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Halifax Regional Council
September 6, 2005

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
Carol Macomber, Acting Director RTC

DATE: August 17, 2005

SUBJECT: Bedford Arena Facility

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

The following motion was approved at the May 10, 2005 Regional Council Meeting.

- 1) Council take the position of opposition to Bill 172 and communicate this to the three party caucuses and Mr. Russell MacKinnon.
- 2) Council authorize staff to meet with the Province and the group proposing the facility to explore options for the proposal and come back to Council in a two week time frame.

BACKGROUND

HRM staff have met with the Developers of the proposed private 3 pad arena complex in Bedford as well have met with the Province on the project. The discussions focussed on the Developers need to have exemption on property taxes in order for the project to proceed. HRM Regional Council has voted to oppose such an exemption. The reason for not supporting Bill 172 was that the proponent was a business enterprise; legislation to exempt a business from property tax would set a precedence relative to other sports/fitness facilities or type of business.

A second proposal was an “ice lease arrangement between HRM and the owner/operators of the rink [RINKCO] to recover the burden of property taxes [and business occupancy taxes, if applicable]. HRM would agree to a renewable 20 year ice lease for 3,000 hours of prime time ice and 1,000 hours of non-prime time ice per winter hockey season.” This proposal was not in agreement with HRM staff.

A community based committee from Bedford has indicated that an arena facility is needed in Bedford and is to pursue the development of the facility in partnership with HRM. The group is the Rocky Lake Development Association and is prepared to make a presentation to Regional Council. The Rocky Lake Development Association is a not for profit community volunteer group and is eligible for HRM financial support **including** tax exemption.

DISCUSSION

The Burke Oliver Report identified a number of recreation facility deficiencies, including one ice surface for Bedford. The requirement was further substantiated in a subsequent arena capacity study undertaken by HRM in November 2001. Furthermore, The Indoor Recreation Facility Master Plan did acknowledge the need in one of the recommendations as follows:

‘It is recommended that should the tri-pad facility not move forward in Bedford, HRM initiate the development of an additional ice surface for the Bedford area.’

With the planned construction of the Mainland Common Recreation Facility to begin this year, and the recent completion of the additional ice surface at the St. Margaret’s Centre, the only facility deficiency remaining from the Burke Oliver Report is the additional ice surface in Bedford.

A number of major facilities with ice surfaces have expressed concern about the potential impact of the 3 pad ice surface facility in Bedford on their existing operations. They are concerned it may impact their shoulder hours and summer programs. Feedback during public consultation sessions that were part of the development process of the IRFMP indicated there is a significant amount of additional demand in the community, including updated information obtained from the original author of the Burke Oliver Report. Much of that demand was for more available peak hours of usage. A staff report on the impact on existing facilities can be done for Council.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

As a non-profit group, the Rocky Lake Development Association is potentially eligible beginning in 2006/07 for tax exempt status under By Law T-200. Their application would have to be reviewed by the Grants Committee along with other applicants in the context of available funds and then a recommendation made to Council.

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.

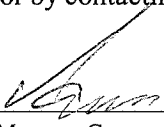
ALTERNATIVES

Regional Council could say no to a Bedford arena facility as proposed by a community group. This is not recommended.

ATTACHMENTS

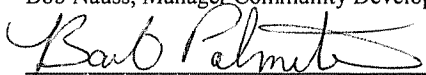
A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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Financial Review :



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