

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES
January 16, 2007

PRESENT:

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

REGRETS:

STAFF:

Mr. Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Geri Kaiser, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Randolph Kinghorne, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Jan Gibson, Municipal Clerk
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:32 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - None

3. COUNCIL FOCUS AREA - PUBLIC SAFETY

- A copy of the PowerPoint presentation was before Council.
- A copy of the Council Focus Area - Public Safety document dated December 5, 2006 was before Council.

Acting Chief Bill Mosher, HRM Fire and Emergency Services, and Chief Frank Beazley, Halifax Regional Police, presented the report.

Councillor Hendsbee entered the meeting at 1:39 pm.

The following comments were raised by Council during the ensuing discussion:

- It is important to maintain contact with the people as past studies have shown that members of the public have helpful information to offer and are ready to work with police. Utilizing public resources also helps citizens bond.
- All Councillors are encouraged to attend the Friday, January 26, 2007 City Watch presentation.
- An HRM wide education campaign in regard to City Watch, including examples of how the initiative has been successful, was suggested.
- The public must be educated on the expectations of technology, such as cameras on street corners, as the cameras will not eliminate crime but will help with the investigation.
- Implement more practical safety initiatives such as a Neighbourhood Watch. Be proactive so that people will feel comfortable walking the streets.
- Acting Chief Mosher was commended on his leadership.
- Appreciation was expressed for the active recruitment of volunteer firefighters.
- Councillor Streach expressed appreciation for the North Central fire station (Musquodoboit Harbour area) adding that the area residents now feel safe. He further commented that Police Officers have integrated well into the community.
- Acting Chief Mosher confirmed that a meeting has been held with Transportation and Public Works in regard to fire service for Dutch Settlement and Four Harbours. Dutch Settlement is in the proposed budget for this year and Four Harbours will be within the next three years. In the meantime, there will be short term relief for Four Harbours.
- Mayor Kelly was thanked for his role at the Big City Mayor's Caucus in regard to Public Safety.

Councillor Johns entered the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

- In response to concerns with petty crime/Young Offenders Act, Chief Beazley advised that the Federal Justice Department has committed to review the Young Offenders/Youth Justice Act. The area of the Act cited for closer review is that of release when it is a threat to the public. A Committee has been struck by the Minister of Justice with Chief Beazley and twenty-five representatives from all counties in Nova Scotia as members. The public meetings will commence in February.
- Chief Beazley further advised that an upcoming series of public meetings on crime prevention will provide an opportunity for HRM citizens to talk about crime in their areas. The Mayor's Task Force on Violent Crime will also be meeting in two weeks. The Halifax Regional Police department is reviewing Policing/staffing resources.
- Concern was expressed that there be adequate funding/resources available for CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) audits/follow-up action when required.
- Acting Chief Mosher responded to concerns for strategic property acquisition for developing/expanding areas in regard to fire services indicating that growth areas are being monitored for future fire service needs and, in consultation with the developers, land is being identified for those needs.
- In response to Councillor McCluskey, Mayor Kelly advised that the Plan for Pandemic will be discussed in the near future at an Emergency Measures Organization Committee's (EMO) meeting, at which time, clarity will be sought in regard to the time frame for the plan to be brought to Council.
- In response to Deputy Mayor Uteck's concern for a communications strategy for Council in the event of a catastrophe, Mayor Kelly advised that he has asked that the plan be tested this year in conjunction with EMO. Other plans will come to the EMO Committee and back to Council for a full briefing and training session.
- A thorough evaluation of all HRM identified comfort centre facilities was suggested so that deficiencies could be addressed prior to a major catastrophic event. Information on the cost and time required to have the facilities up to comfort centre standards was requested. Consideration of how community groups could assist in the process was also suggested. A further note of importance was the ongoing maintenance of the generators to ensure they will work when required. Acting Chief Mosher responded that as new facilities are built, they will have the power/capacity to be a comfort centre. Each community has had a comfort centre facility identified. The time frame for a report on this issue will be approximately six months.
- It was suggested that a funding strategy, with other partners, be developed to address the need for generators in the community centres. Funds will be required to assist with the electronics to host a generator as well as for the actual generators. A suggestion was made that electric panels/generators be identified in the Real Property/Asset Management budget and that Federal funding be applied for now to ensure all new

- buildings will have a transfer switch.
- Concern was expressed that more public awareness/education was required in regard to the Civic Addressing initiative as the public do not understand the public safety aspect of this initiative. The importance for street names and civic numbers to be clearly identifiable and not repetitive has to be clearly communicated.
- Members of the public were encouraged to become active participants in helping to make their neighbourhoods safe. A combination of all stakeholders will create a sense of comfort.
- Community Policing Officers were commended for the pro-active work they do in the neighbourhoods. An important part of the approach is to work internally with other HRM departments/connect with other youth strategies and have police personnel at those meetings.
- Councillor Adams requested a status update on his prior request to have a Judge present to Council on the issues concerning the Young Offender's Act. Legal Services was to provide a report on this matter.
- In response to Councillor Fougere, Chief Beazley commented that the By-Law service level review information will come to Council prior to the budget.
- Mr. Dan English, CAO, responded to Councillor Fougere that discussions with the province in regard to a Municipal Court were still ongoing.
- Acting Chief Mosher responded to Councillor Fougere that he will obtain information from Civic Addressing as to why a street name would have to be changed if it were similar to but not the same as another.
- Chief Beazley provided a Park Patrol update indicating the total number of patrols completed and the number of tickets issued.
- Occasional beat patrols were requested for commercial areas in HRM.
- Chief Beazley responded to Council that consideration has been given to forming a reserve force that would be compiled of retired police officers or possible recruits for future hiring opportunities.
- Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Geri Kaiser, responded to Councillor McCluskey that new street names are reviewed to ensure there is no duplication.
- Councillor Johns requested that Acting Chief Mosher forward a letter to planning staff indicating that the Sunset Ridge lands have been identified as a possible future site for a fire station.
- RCMP Superintendent Gordon Burnett responded to Councillor Johns that he will look into the concerns raised in regard to the Springfield Lake Recreation Centre parking lot area.
- Councillor Johns expressed concern with long, fenced in pathways in the Sackville area that have overhanging trees and a lack of lighting. He requested that planning staff be asked to consider other alternatives to these pathways. Councillor Martin advised that he has requested a presentation to Council on CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) policies and principles.
- In response to concerns raised with proper/adequate street lighting, Mr. English, CAO,

- commented that the street lighting policy is under review.
- The root causes of crime have to be addressed as they are serious issues (poverty, demographics of age, alienation, drug culture, recreational violence) that will not be solved by adding more police officers/cameras.
 - Mr. English, CAO, clarified that the statement in last year's business plan that provided for the potential to close a fire station if needed or reduce the hours, will be removed from this year's budget.
 - Councillor Walker requested the number of fire fighters/trucks at amalgamation. Further, he requested information on whether or not HRM is reaching close to those numbers now.

MOVED BY Councillor Younger, seconded by Councillor Sloane that the Committee of the Whole recommend that Regional Council continue with the direction, as set by Council in the approved 06/07 Business Plans, as follows:

1. **Long term Police strategy,**
2. **By-Law & Enforcement Services level review and improvement,**
3. **Fire Service Strategies aligned with the approved service delivery standard.**

Councillor Fougere entered the meeting at 2:14 pm.

The following amendment was **MOVED BY Councillor Martin, seconded by Councillor Sloane that Council endorse City Watch as a vital tool in providing public safety and to have council and staff approve policies for City Watch's future direction. MOTION TO AMEND PUT AND PASSED.**

The amended motion will now read as follows: **MOVED BY Councillor Younger, seconded by Councillor Sloane that the Committee of the Whole recommend that Regional Council continue with the direction, as set by Council in the approved 06/07 Business Plans, as follows:**

1. **Long term Police strategy,**
2. **By-Law & Enforcement Services level review and improvement,**
3. **Fire Service Strategies aligned with the approved service delivery standard.**
4. **Endorse City Watch as a vital tool in providing public safety and to have Council and staff approve policies for City Watch's future direction.**

AMENDED MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. **PRIVATE ROADS MAINTENANCE COSTS RECOVERY POLICY - BILL C-70**

- An extract of the November 7, 2006 Regional Council Minutes was before Council.
- A copy of the PowerPoint presentation was before Council.

- A copy of the Private Roads Committee report dated October 26, 2006 was before Council.

Ms. Cathie O'Toole, Acting Director, Finance Services, presented the overview.

MOVED BY Councillor Meade, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee that Halifax Regional Council approve the maintenance cost recovery policy as attached to the staff report to the Private Roads Committee, dated October 24, 2006, with a one time charge of \$200.00.

Councillor Rankin entered the meeting at 4:00 pm.

At this time Councillor Meade declared a conflict of interest as he is a resident of a private road. Mr. Randolph Kinghorne, Municipal Solicitor, responded to Council on the conflict of interest indicating that the Councillor would, as a private property owner on a private road, receive a benefit (services) as a result of this investment.

It was then **MOVED BY Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Johns that Halifax Regional Council approve the maintenance cost recovery policy as attached to the staff report to the Private Roads Committee, dated October 24, 2006, with a one time charge of \$200.00.**

Following discussion on the motion, and without a vote being taken on the motion on the floor, the following amendment was **MOVED BY Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Walker that the vote requirement be a 50% plus 1 majority of the affected properties rather than two - thirds (b). MOTION TO AMEND DEFEATED.**

Councillor Smith entered the meeting at 4:24 pm.

The following comments/concerns were raised by Council during the ensuing discussion:

- There will be no additional private roads as they are not permitted under the new Regional Plan.
- Upgrading some of the existing private roads to public road standards would be too cost prohibitive for the residents.
- Concern was expressed that residents who live on private roads pay the same tax rate, based on their assessments, as those residents on public roads. Residents on private roads should not be paying the same tax rate as they are not receiving the services.
- The recently formed Tax Reform Committee may provide an opportunity to address the inequalities for those residents living on private roads.
- Ms. Cathie O'Toole, Acting Director, Finance Services, clarified that HRM's role will be to collect, levy and disburse the funds. It will be up to the residents to hire the

- contractors for the services they require. To be eligible under the proposed policy a minimum of two dwelling units on the private road is required.
- Mr. Randolph Kinghorne, Municipal Solicitor, clarified that the original motion was to deal with annual maintenance only, not capital. The issue of capital/projects was not brought to the Private Roads Committee. Councillor Snow commented that Local Improvement Charges (LIC's) could be used to cover any capital with matters of public safety being brought before Council.
 - Ownership of the properties has to be clarified as there may be one owner or multiple owners. All legal property owners will have to be notified.
 - Ms. O'Toole clarified that the one time administrative fee would be for cost recovery of resources (staff time) such as review of the budget, number crunching, notification letters, ballots, overseeing the mail-outs, meeting signs, overseeing the meetings, answering questions, presenting to council, maintaining relationships with Resident's Association and reviewing their annual budget. She further advised that after one year of actual experience, the administrative cost could be adjusted.
 - In response to Councillor Hendsbee, Ms. O'Toole advised that the \$600.00 administrative fee would not cover filing with the Registry of Joint Stocks.

Without a vote being taken on the motion, the following amendment was **MOVED BY Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Karsten that the motion be amended to restore the cost recovery principle and increase the proposed \$200.00 one time administrative fee to the staff recommended \$600.00 one time administrative fee. MOTION TO AMEND DEFEATED.**

Councillor Mosher entered the meeting at 5:01 pm.

A vote was then taken on the main motion as follows, **MOVED BY Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Johns that Halifax Regional Council approve the maintenance cost recovery policy as attached to the staff report to the Private Roads Committee, dated October 24, 2006, with a one time charge of \$200.00. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

5. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee that upon adjournment of the Committee of the Whole, Council commence the In Camera session at 5:15 p.m. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Jan Gibson
Municipal Clerk