

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

February 21, 2006

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

REGRETS: Councillor Jim Smith

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Wayne Anstey, Acting Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Julia Horncastle, Acting Municipal Clerk
Ms. Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CALL TO ORDER	3
2.	APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES	3
3.	SIDEWALK SNOW PLOWING	3
4.	ADJOURNMENT	5

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Deputy Mayor called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOVED by Councillor Goucher, seconded by Councillor Sloane, the minutes of February 7, 2006 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. SIDEWALK SNOW PLOWING

C A supplementary staff report dated February 8, 2006 was submitted.

C A letter, via e-mail, dated February 20, 2006 from Capt. Earle Wagner, Halifax was submitted.

C A presentation from The Committee for Inclusive Transportation, dated February 17, 2006 was submitted.

Ms. Gail Giles, addressed Council and provided a presentation in regard to the difficulties encountered by persons with mobility problems when dealing with snow covered sidewalks and intersections.

At 1:08 p.m. Councillor Rankin entered the meeting.

In her remarks Ms. Giles advised that the recommendation contained in the staff report does not work for seniors and disabled people because every uncleared sidewalk and intersection becomes a barrier for those individuals. She reviewed two options put forward by the Committee for Inclusive Transportation as follows: enforce the sidewalk snow removal bylaws uniformly; or the Municipality provide sidewalk snow removal for all HRM streets with appropriate service standards, and suggested Council consider implementing one of these options instead of the staff recommendation.

Mr. Mike Labrecque, Director of Public Works and Transportation addressed Council and, referring to the supplementary report, provided a presentation regarding a request made at the August 9, 2005 Committee of the Whole that HRM provide sidewalk snow removal for all HRM streets and that this service be funded through the General Urban Rate. Mr. Labrecque noted the following staff who were in attendance and also worked on the report: Ms. Dale MacLennan, Director of Finance, Mr. Gordon Hayward, Snow and Ice Control; Mr. Wayne Legere, Manager, Transportation and Public Works, and Erin Flaim, Coordinator, Real Property and Asset Management.

In his presentation, Mr. Labrecque advised that although the staff recommendation was not what Council asked, the Alternatives section provides options for consideration. He went on to explain that the cost associated with carrying out sidewalk snow clearing for all of HRM would be \$5.6 million, with the current service areas seeing a .7 cent increase, and the new service area, a 2 cent increase; and this would require \$750,000 capital for fleet. Mr.

Labrecque added that the staff recommendation would cost \$1.9 million and would involve sidewalk snow clearing for all arterial and transit routes, with a net reduction by .2 cents for the current service area, a .7 cent increase in the new service area, an enhancement to the senior and disabled individuals' sidewalk snow removal program by \$300,000; and this would require \$125,000 capital for fleet. He also noted that this option would be funded through the Urban General Rate.

At 1:23 p.m. Councillors Uteck and Wile entered the meeting.

Mr. Labrecque, Ms. MacLennan, and Mr. Hayward responded to questions from Council.

At 1:25 p.m. Mayor Kelly entered the meeting and assumed the Chair.

In response to a question by Mayor Kelly in regard to why the staff recommendation was different from the direction given at Committee of the Whole August 9, 2005, Mr. Labrecque indicated that in light of recent discussions of the tax rate during the Focus Sessions, staff believe this was a way to increase the level of service while being cognizant of impacts on the tax rate. Mr. Labrecque advised that should Council want to proceed with its recommendation as per the August 9, 2005 motion, then that option is one of the Alternatives in the report that Council could approve.

MOVED by Councillor Fougere, seconded by Councillor Goucher that the sidewalk snow removal program for Halifax Regional Municipality include all present elements and the following components:

- 1. All arterials and transit routes within the Municipality funded through the Urban General Tax rate;**
- 2. An enhanced Seniors and Disabled individuals' sidewalk snow removal program funded through the Urban General rate;**
- 3. Continue the service in the areas which receive residential sidewalk snow removal and fund through a single area rate; and**
- 4. That the sidewalk snow removal program be set for a period of not less than five years so staff can make the necessary operational and service level improvements to ensure program effectiveness.**

At 1:33 p.m. Councillor Hum entered the meeting.

In response to a question by Councillor Snow, Ms. MacLennan advised that she will provide a report on the number of kilometres of sidewalk in Fall River/Waverley; what the current area rate is; and how much was collected in 05/06.

In response to a question by Councillor Goucher, the Municipal Solicitor advised that the motion from the August 9, 2005 meeting of Committee of the Whole was referred to staff only,

and there was no supporting Council resolution. Therefore, she recommended that the motion on floor include an additional statement noting that this recommendation replaces the motion from the August 9, 2005. The mover and seconder of the motion were in agreement and, there being general consensus, **the motion was revised to read as follows:**

The sidewalk snow removal program for Halifax Regional Municipality include all present elements and the following components:

- 1. All arterials and transit routes within the Municipality funded through the Urban General Tax rate;**
- 2. An enhanced Seniors and Disabled individuals' sidewalk snow removal program funded through the Urban General rate;**
- 3. Continue the service in the areas which receive residential sidewalk snow removal and fund through a single area rate; and**
- 4. That the sidewalk snow removal program be set for a period of not less than five years so staff can make the necessary operational and service level improvements to ensure program effectiveness.**

This recommendation will replace the motion set out in the August 9, 2005 meeting of Committee of the Whole.

Staff responded to further questions of Council.

At 2:23 p.m. Councillor Johns entered the meeting.

Mayor Kelly questioned if sidewalks in a residential area that are near a school which is not on an arterial or transit route, would be cleared.

In response, Mr. Labrecque advised that the sidewalks would be cleared up to the nearest bus route.

Councillor Sloane suggested that the five year timeframe for the snow removal program as proposed in the staff recommendation was too long, and suggested that three years would be more appropriate.

MOVED by Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee that the motion be amended to revise number 4 as follows: "that the sidewalk snow removal program be set for a period of not less than three years so staff can make the necessary operation and service level improvements to ensure program effectiveness."

THE MOTION TO AMEND WAS PUT AND DEFEATED.

THE MAIN MOTION WAS PUT AND PASSED.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Julia Horncastle
Acting Municipal Clerk