

Halifax Regional Council
May 10, 2005

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
Dan English, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: May 4, 2005

SUBJECT: Immigration in HRM

ORIGIN

At the Halifax Regional Council Meeting December 16th, 2003 meeting, Mr. Hugh Wright, President, Board of Directors, Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) and Mr. Fred Morley, Vice President, Greater Halifax Partnership made a presentation to Council regarding the Immigration Partnership Initiative. Council requested a staff report and staff have been working with MISA and GHP on this initiative. The purpose of this report is to update Council on the initiatives around immigration and to seek Council's support of immigration, particularly in light of the Atlantic Mayors's Conference on Immigration 2005 being held in Halifax May 15-17.

RECOMMENDATION

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT Halifax Regional Council adopt the following vision: Halifax Regional Municipality is a welcoming community where immigration is supported and encouraged. Halifax Regional Municipality will work with other levels of government and community partners to increase our collective cultural, social and economic diversity by welcoming immigrants to our community.

BACKGROUND

Immigration in HRM is both a reality and a necessity. Further to the presentation made by MISA the Economic Potential Study of HRM, by Gardner Pinfold has confirmed the need for increased immigration as part of an economic strategy. Staff have formed an interdepartmental working group to examine how HRM can support immigrants coming to the region, and more specifically, how we might work better with other organizations and other levels of government.

It is important to the community that Council formally adopt a supportive vision around immigration.

In August 2004, the Province of Nova Scotia released A Framework for Immigration, a discussion paper to seek input into the development of a Provincial Immigration Strategy. HRM was consulted and provided input to this process. In January 2005, Nova Scotia's Immigration Strategy was released. The strategy recognizes the important role that municipal governments play in terms of engaging citizens about the benefits of immigration and developing specific strategies at the community level. A specific strategy noted in the document is that the Province will "assist municipalities interested in attracting immigrants by engaging them in marketing and promotion efforts and developing service delivery capacity".

Recognizing the importance of immigration to our community, HRM has undertaken and participated in several initiatives to help ensure HRM is a welcoming community.

Atlantic Mayors' Congress, Immigration Conference May 15-17, 2005

Mayor Kelly will be hosting the Atlantic Mayors' Congress Conference on Immigration. All are welcome to attend, register on-line at www.immigration2005.ca

Greater Halifax Partnership - GHP is focusing on community based immigration strategy development. Halifax Global has been contracted to develop a practical, workable action plan to attract, integrate and retain immigrants in the Halifax Regional Municipality. The action plan will serve as a roadmap for successful implementation of: (a) a community partnership model consisting of business, government, economic development and settlement-providing organizations and (b) a strategy to achieve a target of 2,800 new immigrants per year with a retention rate of 70% within four years of full strategy implementation. HRM staff and council are represented on the project steering committee. Greater Halifax Partnership will be providing a written brief to council.

Halifax Regional Development Agency - HRDA is working closely with the Province under the Provincial Nominee program to help new immigrants become established in HRM.

Halifax Regional Immigration Forum June 10, 2005

Following the results of the Mayors' Conference on Immigration and the GHP Immigration Strategy, CAO George McLellan will be inviting colleagues and community stakeholders to participate in a roundtable discussion on Immigration in the Halifax Regional Municipality. Discussion will focus on specific actions that can be undertaken to help make HRM a more welcoming community. Following the session, staff will develop some specific, tangible actions to pursue over the next 12 months to achieve this goal, and report back to Council.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

No budget implications. Specific activities undertaken may have some budgetary implications, but will be submitted through the budgetary process.

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.

REGIONAL PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

This report is in compliance with regional planning principles. See Principle Four: Support development patterns that promote a vigorous economy Goal 4.1: Reinforce and promote HRM as an economic and cultural force within Nova Scotia, Atlantic Canada and beyond.

ALTERNATIVES

Council could choose not to adopt the recommended vision, however, doing so might suggest that Halifax Regional Municipality is not supportive of efforts to increase immigration and make Halifax a more welcoming community. This alternative is not recommended.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

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.

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