

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES February 7, 2006

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

REGRETS: Councillor Bill Karsten
Councillor Stephen D. Adams

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Dan English, 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 1:35 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - NONE

3. COUNCIL FOCUS AREAS - STATUS UPDATE

C This matter had been deferred from the January 24, 2006 meeting of Committee of the Whole.

C A staff report dated January 18, 2006 was before Council.

Ms. Jennifer Church, Coordinator, Intergovernmental Affairs, addressed Council and presented the report which summarized the discussion and direction Council provided on the identified strategic focus areas which Council had discussed at previous Committee of the Whole meetings. She advised that today, staff was seeking Council approval on the overall status report, and if there were any items requiring revision, that a motion be provided in this regard.

At approximately 1:40 p.m Councillors Uteck and Murphy entered the meeting.

Ms. Church outlined the next steps in the process if Council were to approved the recommendation, and she reviewed the recommendation, as contained in the staff report.

At 1:44 p.m. Councillor Johns entered the meeting.

MOVED by Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Wile that Regional Council endorse the directions respecting the Council Focus Areas as provided by Regional Council during the Committee of the Whole sessions and as summarized in Attachment A of the January 18, 2006 staff report, and instruct staff to prepare the 2006/07 Business Plan reflecting these directions to the extent possible.

The following comments were put forward by Council:

C Support the staff recommendation, however, concern expressed that Council was sending mixed signals to staff. It was noted that Council recently asked staff to prepare a budget based on a 5.1% rate decrease, but at the same time, during the focus sessions, Council indicated their priorities are for additional resources and services from most of the Business Units.

At 1:48 p.m. Councillor Mosher entered the meeting.

- C Concern expressed about the financial implications of the document and the impact on staff resources; suggestion that perhaps the CAO and staff should review the document and, in light of the financial reality, pick out some of the most pressing matters.
- C In response, the Chief Administrative Officer advised that it is his intention to request the departments incorporate these priorities where possible, and staff will come back with a full report to Council which will also note what has been accomplished.
- C Staff was requested to ensure that the concerns expressed about the affordability of recreation programs are included in the document.
- C In response to a question regarding timelines for the Regional Plan, Mr. Kurt Pyle, Executive Assistant advised that staff were currently considering tentative timelines of March 7 for First Reading and March 28 for the public hearing. Further to this, the Chief Administrative Officer advised that staff is working on a report which will be provided to Council soon, and will require Council's approval on timelines.
- C Council advised that once the Regional Plan Public Hearing timelines are established, that this information be forwarded to the Councillors and staff.
- C The Park Patrol program was highlighted as a very important program and a suggestion was put forward to enhance this program through the budget process. In response, Mr. Labrecque, Director of Public Works and Transportation, advised that he would bring this back to staff.

At 2:00 p.m. Councillor Fougere entered the meeting.

- C Concern expressed that metro transit buses that are too full and that traffic light signalling changes do not give the elderly and disabled enough time to cross the street - suggestion that staff provide Council the protocol for the timing of traffic light changes.
- C Suggestion that Council remove from supplementary funding, the portion of teachers salaries and place this in the mandatory funding, and keep the money in supplementary funding to be used to apply to recreation.
- C Suggestion that, in future, all staff reports have a section addressing the question, "Is this within Council's mandate?" This section will explain if this was one of Council's indicated priority areas and, if not, then it will explain what the impact will be to the taxpayer.
- C A graffiti bylaw will be reviewed by the Police Commission, after which, it will then be forwarded to Council.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:19 p.m.

Jan Gibson
Municipal Clerk