

BACKGROUND

See staff report dated May 23, 2008, Attachment 1 to this report.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

See staff report dated May 23, 2008, Attachment 1 to this report.

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

See staff report dated May 23, 2008, Attachment 1 to this report.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Staff Report dated May 23, 2008 - Uniform Charge for White Hills Residents Association

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: Melody Campbell, Legislative Assistant.

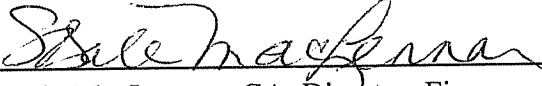


PO Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Attachment 1

Western Region Community Council
May 26, 2008

TO: Chair and Members of Western Region Community Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
S. Dale MacLennan, CA, Director, Finance

DATE: May 23, 2008

SUBJECT: Uniform Charge for White Hills Residents Association

ORIGIN

Interim Area Rate Guidelines were adopted by Council in January 2000 to create a process to assist communities establish new area rates (or uniform charges), ensure that all taxpayers have an opportunity to participate in setting a rate and ensure that rates are set only for valid municipal purposes and not for services already covered by the general rate.

The purpose of this report is to determine if the Interim Area Rate Guidelines have been satisfied thus far with regard to a proposed new uniform charge for the White Hills Residents Association.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

A uniform charge of \$50.00 per property be approved to be applied against the properties within the mapped area depicted in Appendix A of this report effective with the 2008-09 fiscal year for the purpose of funding the activities of the White Hills Residents Association.

BACKGROUND

The White Hills Residents Association (WHRA) was formed in May 2007 “to enhance the image of White Hills as wonderful place to live by (1) being the voice of the community; (2) involvement in protection of local environment; (3) representing interests of community with various levels of government and agencies; (4) facilitating recreational and social activities; and (5) other goals as declared through vote by the membership at general meetings.” The WHRA has been registered with the Registry of Joint Stock Companies since May 7, 2007.

The WHRA has developed plans for enhancements to the entrance way, park, and lake access. In order to leverage funding from public and private sponsors for these projects as well as to achieve the goals outlined above, the WHRA decided to seek approval from the owners of property in the White Birch Hills subdivision for a uniform charge.

DISCUSSION

The current status of this uniform charge in terms of the Interim Area Rate Guidelines is as follows:

- 1. Area rates can only be used for the provision of services within the municipal mandate; services traditionally provided by the municipality.*

Section 65 (ag) of the Municipal Government Act states that “Council may expend money required by the municipality for playgrounds, trails, bicycle paths, swimming pools, ice arenas and other recreational facilities.” The Halifax Regional Municipality and its predecessor municipal units have traditionally funded, either entirely or partially through partnerships, the construction and ongoing operating costs of recreation facilities.

- 2. Area rates are not to be used to provide different levels of a municipal service within urban and suburban areas where said service is covered by the general tax rate.*

The community to which the uniform charge would be applied is within the rural area of HRM. The WHRA is not duplicating any services provided directly by HRM to the White Birch Hills subdivision.

- 3. In order for a proposed new area rate to move to the process as outlined in #4 below, it must have the support of the area's Councillor(s).*

The catchment area for this uniform charge falls entirely within District 23. The Councillor for the District, Gary Meade, conducted a vote of all community households in April and May 2008 to determine if there was support from a majority of the community for the uniform charge. The results of the vote are indicated below. Having determined that sufficient support existed, he

has requested staff prepare a report in compliance with Step 5 of the Interim Area Rate Guidelines for consideration at the next meeting of the Western Region Community Council.

- 4. Proposals for new area rates must be advertised publicly, clearly identifying affected areas, the purpose for the rate, rate information and the duration the rate is expected to be charged. A public meeting will be held and those attending the meeting will be informed of the rationale for the rate and consulted on its appropriateness.*

An information package including a ballot was mailed to the owners of all 544 taxable properties identified within the proposed catchment area. A map of the proposed catchment area is provided in Appendix A of this report, and a copy of the information package is provided in Appendix B. The information package included details of the purpose and amount of the uniform charge, and the date, time and location of a public information meeting which was held on April 30, 2008. It should be noted that the budget figures given in the information package were incorrect because the total number of properties provided to the Association by staff inadvertently included an adjacent subdivision. The Revenue and Expenditure Budgets provided in the mail out were based on \$50 per property x 913 lots = \$45,650. (Refer to page 2 of Appendix B) The calculation should have been based on 544 lots for a total of \$27,200 as shown in Appendix C. The results of the ballot are shown below.

Tabulation of Ballots

Total For Uniform Charge:	202
Total Against Uniform Charge:	50
Total Ballots Distributed:	544
Total Ballots Returned:	252
% Respondents voting For:	80.2%
% Respondents voting Against:	19.8%
Response Rate:	46.3%

- 5. With the concurrence of the Councillor, the request is forwarded to the Community Council for review and a recommendation to Halifax Regional Council. Where a Community Council does not exist, the request will go directly to Halifax Regional Council.*

The purpose of this report is to provide the Western Region Community Council with the necessary information required to consider making a recommendation to Halifax Regional Council for initiating this uniform charge within the proposed catchment area. The implications to the Municipality are identified under the Budget Implications section which follows.

6. *Any proposed new area rates recommended by a Community Council (or, in the absence of a Community Council, the Councillor for the area) will be submitted to Halifax Regional Council through a staff report with a recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer. The staff report will identify the implications to the Municipality along with the results of any public meeting.*
7. *Halifax Regional Council is responsible for approving all area rates.*

Completion of steps 6 and 7 are contingent on the Western Region Community Council approving the Recommendation contained in this report.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The uniform charge would take effect in the 2008/09 fiscal year. As all funding is from the uniform charge (ie. no transfers from the general tax rate), there would be no impact on the HRM General Operating Budget at any time in the future. There is also no impact on the Capital or Reserve Budgets.

The uniform charge of \$50 per property is based on the 2008/09 operating budget of \$27,200, divided by the number of properties in the catchment area, which is 544. Details of the proposed 2008/09 Business Plan and Budget are provided in Appendix C.

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

Community Council could decide not to implement the uniform charge. However, this is not recommended as the WHRA has received a strong endorsement from the owners of property within the White Birch Hills subdivision to proceed with it.

ATTACHMENTS

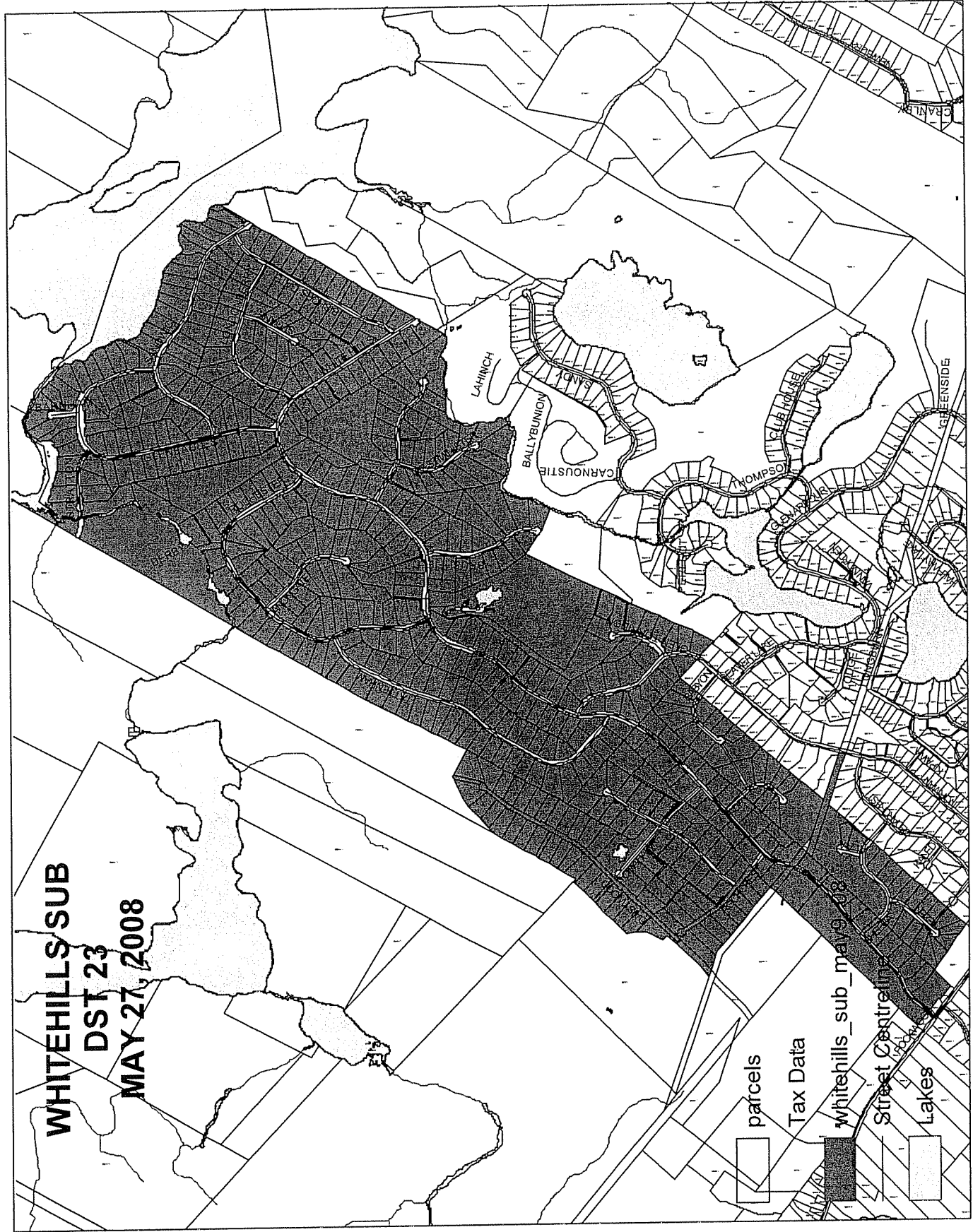
- Appendix A: Map of Catchment Area for Proposed Uniform Charge for White Hills Residents Association
- Appendix B: Copy of Ballot and Information Package mailed to Property Owners
- Appendix C: Proposed Business Plan and Budget for 2008/09 Fiscal Year

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

Report Prepared by : Gordon Roussel, Financial Consultant, Finance 490-6468

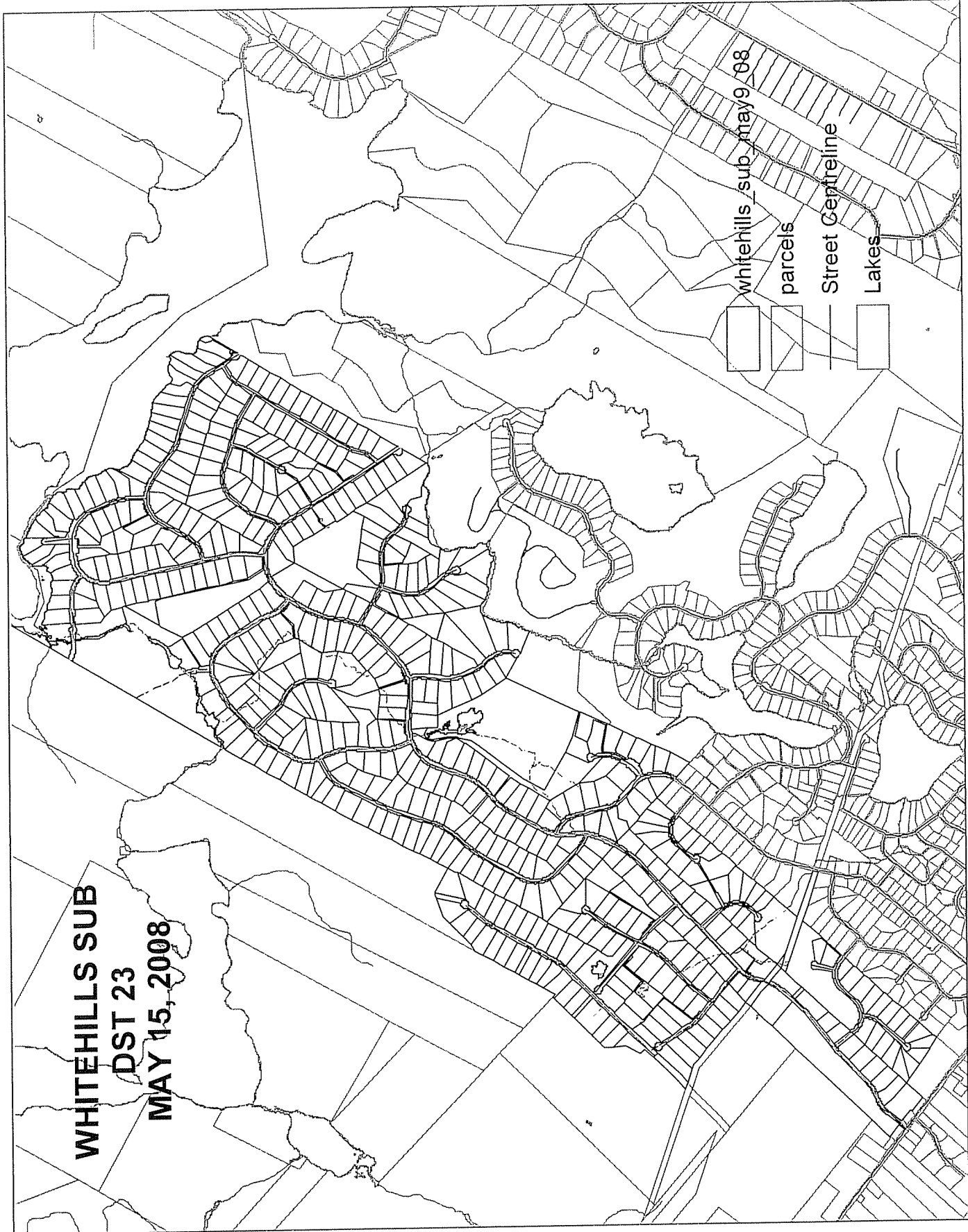
Report Approved by: _____
Dawn Keizer, CA, Manager, Budget & Financial Analysis 490-7203

WHITEHILLS SUB
DST 23
MAY 27, 2008



**WHITEHILLS SUB
DST 23
MAY 15, 2008**

- whitehills_sub_may9_08
- parcels
- Street Centreline
- Lakes



AREA TAX RATE BALLOT

April 18, 2008

OWNER
ADDRESS2
ADDRESS3 PC

Assessment # AAN
LOCATION

Dear White Birch Hills Property Owner:

The White Hills Residents Association (WHRA) was formed by a volunteer group of residents in May 2007 and is registered under the Societies Act with the Registry of Joint Stock Companies. The WHRA exists to represent the interests of the residents of White Birch Hills and to enhance the quality of life within the subdivision. This is accomplished through neighbourhood improvement programs, recreation development, and social activities for all residents to enjoy.

Please find enclosed in this mailing the following:

1. General address letter to all residents from the Association
2. Goals and Budget for April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009 (on reverse side of this letter)
3. Community Project Brief: Lake Access (Appendix A)
4. Community Project Brief: Community Entrance (Appendix B)
5. Community Project Brief: Parkland Development (Appendix C)

In accordance with the Halifax Regional Municipality's procedure for implementing area rates, the property owners in the subdivision must be consulted with regard to whether they wish to pay the \$50 annual fee to contribute to the projects and events proposed by the WHRA. Each property is provided with one ballot and one vote. If a simple majority (50% +1) of ballots returned vote in favour of the area rate, it will be applied to all properties in the area.

For more information, please plan to attend the meeting scheduled for **Wednesday, April 30th at 7PM at the Hammonds Plains Fire Hall**. Our Councilor Gary Meade and a representative from HRM Finance will attend along with members of the Association's Executive and project committee leaders, to help answer your questions.

As the owner of the property identified above, you are entitled to one vote. Please complete the ballot below and either drop it off at the meeting, fax it to 490-5622, or return it in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Councilor Gary Meade at 826-3336 or 476-4123. If you lose your ballot, or have any questions specific to the balloting process, please contact Gordon Roussel at 490-6468.

Please note that all Ballots must be received by May 9, 2008 (No exceptions). If you are mailing your ballot in please allow adequate time for delivery. The results of the balloting will be posted on www.WhiteBirchHills.com by May 16, 2008.

-
- YES**, I am in favour of paying an area rate for the White Hills Residents Association of \$50 per year which will be added to my property tax bill.
- NO**, I am in not favour of paying an area rate for the White Hills Residents Association of \$50 per year and having it added to my property tax bill.

Assessment #AAN

NOTE: Only one vote per assessment number will be counted. Ballots with written-in, typed-in, or altered assessment numbers will not be accepted.

White Hills Residents' Association

Goals for 2008-09

1. Arrange for and hold a vote for Area Rate for the White Hills Community
2. Initiate work on a Community Entrance Project
3. Initiate work on a Community Parkland Project
4. Initiate work on a Community Lake Access Project
5. Host July 1st (Canada Day) social event
6. Conduct local fundraising initiatives to support community projects
7. Facilitate traffic & safety committee
8. Other initiatives as brought forward by Residents of White Hills

Revenue Budget for 2008-09

Description of Revenue Source	Amount (\$)
Estimated area rate revenues (assuming positive approval vote- \$50/property x 913 lots)	\$45,650
Estimated Fundraising Activities	\$1,500
Total Revenues:	\$47,150

Expenditure Budget for 2008-09

Description of Planned Expenditures	Amount (\$)
Social Activities	\$500
Reimbursement of start-up funds by executives/committee chairs (hall rentals, Joint Stock registration fees,	\$500
Communications (website URLs, community advertisements, office supplies, postage & printing)	\$500
Community Entrance Project (details as per enclosed project plan)	\$20,000
Community Parkland Project (details as per enclosed project plan)	\$20,500
Community Lake Access Project (details as per enclosed project plan)	\$5000
Misc	\$150
Total Planned Expenditures:	\$47,150

White Hills Residents' Association

April 2008

Dear White Birch Hills Property Owner,

The executive and project committee members of the White Hills Residents Association (WHRA) seek your support for an “**area rate**” initiative which will be used to beautify the community, enhance the quality of life of the residents and contribute to the investments we have made in our homes. If approved, it will mean that every property owner will pay a flat fee area rate of \$50 annually through their property tax bills to fund the activities and projects of the WHRA.

The WHRA was formed by a volunteer group of residents in May 2007. The association's efforts are focused on improving the quality of life for the residents and to enhance the image of White Hills as wonderful place to live. We do this by 1) being the voice of the community; 2) involvement in protection of local environment; 3) representing interests of community with various levels of government and agencies; 4) facilitating recreational and social activities; and 5) other goals as declared through vote by the membership at general meetings.

Part of this work includes developing community projects. In November of 2007, the Association held a community meeting at the Hammonds Plains fire hall to identify priority projects for the community. From that meeting came three (3) initiatives which we hope to begin work on in 2008.

Many of the envisioned activities and community improvement ideas require funding. To date, White Birch Hills has not had a voice or organizational structure to solicit co-operative funding of community improvement projects with HRM and/or the Province of Nova Scotia. As such, we are asking for your support in realizing these improvements to our community. Stronger funding improves both the quality and quantity of projects; volunteer satisfaction is improved as there is greater visibility for their projects and initiatives; and with enhanced revenue some of the work load of our volunteers can be reduced by using outside resources to supplement their efforts. We believe it's time that the resident's of White Birch Hills receive improvements to the community by accessing publicly available funds.

For more information, please plan to attend the meeting scheduled for **Wednesday, April 30th at 7PM** at the **Hammonds Plains Fire Hall**. Our councilor Gary Meade and representatives from HRM finance department will attend along with members of the Association's executive and project committee leaders, to help answer your questions. If you are unable to attend the meeting please visit the White Birch Hills community discussion forum at <http://whitebirchhills.com> or send us an email at: whitehillscommunity@gmail.com

We look forward to your support

Sincerely,

Dave Wilbur, WHRA President 2007-2008
Dan Coffey, Vice President
Pat McCormick, Treasurer
Rodney McQuade, Communications Dir.

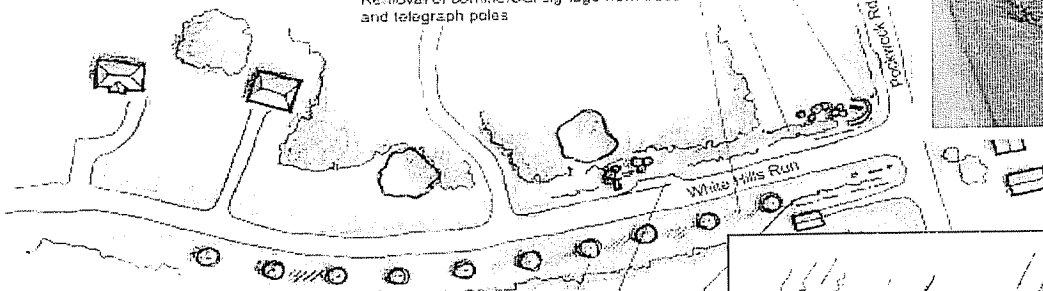
Colleen Tizzard, Secretary
Sheri Edwards, Chairperson, Community Entrance Project
Melanie Sullivan, Chairperson, Parks & Rec. Project
Brad Turnbull, Chairperson, Lake Access Project

White Birch Hills Residents Association Community Project Brief Community Entrance

**White Birch Hills
Entrance Improvements
January 2008**

Phase 1

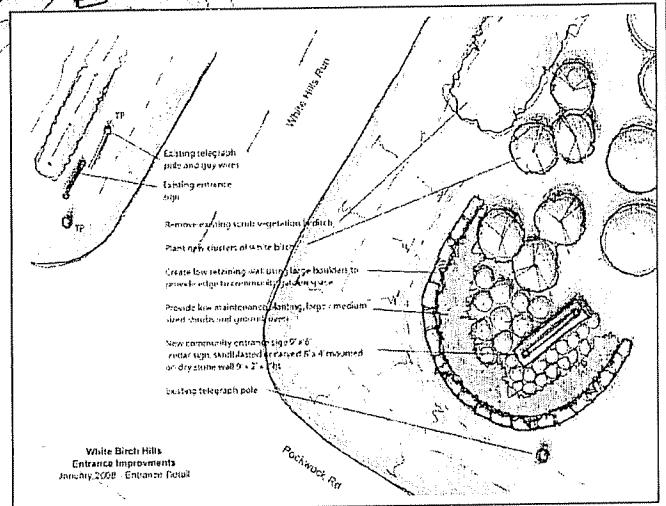
- New community entrance sign and community garden. See Plan B
- Clear scrub vegetation from the ditches and banks from entrance to first residence.
- Removal of Japanese Knotweed from west side of White Hills Run
- Removal of commercial signage from trees and telegraph poles



Phase 2

- Plant avenue of street trees along west side of White Hills Run
- Provide layby for cars pulling in to view existing community map and create rest area / green space near first pond with planting, bench, garbage can
- Plant willow fence buffer to screen property to west of White Hills

Conceptual drawings for illustrative purposes only



Objective: To redevelop the front entrance of the White Birch Hill community that expresses the pride, spirit and character of its residents. The goal is to create a welcoming & inviting entrance to the community that creates a positive first impression for friends & visitors and evoke a sense of pride of belonging for the residents

Project Details:

- Removal of scrub vegetation from ditches and along the banks
- Removal of commercial signage
- Removal & disposal of Japanese knotweed along the fence at the west side of White Hills Run
- Construction of a willow tree fence along the west side of White Hills Run to screen adjacent property
- New community signage; natural stone base and sandblaster or carved cedar sign
- Complement signage with low maintenance trees/scrubs and ground cover around the new sign
- Lighting cast on entrance sign
- Phase II of the project could include further landscaping and a pull off area for cars with a map of the community

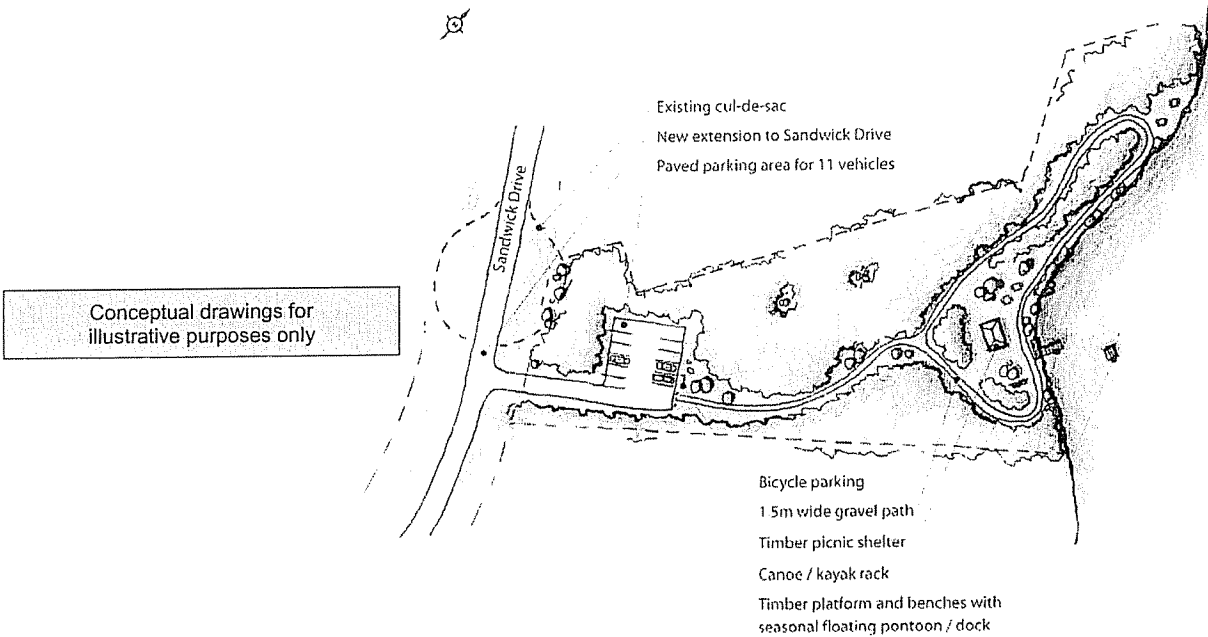
Budget:

- Phase I – new signage & landscaping \$20K
- Phase II - TBD

Timing:

- Phase I – site prep summer 2008
- Phase I – signage & landscaping 2009
- Phase II - 2010

**White Birch Hills Residents Association
Community Project Brief
Community Lake Access**



Objective: To provide safe access to beautiful Lake McCabe. The goal of lake access is to provide the community with a place to swim, canoe, fish and picnic.

Description:

Phase 1

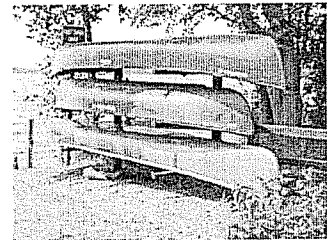
- Paved parking lot to accommodate 11 vehicles
- Standard wrap around walking trail or foot path (1.5m wide gated)
- Tree thinning and clean-up

Phase 2:

- Water access with 5000sq ft. grassed area
- Seasonal floating dock / platform and three picnic tables
- Waste containers
- Warning signage

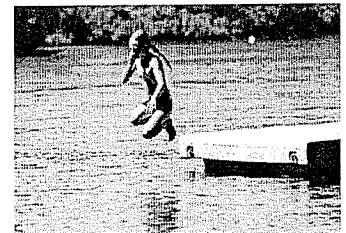
Phase 3:

- Timber shelter on concrete slab with picnic tables
- Bicycle rack
- Canoe / Kayak rack
- Timber benches



Budget:

Phase 1	\$0 (funding provided by United Gulf Developments as part of Glen Arbour Phase 7)
Phase 2	\$40K - \$45K
Phase 3	\$35K - \$40K

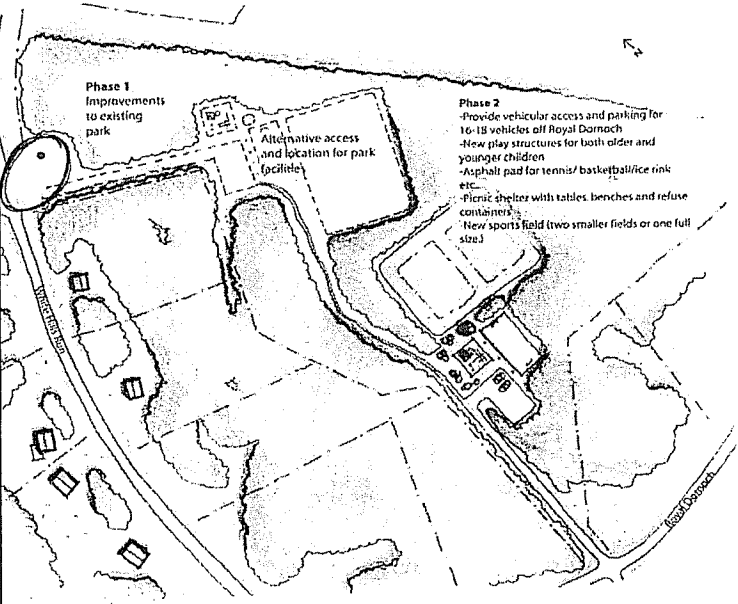
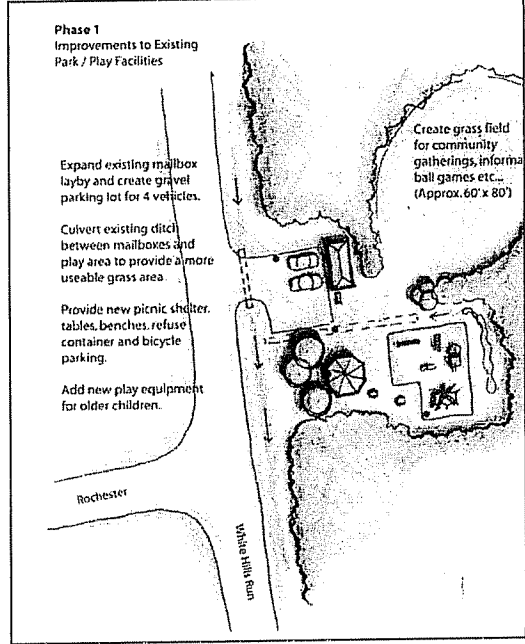


Timing:

Phase 1	Spring - Fall 2008
Phase 2	TBD
Phase 3	TBD

**White Birch Hills Residents Association
Community Project Brief
Community Park**

Conceptual drawings for illustrative purposes only



Objective:
To use the 29+ acres of designated parkland in the middle of our community, by creating accessibility, adding recreational facilities, and creating a space where we can gather, play, and enjoy nature.

Project Details:

Phase 1

- 3-5 vehicle gravelled off-street parking off White Hills Run
- Shelter for mailboxes & Community message board
- Relocation of mailboxes
- Security lighting in mailbox area
- 1 km of walking trails between White Hills Run entrance of park with Royal Dornoch Drive entrance of park
- Community green space
- Clear area for additional play equipment for older children
- Park benches, picnic tables, bicycle racks, fencing, trash receptacles, etc as needed

Phase 2

- Additional play equipment for younger and older children
- Vehicle access and parking off Royal Dornoch Drive entrance to park
- Multipurpose asphalt pad for road hockey, basketball, tennis, etc
- Green space off Royal Dornoch Drive entrance for community recreation
- Park benches, picnic tables, bicycle racks, fencing, trash receptacles, etc as needed

Budget:

Phase 1: \$110,000 over 2 years (2009-2010)
Phase 2: \$135,000 over 3 years (2011 - 2013)

Appendix C
2008-09 Business Plan & Budget for

Name of Association or Society:	White Hills Residents' Association
Registry of Joint Stock Companies ID#:	3127114

	Primary Signing Authority	Secondary Signing Authority
Name & Title:	Dave Wilbur - President	Dan Coffey - Vice President
Phone number:	902-444-9345	902-835-1164
Mailing Address:	190 Brushfield Drive, Hammonds Plains NS B4B 1V6	137 Brushfield Drive, Hammonds Plains NS B4B 1V6

Business Plan & Budget approved at Annual General Meeting held on:	
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Mission and Description of Services Provided
(including who the services are provided to)

On a volunteer and non-profit basis the society will seek to achieve these objects:

- (a) To enhance the quality of lifestyle enjoyed by the society members through
 - 1—Being the voice of the community
 - 2—Active involvement in protection of local environment
 - 3—Representing interests of community with various levels of government and agencies
 - 4—Facilitating recreational and social activities
 - 5—Other goals as declared through vote by the membership at general meetings
- (b) To acquire by way of grant, gift, purchase, bequest, devise or otherwise, real and personal property and to use and apply such property to the realization of the objects of the Society;
- (c) To buy, own, hold, lease, mortgage, sell and convey such real and personal property as may be necessary or desirable in the carrying out of the objects of the Society.

The activities of the Society are to be carried on in White Birch Hills Subdivision, Hammonds Plains, Nova Scotia.

Accomplishments

(What has your organization accomplished in the past year?)

- Organized & registered the White Hills Residents' Association as a non-profit , elected executive & board of directors (May 2007)
- Developed association charter including bylaws & governance, vision, mission & values
- Held the first annual general meeting of the WHRA to announce Association to the community & gain community support for area rate vote (November 2007). Requested volunteers for community projects
- Establish chairpersons for each committee
 - Planning & Projects
 - Community Events & Social
 - Traffic & Safety
 - Fundraising
- A special meeting of the Projects & Planning committee was held to identify project focus of the community; project chairpersons were selected with the aim of scoped/developed projects. (1. community entrance, 2. community lake access, and 3. community parks development) Representatives from HRM were also in attendance (December2007)
- Each project committee was tasked with scoping the vision/objectives and development plans for their respective projects and report back to the Association.
- A follow-up meeting with representative of HRM to discuss the details of identified projects timelines & budgets (January,2008)
- The Association executive dialogued with neighboring associations to discuss voting details, share organization experiences, and talk about projects of mutual benefit.
- Project briefs were prepared by each project committee. Business planning documents, budgets and supporting papers were drafted by the Association executive to support the Associations' objectives and an area rate vote. Arrangements were made with HRM to proceed with a vote in April/May 2008

Goals for 2008-09

(What does your organization plan to accomplish between April 1, 2008 and March 31, 2009)

1.	Arrange for and hold a vote for Area Rate for the White Hills Community
2.	Initiate work on a Community Entrance Project
3.	Initiate work on a Community Parkland Project
4.	Initiate work on a Community Lake Access Project
5.	Host July 1 st (Canada Day) social event
6.	Conduct local fundraising initiatives to support community projects
7.	Facilitate traffic & safety committee
8.	Other initiatives as brought forward by Residents of White Hills
9.	
10.	

Area Rate Information

Amount of Area Rate:	\$50/household /year
Will the Purpose <u>or</u> Amount of the Area Rate change in 2008/09?	No
If so, how and why has it changed, and have the majority of homeowners voted to approve the change?	NA
Area subject to Area Rate:	White Hills Subdivision
Year Area Rate to Expire (if applicable):	2011 as per 2007/08 Annual General Meeting vote
Do you anticipate a surplus or a deficit at the end of this year (2007/08)? How much?	All funds will be accrued to projects as per outlined in business plan
If a surplus exists at the end of the fiscal year, how is it to be applied?	All funds will be accrued to projects as per outlined in business plan

Revenue Budget for 2008-09

Description of Revenue Source	Amount (\$)
Estimated area rate revenues (\$50/property x 544 properties)	\$27,200
Estimated Fundraising Activities	\$1,500
Total Revenues (must equal total expenditures):	\$28,700

Expenditure Budget for 2008-09

Description of Planned Expenditures	Amount (\$)
Social Activities	\$500
Reimbursement of start-up funds by executives/committee chairs (hall rentals, Joint Stock registration fees,	\$500
Communications (website URLs, community advertisements, office supplies, postage & printing)	\$500
Community Projects	\$27,000
Misc	\$200
Total Planned Expenditures (must equal total revenues):	\$28,700