

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES
November 30, 2004**

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

REGRETS: Deputy Mayor Goucher
Councillor Robert P. Harvey

STAFF: Mr. George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Barry Allen, Acting Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Jan Gibson, Municipal Clerk
Ms. Patti Halliday, Legislative Assistant

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Kelly called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - October 19, 2004**

MOVED by Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Meade, that the minutes of October 19, 2004 be approved, as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

On a **Point of Privilege**, Councillor Uteck expressed concern with the lack of information provided to Council regarding the signing earlier in the day of a harbour solutions project contract with SNC Lavalin and the subsequent press release. The Councillor stated she was extremely disappointed that this event took place in the Mayor's Office with no benefit of Council's participation and requested that, in the future, Council be made aware of such events prior to them taking place. In response, Mayor Kelly stated it was his understanding Council was advised, however, the Councillor's point was taken.

Councillor Adams requested that a special regular session be held following this meeting to endorse any recommendations regarding Community Council boundaries. The Councillor noted he also had an item he would like added regarding accessible taxis in order to request a staff report.

Mayor Kelly responded such a meeting would only be held in the case of an emergency and this would not be considered as such. Therefore, three days notice would be required. Councillor Adams stated the definition of "emergency" is subjective. Mr. Barry Allen, Acting Municipal Solicitor, stated it would ultimately be Council's decision as to whether or not it is an emergency; however, it was his opinion that it would not be.

MOVED by Councillor Adams, seconded by Councillor Mosher, that Regional Council suspend notice requirements as outlined in Administrative Order One, Section 8 (6), and that Council hold an emergency meeting immediately following Committee of the Whole to deal with emerging community issues.

Following a brief discussion the vote was taken.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. HALIFAX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - ECONOMIC SUMMIT

- C Copies of the document "Economic Summit, Halifax, November 27, 2004" prepared by the Halifax Chamber of Commerce were provided to Members of Council.

Ms. Valerie Payn, Halifax Chamber of Commerce, provided an overview of the recent Economic Summit recently hosted by the Chamber at Saint Mary's University.

Mr. Bill Black, Chair, Economic Summit, continued the presentation and expanded on the recommendations for:

- C **Military Growth**
- C **Tourism**
- C **Information Technology Sector**

Councillor Younger expressed concerns with respect to litter, noting it's a serious problem in Dartmouth. He inquired how important is cleanliness to tourism and how does HRM measure up to other Canadian cities. In response, Mr. Black stated Canadian cities are a wide mix with respect to this issue. He noted the need for HRM to be attractive is more important here than some other areas because we want visitors to enjoy walking around the Municipality.

Councillor Hendsbee inquired if there was any discussion about having downtown Halifax and Dartmouth being wireless technology centres. Mr. Black responded that this was not discussed, however, he noted that the area is fine in terms of technology friendliness.

Councillor McCluskey expressed disappointment with the lack of emphasis placed on downtown Dartmouth. In response, Mr. Black clarified that, to the extent that downtown Dartmouth is a place where visitors go, his comments are intended to apply equally.

Responding to a question of Councillor Sloane, Mr. Black stated businesses and HRM are both responsible for cleanliness of the downtown areas.

Councillor Murphy inquired about the response from the military. Mr. Black stated the Chamber found the military to be very cooperative and receptive to a lot of their ideas and he is optimistic towards the level of cooperation that will be received from them.

Councillor Uteck referenced former Mayor Wallace's campaign "Slam Dunk Your Junk" which was very successful and suggested HRM could work with the Chamber to come up with a similar program. Mayor Kelly responded that staff are reviewing that particular campaign.

Mr. Andy Cutten, Halifax Global, presented the recommendations for the next topic: **Harbour**

and Airport Committee.

Regarding the seawall redevelopment recommendation, Councillor Kent inquired if consideration was given to private citizens having access to docking space to allow them to utilize their own water craft to access downtown Dartmouth and Halifax. Mr. Cutten responded in the affirmative noting there have been a series of open community meetings associated with seawall development.

Councillor Murphy suggested a marina for the downtown should be examined. He inquired if the Chamber's analyses included other HRM harbours. Mr. Cutten responded that the focus and concentration for economic impact was on Halifax Harbour.

Councillor Hendsbee inquired about any discussions that took place regarding the marshalling yards in both Halifax and Dartmouth as well as the extent of CN involvement in the discussions. Mr. Cutten stated the rail lines would have to be examined and as much as possible should be used. He noted he has not spoken to CN directly but other participants have spoken to them. With respect to the marshalling yard, Mr. Cutten stated there was no particular discussion of it.

Mr. Black then presented the next topic: **Attracting and Retaining Talent to the Area.**

Councillor Uteck inquired about the vision of the proposed conference on an immigration strategy being held by the Mayor in 2005. In response, Mayor Kelly stated this is still being formulated.

Councillor Sloane inquired about the possibility of an educational process for residents regarding immigrants. Mr. Black agreed there is a lot of misinformation out in the public realm and there is a need to rectify this.

In response to a question of Councillor Murphy, Mr. Black stated he believes the Province understands the importance of immigration to succeed economically and to avoid the risk of declining population.

Councillor Hum inquired about the organizations involved in the discussion regarding immigration. Mr. Black responded that representatives from MISA and other immigrant associations were involved in the discussion. He noted that the Arabic speaking community is one of the largest and most successful efforts in the immigration area and this one area that should be targeted for marketing.

Councillor Fougere noted there has been success in attracting international students to the area through twinning efforts, and she suggested there is an opportunity to capitalize on those relationships to attract some of those students to either stay or come back to the area.

Councillor Wile inquired if the Chamber of Commerce provides training to corporations on how to interview and deal with immigrants. Mr. Black responded he believes this issue will be addressed.

In response to a question of Councillor Streach regarding other methods to increase population, Mr. Black stated the Chamber is not opposed to other methods, noting this summit just focussed on immigration.

Councillor Walker stated the biggest drawback for immigrants is the difficulty they experience in finding employment. He noted that unless the hiring attitude changes, immigrants will continue to leave the area. Mr. Black agreed with the Councillor's comments.

In response to a question of Councillor Mosher regarding pay scales, Mr. Black stated many people chose to live here knowing they can make more money elsewhere.

Mr. Mike DiPenta, President, Maritime World Logistics, presented the next topic: **Improving Commuting Experience.**

In response to a question of Councillor Mosher regarding rapid transit and the cost of the right-of-way from CN versus the cost of the Burnside expressway, Mr. DiPenta stated if CN has a resource to provide, they will want compensation for it and this needs to be built into the cost. He noted there was no suggestion from any of their representatives that any initiative that would be positive to public transit should be eliminated. Councillor Mosher relayed comments on behalf of Deputy Mayor Goucher regarding the cost effectiveness of using high speed ferries as a transportation alternative. In response, Mr. DiPenta stated there is lots of room for innovative ideas and solutions to the traffic issue.

Councillor Sloane expressed concern with truck traffic in the downtown core. Mr. DiPenta stated an opportunity to move the trucks to the railway cuts exists but it would have to work in tandem with rapid transit.

Councillor McInroy stated vehicular traffic will continue to be a concern as only some people will utilize public transit. Mr. DiPenta agreed, noting some areas would be more conducive to public transit than others.

In response to concerns expressed by Councillor Kent regarding the exclusion of Eastern Passage and Woodside in the recommendations regarding transit, Mr. DiPenta explained that they focussed on the areas of the greatest potential, but noted the idea of rapid ferries has potential in Woodside.

With respect to comments of Councillor Wile regarding the possibility of transit being provided

in the South Shore area. Mr. DiPenta responded that this area was discussed and it presents a challenge. Therefore, Park and Ride facilities feeding into the rapid transit system may be the best alternative for this area.

Mr. Black then presented the next topic: **How and Where Should HRM Grow.**

With respects to comparisons in needs made between his District and Guysborough County, Councillor Streach inquired what were the similarities. Mr. Black clarified that he was referring to the relatively low density of both locations. In response to further questions of the Councillor, Mr. Black stated the main focus of this report is in on future development and the right way to guide it.

Mr. George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer, reminded Council that this study was done at HRM's request through volunteer work. It was not intended to be all encompassing: it was intended to be provoking. He stated it is a different point of view intended to be helpful and to provide HRM with good feedback in making its decision.

Councillor Younger stated he does not believe most of the recommendations reflect what he hears from residents. The Councillor stated one of the biggest concerns of residents is there is too much as-of-right development as it stands now. However, Councillor Younger stated he understands this report to say there should be more as of right development. Mr. Black responded that this is correct.

Councillor Hendsbee inquired how the cost calculations were determined. Mr. Black stated the data came from staff. Mr. McLellan confirmed most of the data came from staff and has been available to Council for some time. Mr. McLellan expressed concern that the volunteers who conducted this study are being forced to justify themselves. He stated the purpose of this study was to get as many opinions before Council as possible.

Councillor Johns stated he believed the mandate of the group has been narrowly focussed. He noted the level of services received by rural/suburban is not the same as urban.

With respect to the data, Mr. Black stated even if Council does not agree with the recommendations, it should not deny the data.

Councillor Hum expressed concern with the overall tone being expressed by Council regarding the recommendations, stating the 60 individuals who contributed to this discussion document are here to present their ideas and have dialogue. She stated although she did not agree with all the recommendations, the report has some very valid points and it should be accepted as is and that the information be passed on to Regional Planning for further discussion.

Ms. Paula Gallagher, Partner, Deloitte Inc., presented the next topic: **Post Secondary Institutions.**

(Councillor Johns left the meeting at 4:30 p.m.)

Councillor Uteck stated this is an area in which HRM has sadly lacked sadly in with respect to the formal understanding of the relationship. For example, she stated UNSM has a motion to go forward that would tax the residential portion of the universities, thereby driving up the tuition fees for students. With respect to twinning opportunities, the Councillor suggested additional work needs to be done in this area.

Councillor McInroy inquired if the amalgamation of universities was discussed in an attempt to reduce costs. Ms. Gallagher responded that they recommend the universities be mandated to figure out how to get the critical mass.

Councillor Adams suggested medical schools should be examined in the future to ensure those that are trained there stay and contribute to Nova Scotia for a set period of time.

In response to a question of Councillor Streach, Ms. Gallagher stated they believe an option for high school students of choosing a community college route would help reduce high school drop out rates.

Responding a question of Councillor Hendsbee regarding the direct municipal relevance of this section of the report, Ms. Gallagher stated that focus on post-secondary institutions has broad economic benefit. The Chamber is recommending that HRM make a commitment to turn to post-secondary institutions when addressing any issue within its purview.

Councillor Wile inquired if private colleges would be included to which Ms. Gallagher stated the implementation of the recommendations would extend to them.

Ms. Payn provided closing remarks noting that not everything presented today is necessarily within HRM's jurisdiction. Ms. Payne further noted that the slides of today's presentation will be made available on the Chamber's web site. The Chamber will also be preparing, over the next several weeks, a summary report. She asked each member of Council to take away today's recommendations and think about their part in them and what can be done to move forward. The Chamber and other levels of government will be doing the same. Ms. Payne stated it is clear that all parties need to work together to achieve the full potential of HRM.

Mayor Kelly thanked the Chamber for taking lead the lead on this task and for their work and stated HRM wants to work with the Chamber to move forward stronger and together.

Mr. McLellan noted that the settlement pattern recommendations for the Regional Plan will be

brought to Council in two weeks. He further noted there is additional information included in the package provided to Council by the Chamber which Council should review.

Councillor Kent expressed appreciation to the Chamber for recognizing the importance of the military to the community.

Councillor Younger stated it is important for all of HRM to be represented and the Regional Plan must be resident driven.

Councillor Murphy expressed appreciation to the Chamber for their efforts, but noted Council needs to balance out their recommendations with what they hear from the residents they represent.

Due to the late hour, Mayor Kelly stated the next item regarding Community Council Boundaries will be deferred to Committee of the Whole next week. Council agreed. Mayor Kelly noted there was also no need now to hold the special meeting agreed to by Council earlier in the meeting. Councillor Adams noted there was another item besides the Community Council Boundaries issue to be discussed at the special session. Mayor Kelly stated the item regarding accessible taxis has already been placed on next week's regular agenda.

5. COMMUNITY COUNCIL BOUNDARIES

This item was deferred to next week.

6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Jan Gibson
Municipal Clerk