



**HARBOUR EAST-MARINE DRIVE COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES
October 1, 2015**

REVISED

PRESENT: Councillor Gloria McCluskey, Chair
Councillor Bill Karsten, Vice Chair
Deputy Mayor Lorelei Nicoll
Councillor David Hendsbee

REGRETS: Councillor Darren Fisher

STAFF: Ms. Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to Community Council are available online: <http://www.halifax.ca/Commcoun/east/HEMDCC151001-agenda.php>

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Community Council adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 10, 2015

MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Deputy Mayor Nicoll,

THAT the minutes of the September 10, 2015, meeting be approved, as circulated.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

The agenda was agreed upon as presented.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - NONE

5. MOTIONS OF RECONSIDERATION – NONE

6. MOTIONS OF RESCISSION – NONE

7. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

8. HEARINGS

8.1 PUBLIC HEARINGS - NONE

8.2 VARIANCE APPEAL HEARINGS - NONE

9. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

9.1 Correspondence - None

9.2 Petitions - None

9.3 Presentation

9.3.1 2016-17 Budget Consultation

The following was before Community Council:

- A copy of the staff presentation

Ms. Barbara Wilson, Budget Coordinator, presented to Community Council with regard to the Budget Consultations for 2016-17. Ms. Wilson reviewed the approach to the budget, an overview of the budget (including expenses, revenues, staffing, capital debt, and taxation), public consultations, and timeline. The presentation is available online and on file.

Councillor Karsten, referencing page 18 of the presentation “Our Financial Position”, noted that the financial position of the Municipality is very healthy. He commented that in an extensive financial survey of Nova Scotia municipalities undertaken by the Province a few years ago, HRM passed all 14 financial indicators of good financial health. He suggested that Ms. Wilson add this to the presentation to share this good news story.

Deputy Mayor Nicoll, referring to page 6 of the presentation, noted that 32% of household tax bills go toward payments to the Province and School Boards. She commented that misconceptions exist with the public about the role of the municipality in the education system, since the Municipality provides funding toward education. She clarified that the Municipality does not have any input into the education system.

In response to an inquiry from Community Council, Ms. Wilson advised that priorities identified by residents last year through the budget allocator tool included the core basics such as recreation services and protective services (fire and police). Ms. Wilson noted that the results of the survey tool are not statistically correct because it could be used by one group or section of the population more than others, and does not represent a core sample of the population of the Municipality.

Deputy Mayor Nicoll suggested that more education on taxation for residents could be included in the budget consultation process.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested that the budget consultation process should be better advertised to the public, and that this presentation should be given to Council for the benefit of the public, as Council meetings are televised and live streamed. He also suggested that the budget allocator tool should be live through the months of November and December. Ms. Wilson Barb noted that with the short timeline, staff plan to run the budget tool for four weeks, to be able to get the data to Council for December.

Councillor Hendsbee further suggested that staff hold engagement meetings with the chambers of commerce and business commissions, or hold additional public consultation meetings at libraries.

Councillor Hendsbee asked about examples of traffic service improvements for rural areas of the Municipality. Ms. Wilson indicated that specific details would be included in the capital budget, which can be found online.

Councillor McCluskey, referring to the table on p. 15 of the presentation with regard to change in single family home assessments for 2014-15, specifically comments on the table that "90% of homes will see increases in municipal property taxes of less than 2.9%", questioned the origin of this statistic. Ms. Wilson indicated that she would ask staff from Financial Policy and Planning would get in touch with the Councillor to provide clarification.

Councillor McCluskey, referring to the table on p. 17 of the presentation with regard to change in commercial assessments for 2014 to 2015, asked for a break-down of how many of those were small vs. big businesses.

The Chair opened the floor to those wishing to speak with regard to the 2016-17 Budget.

Ms. Charlotte Hutchinson, Dartmouth, noted that the presentation started with the Halifax logo, and questioned whether the budget will only apply to the Halifax area of the Municipality. She indicated that she does not want any more money spent on the rebranding of Municipal property including but not limited to transit vehicle, police vehicles, ferries, letter head, labels, bus passes, and man-hole covers. Ms. Hutchinson indicated she would like to see a break-down of the costs of the rebranding project to date, and projected future costs.

At the request of Ms. Loretta Fit, Dartmouth, Ms. Wilson confirmed that all Municipal departments are included in the presentation.

Mr. Patrick Stubbard, Dartmouth, advised that he doesn't mind paying taxes for the services he receives, and commented that he found the analogy of comparing the fiscal budget to a home owner budget very helpful to understand and thanked staff for the presentation. Mr. Stubbard commented that with regard to the statistic identified on the table on p. 15 of the presentation with regard to changes in single family home assessments for 2014-15 that 3.5% of properties increased more than 12.5%, that this figure may

be coming from when homes are sold, they are reassessed for the sale price and the property tax CAP comes off.

10. REPORTS

10.1 STAFF - NONE

10.2 Board & Committee Reports - NONE

11. MOTIONS - NONE

12. IN CAMERA - NONE

13. ADDED ITEMS - NONE

14. NOTICES OF MOTION - NONE

15. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Charlotte Hutchinson, Dartmouth, circulated a handout to Community Council, and read from the handout concerns regarding the Municipal rebranding project.

Mr. Dave Harrison, Dartmouth, on behalf of the We Love Dartmouth Facebook group, provided a submission, which he read from regarding concerns with the Municipal rebranding project, and in particular its effect on planning appeals. He argued that the logo should not have replaced Halifax Regional Municipality on the Municipality's Land Use By-laws and Municipal Planning Strategies.

Mr. Victor Matthews, Dartmouth, concurred with the concerns raised by the previous two speakers. He added that the front page of the website should not be the Halifax logo, but should be the legal name and legal flag of the Municipality. He noted other pages on the Halifax website that have been changed after the rebranding project, and indicated that they should be changed back.

Mr. Patrick Stubbard, Dartmouth, commented on issues he has been experiencing in his neighbourhood with regard to the off-leash dog area in Shubie Park, noting that the enjoyment of his property has been diminished greatly. Mr. Stubbard commented that a 2007 staff report initiating off-leash dog parks indicated that these areas would be reviewed after a six month period, after which Council could make changes, although this has never been done. He suggested that the off-leash dog area at Shubie Park should be removed and the process start over.

The Chair advised that staff are in the process of reviewing all off-leash dog parks and she has asked enforcement staff to look into the concerns raised by Mr. Stubbard.

Ms. Loretta Fit, Dartmouth, commented that she finds the boundaries between off-leash and on-leash areas of parks confusing.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – November 12, 2015

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, November 12, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. in the Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council meeting space, on the main floor of Alderney Gate, 40 Alderney Drive, Dartmouth.

17. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Jennifer Weagle
Legislative Assistant