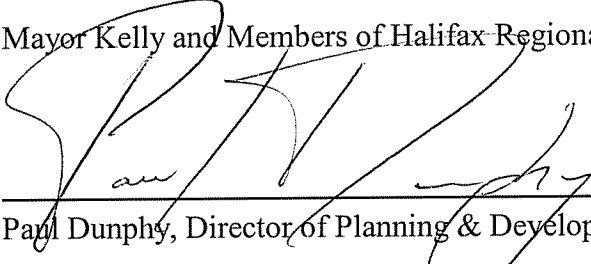


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Halifax Regional Council
March 1, 2005

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:


Paul Dunphy, Director of Planning & Development Services

DATE: February 18, 2005

SUBJECT: Shelter of Last Resort (Winter Shelter) Update

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

November 23, 2004, Council session (item 10.3.1(i)) - requested a staff report on availability of municipal funds for interim funding of an "out of the cold" shelter program.

BACKGROUND

The need for a wet shelter or shelter of last resort has been documented in the report *Homelessness in HRM: A Portrait of Streets and Shelter 2004*. Many stakeholders have been trying for several years to find a sustainable service model that could meet the emergency and longer term housing needs of high needs individuals. Last winter no permanent program was in place and the Brunswick Street United Church offered a 24 hour *out of the cold* program. The response to this program was very strong. Metro Turning Point also was funded for 10 special wet beds. However the church was not able to operate the program for this winter season. The gap left by closure of this program was considered very serious and an alternative was clearly needed. Many groups were looking at alternatives. At the same time, staff were asked to look into whether HRM could find available funds to provide support to an interim replacement service until possible Federal dollars could be accessed.

DISCUSSION

HRM could not readily find available dollars but during this same time community agencies and the Department of Community Services came together and agreed on the needed winter emergency response service and The Minister of Community Services agreed to fully fund the program for this winter.

A new temporary winter shelter has been implemented with the addition of shelter beds and is operated by Saint Leonard's Society of Nova Scotia which also operates Barry House Women's Shelter. HRM staff assisted in finding and securing a facility; facilitating the partnership of St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church Council and the Halifax Catholic Archdiocese as providers of the facility; and providing timely advice and direction on necessary repairs and speedy inspection services.

Pendleton Place opened its doors on December 22, 2004. It is a 40-bed, co-ed shelter that will operate until April 30, 2005. Its purpose is to provide a dry, warm and safe place for homeless individuals who may not have access to other shelters in the city. Pendleton Place opens at 4 p.m. and remains open until 8 a.m. each day. The shelter has housed 144 different persons since the opening night. They have provided 1,660 bed nights of service over a 50 day period. Further information can be found at www.slsns.ns.ca/pendleton.html.

Efforts to find a long term resolution to the need for a wet shelter continues. As yet, there is no word on whether the shelter will be funded again next year, or what form it may take.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

None

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

None

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.

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