

**HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY**

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**HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**January 17, 2006**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Peter Kelly  
Deputy Mayor Russell Walker  
Councillors: Steve Streach  
Krista Snow  
David Hendsbee  
Gloria McCluskey  
Andrew Younger  
Bill Karsten  
Becky Kent  
Jim Smith  
Mary Wile  
Patrick Murphy  
Dawn M. Sloane  
Sue Uteck  
Sheila Fougere  
Debbie Hum  
Linda Mosher  
Stephen D. Adams  
Brad Johns  
Robert P. Harvey  
Reg Rankin  
Gary G. Meade

**REGRETS:** Councillor Harry McInroy  
Councillor Len Goucher

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mr. Wayne Anstey, A/Deputy Chief Administrative Officer  
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor  
Ms. Jan Gibson, Municipal Clerk  
Ms. Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**MOVED by Councillor Wile, seconded by Councillor McCluskey, the minutes of January 10, 2006 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**2. COUNCIL FOCUS AREAS:**

**i) Economic Development**

C A document entitled, Council Focus Area, Economic Development Background and Discussion Paper, dated January 17, 2006 was submitted.

C A letter dated January 13, 2006 from Valerie A. Payn, President, Halifax Chamber of Commerce regarding Economic Strategy Implementation was submitted.

Mr. Jim Donovan, Manager, Economic Strategy, and Ms. Betty MacDonald, Director Governance and Strategic Initiatives provided a presentation on the Focus Area of Economic Development. Mr. Donovan noted in the public gallery there were representatives from the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, Halifax Regional Development Agency (HRDA), and the Greater Halifax Partnership (GHP) who were in attendance to respond to any questions Council may have.

Mr. Donovan reviewed the areas of concern Council identified in their workshop in regard to economic development, and he reviewed the current initiatives that are underway, elaborating on the Economic Strategy. He advised that it offers guiding principles with regard to implementation of the plan. Mr. Donovan noted that there was no firm recommendation with regard to implementation but staff have provided options pertaining to oversight /steering function; the support and implementation function and commitment, buy-in and monitoring function and with regard to the overall funding of Economic Development. Mr. Donovan noted that staff are in the process of renewing service agreements with the Halifax Region Development Agency and the Greater Halifax Partnership. He reviewed the next steps in the process and advised that direction from Council would be welcomed.

At 10:22 a.m. Councillor Uteck entered the meeting.

Staff responded to questions, and in regard to staff's request for direction from Council, the

following comments were put forward:

- C the composition of the advisory committee should include business people

At 10:29 a.m. Councillor Fougere entered the meeting.

At 10:32 a.m. Councillor Sloane entered the meeting

- C important to have relationship with the three levels of government.
- C have to be careful that in the evolution of economic development, that we do not unintentionally lose what we have;
- C the process has to be non-political; has to involve all three levels of government; avoid new bureaucracies and eliminate duplication
- C support the idea of joint business plans.
- C need diversity in our economy
- C important that all areas have access to high speed Internet
- C GHP take the lead on the implementation of the Plan, and bring in the RDA; do not need this coming back to Council for another committee to be formed.
- C emphasize small business opportunities; should look at tax incentives; long term vision is important; Destination Halifax should be brought into this process
  
- C Greater Halifax Partnership and HRM should look into the idea of better signage for “gateways”.
- C important for Council to have input into the Steering Committee
- C collective understanding from all three levels of government is very important.

At 10:55 a.m. Councillor Kent entered the meeting

- C would be good to have a ‘one stop shopping’ approach to economic development issues with all levels of government, much in the same way the Provincial and Municipal service centres operate
- C Councillor Hendsbee: supports Option B for the Oversight/Steering Function; Option B for the Support & Implementation Function; Option D, with elements of A and C for the Commitment, Buy-in & Monitoring; and Option B for Overall Funding of Economic Development
- C should have equal partnership and not have one group above another
- C Councillor Karsten: supports the idea of joint business plans; avoid duplication; Option E with regard to Commitment, Buy-in & Monitoring; Option A on the Overall Funding of Economic Development; current funding should be looked at for one fiscal year.
- C Highway interchange to Bayers Lake Business Park is not welcoming and sometimes deters businesses; support incentive for taxes for business park development.

Councillor Harvey advised that there were two issues in front of Council about which to make decisions, i.e. the implementation of the economic strategy and the finalizing of service

agreements with GHP and HRDA. He suggested that Council direct the two agencies to develop a joint implementation group made up of representatives of their Boards, staff, and HRM staff; and write this implementation vehicle into their service agreements, and have this completed within the next two months.

**MOVED by Councillor Harvey, seconded by Councillor Fougere that Regional Council recommend a joint group be formed from representatives of the two organizations and HRM Staff, to develop an economic strategy implementation plan, reflecting the Guiding Principles as contained in the January 17, 2006 presentation, and this be reflected in the service agreements of the respective Boards of Greater Halifax Partnership (GHP) and the Halifax Regional Development Agency (HRDA). It is understood that the following next steps are:**

- C     Tripartite Discussion with GHP and HRDA**
- C     Joint Business Plans, Budgets**
- C     New Service Agreements, March, 2006**
- C     Economic Strategy Implementation Plan & Structure, April 2006**

A brief discussion ensued with staff providing clarification on the guiding principles.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.**

**The meeting reconvened at 1:08 p.m. with the same members present and the Deputy Mayor in the Chair**

**ii) Community Development**

- C     A document entitled, Council Focus Area, Community Development, Background and Discussion Paper, dated January 10, 2006 was submitted.**

Ms. Carol Macomber, Acting Director of Recreation Tourism and Culture outlined the Focus Area of Community Development. She reviewed the common themes which resulted from council discussions, and elaborated on the current initiatives, which are the youth engagement strategy; community response team; volunteer conference/workshops; Cultural Plan; and integrated service teams (i.e. CANB, Dartmouth North, Capital District).

At 1:13 p.m. Mayor Kelly entered the meeting and assumed the Chair.

Ms. Macomber continued with her presentation, noting the issues staff are dealing with and the principles of Community Development. She concluded her remarks by requesting Council provide direction in regard to pursuing coordinated service delivery opportunities and

providing resources to stabilize volunteer/community groups that operate programs, services, and facilities on HRM's behalf. She further advised that staff was requesting clarity and feedback with regard to reviewing and restructuring support to community events and cultural initiatives.

At 1:15 p.m. Councillor Uteck entered the meeting.

Ms. Macomber, Ms. Betty MacDonald, Director of Governance and Strategic Initiatives, and Mr. Bob Nauss, Regional Coordinator, Recreation Tourism and Culture responded to questions.

At 1:20 p.m. Councillor Murphy entered the meeting.

The following comments were put forward by Council:

- C need more of a cohesive approach in regard to community consultation
- C HRM's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary is approaching soon, and HRM should not let this slide - there are a lot of positive aspects and we should start championing these
- C promote the value of voluntarism
- C concern expressed that many events today that rely on volunteers charge the volunteer for t-shirts, etc. pertaining to the event; also, many people are worried about volunteer work if they are not covered by insurance.

At 1:29 p.m. the Deputy Mayor took the Chair.

At approximately 1:33 p.m. Councillors Snow, Fougere, and Mosher entered the meeting.

- C have to get the youth involved in a youth engagement strategy
- C a stabilization program is needed to address the burnout rate of volunteers
- C adjusting the tax structure; and assisting groups with up to 50% of operational maintenance costs would assist volunteer groups
- C need to increase efforts to improve the skill sets of volunteer boards and provide further support
- C HRM needs to encourage voluntarism
- C HRM needs to step back and take a look at the facilities it owns, and the service level it can maintain
- C need to implement corporate initiatives at community level; fragmentation of local service delivery; integration of cultural and heritage programs and services among the business units and throughout HRM

At 2:09 p.m. Mayor Kelly returned to meeting and assumed the Chair.

- C mentorship program for volunteers - perhaps this could be a high school credit for students.
- C additional funding is needed for local events such as Natal Day

**MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee that Regional Council accept the report of January 10, 2006 and endorse staff moving forward with the following direction:**

- C Pursue coordinated service delivery opportunities**
- C Provide resources to stabilize volunteer/community groups that operated programs, services, and facilities on HRM's behalf.**
- C Review and restructure support to community events and cultural initiatives**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**iii) Community Relations**

- C A document entitled, Council Focus Area, Community Relations, January 17, 2006 was submitted.**

Mr. Andrew Whittemore, Executive Assistant, Chief Administrative Office, gave a presentation outlining the Council Focus Area of Community Relations. In his remarks, Mr. Whittemore advised that Community Relations refers to the manner in which the public is consulted, who is participating, the way information is gathered and how information is shared. He reviewed the concerns Council has expressed in regard to the state of HRM's community relations, the current initiatives that are underway, and proposed initiatives. Mr. Whittemore advised that staff is seeking direction from Council with regard to the following: re-align and focus staff resources at improving community engagement in HRM by, 1. Coordinating all HRM public engagement, 2. Using new consultation tools and techniques (i.e. community visioning), 3. Increasing representative participation, 4. Improving information gathering and sharing, and 5. Utilising untapped Council and community knowledge.

**MOVED by Councillor Younger, seconded by Councillor Sloane that Regional Council endorse the approach to improving community engagement including the draft engagement model, the draft community visioning program and the establishment of a centralised repository of information, as outlined in the January 17, 2006 presentation, and the next steps would involve:**

- C Develop the pilot vision project**
- C Identify pilot visioning communities**
- C Seek Council approval of Communities**
- C Begin implementation**
- C Draft engagement model**

The following comments were put forward by Council:

- C hope that staff would start with Dartmouth in regard to the community visioning because the Plan is older than in other parts of the Municipality**
- C needs to be a focus on 'sharing' when it comes to problem solving because that is where HRM seems lacking**

- C the areas of traffic issues, Bloomfield School, and the Regional Plan need to be focussed in regard to community consultation and engaging the public
- C better technology in the Council Chamber to record and transmit Council's proceedings; take advantage of local newspapers to engage the public; the area rate policy which was adopted in 2000 may be too restrictive in terms of public engagement - ensure policies are flexible.
- C need to redefine our business practices - Harbour Solutions and the Dartmouth plant is an example of a breakdown in the process of community engagement; public consultation and public engagement has been very disappointing; support the community engagement model - need to have a model as a guiding factor; would like to see the pilot project on community visioning start in District 8.
- C staff does not get the same feedback as council members do, so staff should consult with Council one in a while, in regard to the visioning program

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**iv) Taxation**

This item was deferred.

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 3:13 p.m.

Jan Gibson  
Municipal Clerk