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Halifax Regional Council
January 9, 2007

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Labrecque".

Mike Labrecque, P.Eng., Director, Transportation and Public Works

DATE: December 22, 2006

SUBJECT: Cornwallis Junior High School Parking

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Item 9.2.2 raised at the October 31, 2006 meeting of Halifax Regional Council.

BACKGROUND

At the October 31, 2006 meeting of Halifax Regional Council, it was moved by Councillor Uteck and seconded by Deputy Mayor Walker that staff be requested to look at the possibility of a change to the Permit Parking policy to allow for on street permit parking for the staff of Cornwallis Junior High.

Councillor Sloane requested the report also address the matter of why residents on Charles Street cannot obtain permits to park in front of their homes.

DISCUSSION

Cornwallis Junior High School is located at 1787 Preston Street in Peninsular Halifax. Like several schools and businesses in the area, off-street parking on site is insufficient for staff needs. Currently, the school has a staff of 25 persons. Approximately eight vehicles are able to park on a paved surface adjacent to the school facing Chestnut Street. The space for four of these vehicles is accessed illegally by driving along the sidewalk, presenting a safety concern. Staff members are seeking options for readily-available parking spaces at or adjacent to the school.

HRM's Residential On-Street Parking Policy was approved, in principal, by Council on November 12, 2002. The goal of the Policy is to balance the competing on-street parking interests of local and non-local residents. One of the on-street parking options provided in the Policy (and the corresponding Bylaw P-1000) is 'Parking by Permit Only'.

According to the Policy, a 'Parking by Permit Only' restriction must be initiated by the residents of the street and must be supported by the majority of residents. Staff does not support amendments to the Policy to allow business owners to request or petition for reserved on-street parking spaces. A permit parking system for businesses would be difficult from administrative, maintenance and enforcement perspectives.

Staff has examined the following options for school staff:

- **A Second Driveway on Chestnut Street**
A second driveway would allow school staff to legally access the paved surface where they currently park. This option is not recommended by staff, however, due to the impact of the driveway on adjacent trees. The trees in question are two 60-year old red oaks with assessed values between \$15,000 and \$17,000 each. According to Urban Forester John Simmons, the trees have grown in a limited soil area and any disturbance of the root zone will have a negative impact (including potential loss of the trees).
- **Additional On-Site Parking**
The Policy is intended to be implemented only where increasing off-street parking supply to meet demand is not feasible. The principal of the school has indicated that 15 spaces would suit the needs of school staff. There is sufficient space on the grassed property adjacent to Cedar Street to provide eight angled parking stalls (between the stairway and Chestnut St.). This is the **preferred option** of staff and a driveway on Cedar Street would be approved to allow for this construction. There is also potential for more spaces in the currently grassed areas on the other side of the stairway as well as along Preston Street. The Councillor and school have been advised of this option.

- **Change of Parking Restrictions in the Area**

The existing parking time limits in effect on and around Chestnut Street were approved at the request of residents who, many years ago, petitioned to have relief from all-day parking.

There are many unlimited time parking spaces adjacent to the school property. However, these spaces are basically monopolized by workers of the QE2 Health Sciences Centre. The option of creating more unlimited time parking spaces would not only upset residents, but will not provide additional space for school staff as any new open spaces will be taken by hospital workers who start their shifts much earlier in the day than do the teachers.

- **Alternative Transportation Modes**

School staff may want to consider using alternative modes of transportation such as walking, cycling, public transit and/or carpooling.

The street is public ROW and the Policy does not support preferential parking measures for any particular business or organization. Where insufficient off-street parking is available, employees should be prepared to search for available parking and accept that it may not be immediately adjacent to their place of business.

Regional Transportation Planning has recently hired a consultant to undertake a Regional Parking Strategy Functional Plan. The study is intended to develop an overall direction for parking throughout HRM and balance the needs of the business community, commuters, tourism and other services. As part of this study, the consultant will review and provide recommendations for changes to the Residential On-Street Parking Policy and Bylaw P-1000 Respecting On-Street Parking Exemptions and Permits.

The parking issues addressed in this report are not unique to Cornwallis Junior High School, but apply to most places on the Peninsula. Allowing reserved parking for one organization will set an undesirable precedent and result in several similar requests.

Residents of Charles Street are eligible for Residential Parking Exemptions. The Exemptions were originally denied to residents due to an administrative oversight. This has since been resolved.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS


There are no budget implications.

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.

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.

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