

**HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES**

March 30, 2010

PRESENT: Mayor Peter Kelly
Deputy Mayor Brad Johns
Councillors: Steve Streach
Barry Dalrymple
David Hendsbee
Lorelei Nicoll
Gloria McCluskey
Darren Fisher
Bill Karsten
Jackie Barkhouse
Mary Wile
Dawn M. Sloane
Sue Uteck
Jennifer Watts
Russell Walker
Debbie Hum
Linda Mosher
Stephen D. Adams
Robert P. Harvey
Tim Outhit
Reg Rankin
Peter Lund

REGRETS: Councillors: Jim Smith
Jerry Blumenthal

STAFF: Mr. Wayne Anstey, Acting Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Cathy Mellett, Acting Municipal Clerk
Ms. Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kelly called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - None

3. CENTRAL LIBRARY - FUNDING STRATEGY

C A staff report dated March 22, 2010 was submitted.

C Correspondence was submitted from: Ross Blakeney, Halifax; and Peter Dunn; Brad Barton, Senior Office Administrator, Black Educators Association;

Councillor Uteck acknowledged Mr. Leo McKenna, Chair of the Library Board, and staff from HRM Library sitting in the public gallery.

Mr. Peter Bigelow, Manager, Real Property Planning provided a presentation on the Central Library Project funding strategy.

At 1:16 p.m. Councillors Hum and Streach entered the meeting.

In his presentation, Mr. Bigelow noted that staff are aware of the current financial issues facing the City and this is why the project is being largely funded outside of conventional funding measures. He also noted that the former library site has been taken out of the financial equation due to issues around the deed of the property. Mr. Bigelow explained that the deed does not allow the site to be used for anything other than a library and/or park; however, this can be changed through Legislation. He added that staff are investigating this but it will take some time, therefore, staff are recommending that it be taken out of the financial strategy. It will be dealt with separately and brought back to Council.

Mr. Bigelow reviewed the detailed funding strategy. The overall contribution breakdown is summarized as follows:

-	Federal Government contribution -	\$18,300,000
-	Provincial Government contribution -	\$13,000,000
-	HRM Contribution -	\$23,700,000

Mr. Bigelow advised that the \$55 million cost is inclusive of other aspects of the project, noting that it was not simply the cost of the building itself. He added that the \$55 million figure includes the following: approximately \$35 million in construction costs; \$7 million in ancillaries and soft costs; \$7.1 million in underground parking; \$452,000 for an art component, \$3.6 million in contingency and library materials and \$1.2 in non-

recoverable HST.

Prior to the conclusion of the presentation, Mr. Bruce Fisher, Manager, Fiscal and Tax Policy advised that Appendix D, attached to the staff report, had some incorrect subtotals. He submitted the revised Appendix D and noted that the figures in the slide presentation were correct, and that the body of the report was correct.

MOVED by Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Uteck that Regional Council:

- 1. Approve the Central Library Funding Strategy as outlined in the March 22, 2010 staff report;**
- 2. Approve the Central Library Repayment Reserve Business Case as outlined in the March 22, 2010 staff report;**
- 3. Approve the Central Library Recapitalization Reserve Business Case as outlined in the March 22, 2010 staff report;**
- 4. Approve an increase to Capital Account CBW00978 of \$52,700,000 as outlined in the Budget Implications section of the March 22, 2010 staff report.**

A discussion ensued with Mr. Bigelow and Mr. Philip Townsend, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management responding to questions. Highlights of the discussion are noted as follows:

- C Approval of this project is a sign to the downtown businesses that HRM is supportive and investing in the downtown.
- C This model, i.e. a Design-Build and HRM-owned, is supported by staff based on past experience with similar facilities; it was noted that there would have been no Federal or Provincial contribution if a model had been chosen that involved private sector participation.

At 1:45 p.m. Councillor Wile entered the meeting.

- C Council was urged to approve the recommendation, noting that there was a solid financial plan for the project and public support; it was suggested that it was unlikely the Federal and Provincial governments would come forward with funding in the future, if Council were to turn this down.
- C The partnership approach taken with this project has been very encouraging; it was also noted that the tax which will be generated by the library is very encouraging.

At 1:53 p.m. Councillor Hendsbee entered the meeting.

- C It was noted that confirmation letters in regard to funding contributions were received from the Provincial and Federal Governments (and were attached to the staff report).
- C The new library will generate additional revenue streams, and it will provide economic spinoff for the businesses along Spring Garden Road.
- C Ensure that due diligence is carried out with regard to the costs of the project; if there were to be a cost overrun, the expectation is that some of the amenities of the project would be reduced, rather than staff come back to Council for further funding.
- C Two aspects staff need to be cognizant of are capital costs and if there is a shortfall in fundraising.
- C In going forward, would like to see the library integrated with the schools and other libraries so it is accessible to everyone.

In closing the debate, Councillor Sloane expressed her appreciation to everyone who was supportive and noted that, if approved, it will be a legacy project.

Councillor McCluskey indicated that she supported a new central library, however, she had concern over the cost and she did not feel a cafeteria and an auditorium were necessary to the project.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

At 2:33 p.m. Council recessed.

At 2:54 p.m. Council reconvened with the same members present.

4. PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL PLAN - HALIFAX NORTH COMMON

- C A staff report dated March 19, 2010 was submitted.

Mr. Peter Bigelow, Manager, Real Property Planning provided a presentation on the proposed conceptual plan for the Halifax North Common.

Mr. Bigelow began his presentation by providing a brief history of the Halifax Common. He advised that the objectives staff were working on came out of public consultations on the Halifax Common Plan held in 1994. Mr. Bigelow explained that the north common is now used for dedicated recreation activities, but the area also needs to be used for passive and casual activities; and it needs improvements from a safety perspective and in regard to upgraded facilities. He elaborated on the key features of the north common concept plan, noted as follows:

- Trees and Landscaping - trees will be planted in street medians, along the outer paths, and in a central island within the Common; and there will be low planting beds around seating areas.
- New lighting to make the park better lit and safer
- Improved pathways by widening the paths; some new paths will be

- created
- More seating areas, particularly at neighbourhood entrance plazas
- Redesign of the Fountain

Mr. Bigelow advised that this was a long term project, estimated at \$3.25 million. He noted that the installation of a permanent power source was a significant portion of the overall cost. He added that the improvements planned for 2010/11 are the permanent power source, the neighbourhood entrance plazas, pathways, and turf reinforcing.

Mr. Bigelow advised that the long track speed skating oval proposed for the Canada Games will be a temporary facility. He explained that the plan is to have it in operation before and after the Games for the use of the community, and following this the chillers will be used at indoor facilities and to create smaller outdoor facilities. Mr. Bigelow added that it was determined the best place for the Oval was near the Special Events area, as it is dependent on the installation of the permanent power source. He also pointed out that a challenge in moving it to this location is that a portion of the site is sloped, and poses a safety risk. This will be dealt with by digging and removing the material, stock piling it and later, regrading the area. The site would be reinstated in the spring of 2011. Mr. Bigelow advised that with this work it means that this area of the Common will not be available until August of 2011, and this will impact those who play frisbee and bantam baseball teams.

Mr. Bigelow noted that public consultation has resulted in mixed reviews, advising that the majority of individuals who attended the public session did not welcome the large events on the Common, however, in the surveys, between 70% and 90% of respondents were supportive of large events.

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Johns, seconded by Councillor Sloane that Regional Council approve, in principle, the proposed conceptual plan as described in the March 19, 2010 staff report, subject to Councillor Watts' motion this evening.

A discussion ensued with Mr. Bigelow, and Mr. Terry Gallagher, Manager, Facility Development responding to questions.

Councillor Karsten advised that he could support this Plan mainly due to the immediate enhancements that will be done. He added that he felt it was time to reign-in any further development of bigger plans like streetscape plans and visioning exercises as there is no money to deal with these large scale plans at this time.

In response to a question by Councillor Watts, Mr. Bigelow explained that the permanent power source will be housed in a small building and will have the flexibility to supply power for large and small events. There will be two types of amperage—for large and smaller events. The larger amperage will power large concerts and the speedskating oval. Mr. Bigelow noted that the benefit of moving the Oval to the southeast corner is that it can use the permanent power source rather than having to

rely on running generators on a 24/7 basis.

Councillor Sloane noted that there is a great deal of local talent who live in the neighbourhood surrounding the Commons. Having a local events plaza on the Commons will add greatly to the community.

Further to this, Mr. Anstey noted the cost of renting a generator was in the range of \$50,000 per weekend, not including the cost to run it. He also pointed out that staff have dealt with reliability issues in using generators during the concerts.

Councillor Watts noted that at the public information meetings there was strong support for the portions of the Plan that address active transportation opportunities and improvements to the open space on the Commons. The biggest call from the community is for active recreation opportunities and that needs to be supported. She noted it is difficult to get behind the Plan when it appears that the improvement priorities are being driven by the concerts.

Councillor Wile spoke in support of the Plan and advised that she was pleased to see the improvements. She added that she felt the major events can not continue to be held on the Common and that she hoped in the future staff will prepare a report discussing other locations in which major events can be held.

In response to a question by Councillor Wile, Mr. Anstey advised that event-holders will be charged a fee for the use of the permanent power source.

In response to a question by Councillor Outhit, Mr. Bigelow advised that the permanent structure for large events would reduce wear and tear on the Common and result in less time to set up and dismantle events, as well as enabling the flexibility of a wider array of events.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Cathy Mellett
Acting Municipal Clerk