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Item No. 5  
Halifax Regional Council  
September 9, 2014

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

Original Signed by Director

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Brad Anguish, Director, Community and Recreation Services

**DATE:** August 5, 2014

**SUBJECT:** Notification of Public Information Meetings - Renters

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### INFORMATION REPORT

#### ORIGIN

May 22, 2012 motion of Regional Council:

***“MOVED by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee that Halifax Regional Council request a staff report regarding the revision of public information meeting procedures regarding resident mail-out notification, that all residents, whether owners or renters or otherwise living in a mail-out zone are to be sent notification of public meetings in that area. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.”***

#### LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

*Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Part VIII, Planning & Development and Part II, Administration*

#### BACKGROUND

The request by former Councillor Smith to change HRM's notification process for public information meetings (PIM) was raised in response to a PIM held in his district. The planning application was for a new multi-unit building in an area which contained a number of multi-unit buildings. A notification letter for the PIM was sent out to property owners only, as per HRM's notification protocol at the time. This action resulted in only a few notices being delivered despite a large number of renters within the notification area. Former Councillor Smith maintained that renters within the multi-unit buildings should have been notified the same as property owners, as they are also impacted by new developments in their area.

## DISCUSSION

On February 25, 1997, Regional Council passed a motion that adopted a public participation program for Municipal Planning Strategy amendments. This program is still followed today and forms the basis upon which public consultation has been applied to other planning applications. The public participation program resolution adopted by Regional Council requires staff to notify the public of a meeting as follows:

- 1) Place an ad within “a newspaper circulating in the area affected a minimum of seven (7) clear days prior to the meeting”; and
- 2) Indicate the “time, date, and place of the meeting as well as the location and hours during which written material concerning the proposed amendments may be inspected by members of the public”.

In addressing Council’s public participation resolution, staff adopted an enhanced internal protocol which specifies that staff:

- Sends property owners a copy of the ad within:
  - 76.2 metres (250 feet) of the site in a serviced area (municipal sewer and water); and
  - 152.4 metres (500 feet) of the site in a non-serviced area; and
- Places a fact sheet on the HRM website which contains details of the application and any applicable reports and studies;
- Places the ad within the newspaper earlier (target of 14 days before the meeting – same as for a public hearing); and
- Expands the notification area to take into consideration the topography, land uses, and development pattern of the surrounding area.

When HRM’s public participation program was adopted in 1997, the municipality could only confirm the names and addresses of property owners within a notification area. As a result of former Councillor Smith’s motion in May of 2012, staff updated the internal notification protocol to include notification to both owners and renters within multi-unit buildings for public information meetings within the notification area. This new notification process was made possible through technological access to updated civic address information. Staff has also applied this same notification protocol to ads for public hearings.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

## ATTACHMENTS

None

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.php> 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: Kurt Pyle, Acting Operations Manager, Development Approvals, 490-6011

Original Signed

Report Approved by:

for: Kelly Denty, Manager of Development Approvals, 490-4800

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