

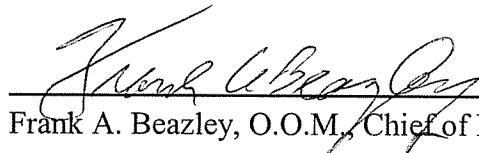


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Halifax Regional Council
December 13, 2005

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:


Frank A. Beazley, O.O.M., Chief of Police

DATE: December 6, 2005

SUBJECT: **Petition - Residents of Lake Drive, Mill Court, Forrest Lane and
Mill Run Crescent**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Under Item 9.2.1 of the September 13, 2005 Regional Council meeting, Deputy Mayor Goucher served a petition from residents of Lake Drive, Mill Court, Forrest Lane and Mill Run Crescent area concerning acts of vandalism and break-ins in their neighbourhood.

BACKGROUND

Lake Drive is located off Hammonds Plains Road and the roadway ends in a cul-de-sac at the end of Mill Court. There are several other roadways that connect to Lake Drive (main thoroughfare) and all end in cul-de-sacs as well.

At the beginning of Lake Road there is a pathway that leads to heavily wooded private lands that provides youths cover and opportunity to gather and consume alcohol.

There was a supervised beach area at Fenerty Landing located adjacent to Lake Drive, which was closed in 2005 when Sandy Lake Park and Beach opened. This beach area is still used by local residents periodically. Also located on Lake Drive is a pathway maintained by HRM that leads to Scott Saunders Park and Playground. This area is heavily used by both residents and youth as it is a well known swimming location. Residents can also access this park from Mill Run Crescent.

Mill Court is a cul-de-sac at the end of Lake Drive and has a pathway that leads to the rear of the old

Moirs Building (off Bedford Highway next to Tim Hortons) which is currently a Tourist Information Centre. This pathway is heavily used by both area residents, visitors and youth as there is a designated area with picnic tables next to Moirs Mill Run. This area and pathway are very picturesque and, although somewhat short in length, it is wooded on both sides which provides cover for youth to gather and drink.

For the past 13 years, a private security officer has patrolled this area from the long weekend in July to the long weekend in September to deal with loud parties and youth who gather in this area. The security guard was given a cell phone to contact police as required. However, 2005 saw the withdrawal of these services.

DISCUSSION

The Quick Response Unit was assigned to implement the 2005 Halifax Regional Police Parks Plan in an effort to deter and reduce youth complaints, underage drinking and noise. Members worked in one division each shift and focused on all parks and areas of concern identified through community complaints and concerns. The Parks Plan covered a three week period from June 21st to July 7th and due to rainy weather little activity occurred.

The Quick Response Unit utilized uniformed members, members on dirt bikes and plainclothes members to effectively combat these quality of life issues. At any given point there were 4-8 members assigned to this project working afternoons until late evenings. Members patrolled before the parks closed to educate legitimate park users about the by laws and closures and then returned after the parks closed for enforcement.

Scott Saunders Park, listed as Paper Mill Lake was patrolled along with all other areas in West Division. This park was relatively quiet during our patrols. In June one youth was charged with possession of marijuana.

On July 29th a special check was initiated in response to youth and recent acts of vandalism, loud disturbances and break-ins in the area.

Patrol members were encouraged to interact with residents of the neighbourhood and those utilizing the park and pathways, while enhancing police visibility in the area. This resulted in a very positive response from citizens. These patrols were carried out at all hours of the day and night. Youth were informed as to why the police were patrolling the area and reminded them to use the park responsibly while respecting those who lived in the area. They were also informed that arrests would result from intoxication or any illegal activity in the park.

During the special check from July 29 to September 1, 2005, only four calls for service to this area were received. It appeared that the efforts of the West Division members were having a positive affect. However, between September 2 to 7, 2005 there was an escalation in calls for service in

that area. Seven incidents were reported to police involving youth gathering at Mill Lake, cars racing on Moirs Mill Road, property damage and an attempted break and enter. Patrols were increased and there were no further incidents reported to police until September 25, 2005. From September 25 to December 3, 2005, there have been 17 calls for service reported to police. These calls range from youth, theft, property damage and two break and enters. To date we have conducted 145 special checks in this area. Our presence will continue over the winter months.

Contact has also been made with the Parks Patrol Supervisor for HRM to solicit his help in checking the parks over the winter months. The Citizens on Patrol (COPS) group in West Division will also be requested to patrol this area over the winter months as well.

Halifax Regional Police in partnership with other HRM departments was successful in replacing signs that were damaged or in need of cleaning resulting from graffiti. The signs will be posted 8 feet from the ground to prevent further graffiti. Trimming of brush in the area will also be carried out.

As this activity appears to be seasonal, it will be addressed in 2006 through the implementation of a Parks Plan. In addition, routine checks by HRM Parks Patrol Officers, special checks of the area at the beginning of summer and checks by Citizens on Patrol will also be conducted.

It is our understanding that consideration will be given to the rehiring of private security for routine patrol of the area for 2006.

Halifax Regional Police is committed to working with the community to provide safe neighborhoods and quality of life.

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.

ALTERNATIVES

ATTACHMENTS

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:

Staff Sergeant G. Mosher, West Division

490-5204