



PO Box 1749  
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Item No.

North West Community Council  
November 4, 2010

**TO:** Chair and Members of North West Community Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Cathie O'Toole, CGA, Director, Finance

**DATE:** October 22, 2010

**SUBJECT:** Uniform Charge for Lost Creek Community Association

**ORIGIN**

Interim Area Rate Guidelines were adopted by Council in January 2000 to create a process to assist communities establish new area rates or uniform charges, and to ensure that all taxpayers have an opportunity to participate in setting a rate. The Guidelines are also intended to ensure that rates are set only for valid municipal purposes and not for services already covered by the general rate.

The purpose of this report is to determine if the Interim Area Rate Guidelines have been satisfied thus far with regard to a proposed new uniform charge for the Lost Creek Community Association.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**It is recommended that North West Community Council recommend to Regional Council that:**

**A uniform charge of \$50.00 per property be approved to be applied against the properties within the mapped area depicted in Appendix A of this report effective with the 2011-12 fiscal year for the purpose of funding the activities of the Lost Creek Community Association.**

## BACKGROUND

Lost Creek Village is located in Kinsac in District 2. The Lost Creek Community Association (LCCA) has been registered with the Registry of Joint Stock Companies since December 4, 2008. The primary goal of the LCCA is to “steer the development of parkland in Lost Creek Village.” The Association intends to use the uniform charge to leverage more funding from other levels of government, including HRM, to finance construction of a playground, walking trail, open play space and asphalt court on parkland provided to HRM by the developer.

It is proposed that the uniform charge of \$50 per property would commence in 2011. The uniform charge is intended to be on-going as parkland development is expected to take several years to complete, and some of the funding will also be used for community activities.

## DISCUSSION

The current status of this uniform charge in terms of the Interim Area Rate Guidelines is as follows:

1. *Area rates can only be used for the provision of services within the municipal mandate; services traditionally provided by the municipality.*

Section 79(1)(ah) of the Charter states that “Council may expend money required by the municipality for playgrounds, trails, bicycle paths, swimming pools, ice arenas and other recreational facilities.” The Halifax Regional Municipality and its predecessor municipal units have traditionally funded, either entirely or partially through partnerships, the construction and ongoing operating costs of recreation facilities.

2. *Area rates are not to be used to provide different levels of a municipal service within urban and suburban areas where said service is covered by the general tax rate.*

The community to which the uniform charge would be applied is within the urban and suburban areas of HRM. However, the LCCA is not duplicating any services provided directly by HRM to Lost Creek Village.

3. *In order for a proposed new area rate to move to the process as outlined in #4 below, it must have the support of the area's Councillor(s).*

The catchment area for this uniform charge falls entirely within District 2. The Councillor for the District, Barry Dalrymple, conducted a vote of all community households in September and October 2010 to determine if there was support from a majority of the community for the uniform charge. The results of the vote are indicated below. Having determined that sufficient support existed, he has requested staff prepare a report in compliance with Step 5 of the Interim Area Rate Guidelines for consideration at the next meeting of the North West Community Council.

- Proposals for new area rates must be advertised publicly, clearly identifying affected areas, the purpose for the rate, rate information and the duration the rate is expected to be charged. A public meeting will be held and those attending the meeting will be informed of the rationale for the rate and consulted on its appropriateness.*

An information package including a ballot was mailed to the owners of the 146 taxable properties identified within the proposed catchment area. A map of the proposed catchment area is provided in Appendix A of this report, and a copy of the information package is provided in Appendix B. The information package included details of the purpose and amount of the uniform charge, and the date, time and location of a public information meeting which was held on October 7, 2010. The results of the ballot are shown below.

#### **Tabulation of Ballots**

Total in Favour of Uniform Charge:	50
Total Against Uniform Charge:	15
Total Ballots Distributed:	146
Total Ballots Returned:	65
% Respondents voting For:	76.9%
% Respondents voting Against:	23.1%
Response Rate:	44.5%

- With the concurrence of the Councillor, the request is forwarded to the Community Council for review and a recommendation to Halifax Regional Council. Where a Community Council does not exist, the request will go directly to Halifax Regional Council.*

The purpose of this report is to provide the North West Community Council with the necessary information required to consider making a recommendation to Halifax Regional Council for initiating this uniform charge within the proposed catchment area. The implications to the Municipality are identified under the Budget Implications section which follows.

- Any proposed new area rates recommended by a Community Council (or, in the absence of a Community Council, the Councillor for the area) will be submitted to Halifax Regional Council through a staff report with a recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer. The staff report will identify the implications to the Municipality along with the results of any public meeting.*

7. *Halifax Regional Council is responsible for approving all area rates.*

Completion of steps 6 and 7 are contingent on the North West Community Council approving the Recommendation contained in this report.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

The uniform charge would take effect in the 2011/12 fiscal year. As all funding is from the uniform charge (i.e. no transfers from the general tax rate), there would be no impact on the HRM General Operating Budget at any time in the future. There is also no impact on the Capital or Reserve Budgets.

The uniform charge of \$50 per property applied to the 146 properties in Lost Creek Village would provide \$7,300 in revenue in 2011.

### **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN**

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

Community Council could decide not to implement the uniform charge.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A: Map of Catchment Area for Proposed Uniform Charge for Lost Creek Community Association

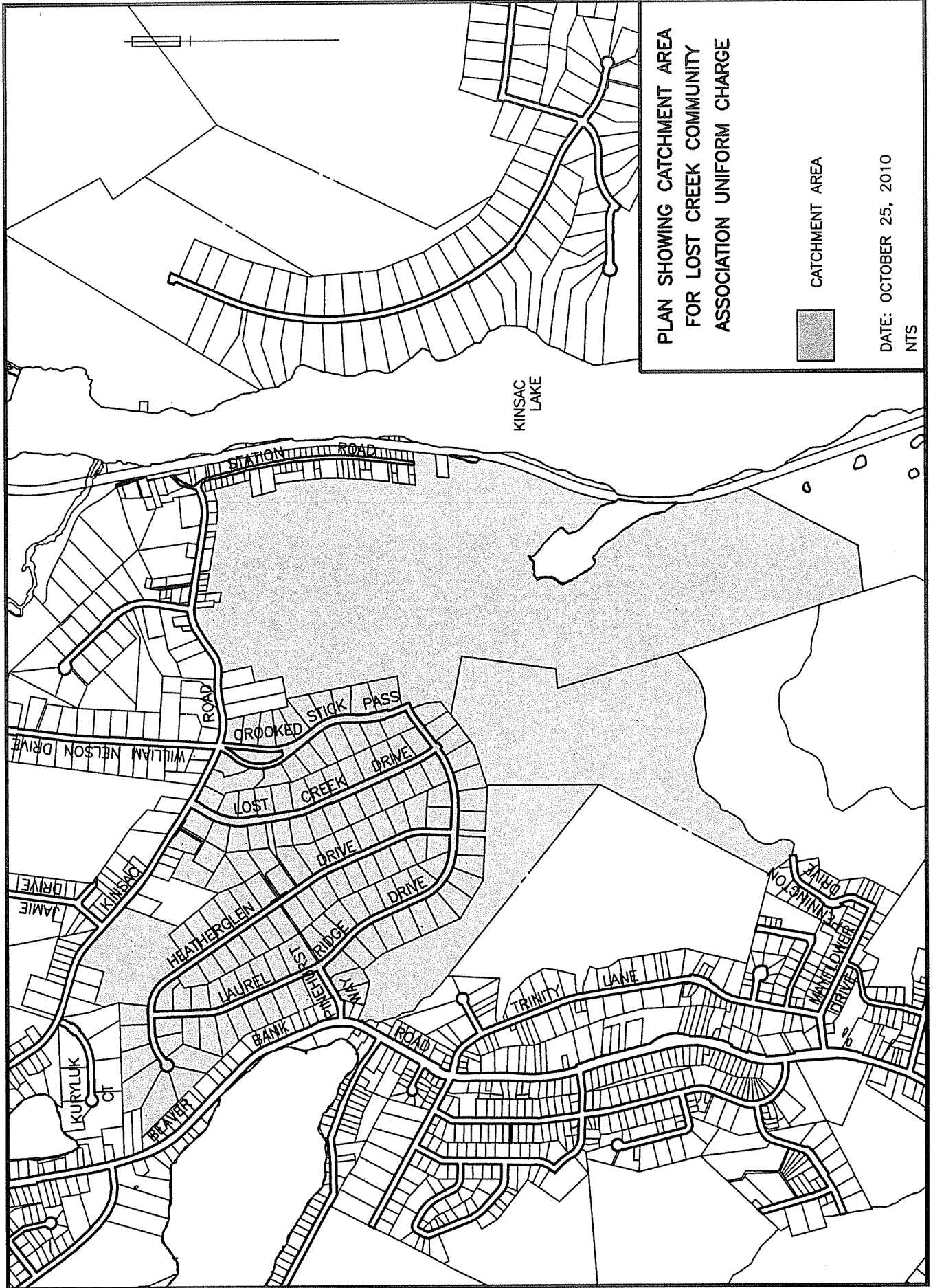
Appendix B: Copy of Ballot and Information Package mailed to Property Owners

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/cc.html> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Gordon Roussel, Financial Consultant, Finance 490-6468



Report Approved by: Paul Fleming, Manager, Budget & Financial Analysis 490-7203



PLAN SHOWING CATCHMENT AREA  
FOR LOST CREEK COMMUNITY  
ASSOCIATION UNIFORM CHARGE

CATCHMENT AREA

DATE: OCTOBER 25, 2010  
NTS

## Appendix B



### AREA TAX RATE BALLOT

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September 27, 2010

OWNER / OWNER 2  
ADDRESS  
CITY / PROV / PC

Assessment # AAN  
CIVICNUM / STREET / ST\_TYPE / LOT\_TYPE / LOT

Dear Lost Creek Village Property Owner:

The Lost Creek Community Association (LCCA) was incorporated under the Societies Act with the Registry of Joint Stock Companies in December 2008. The Association is a not-for-profit, volunteer-led group of local citizens, who are engaged in neighbourhood improvement programs, recreation development, and social activities for all residents of Lost Creek Village to enjoy. This includes helping steer the development of park land in the community.

Please find enclosed in this mailing the following:

1. Letter from the LCCA to residents providing details of the goals/plans of the Association
2. Proposed Annual Budget of the Association for April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012

In accordance with the Halifax Regional Municipality's procedure for implementing area rates, the property owners in the subdivision must be consulted with regard to whether they wish to pay the \$50 annual fee to contribute to the projects and activities proposed by the LCCA. Each property is provided with one ballot and one vote. If a simple majority (50% + 1) of ballots returned vote in favour of the area rate, it will be applied to all properties in the subdivision commencing in 2011.

For more information, please plan to attend the meeting scheduled for **Thursday, October 7th at 7:00 pm at the Lost Creek Golf Club, 310 Kinsac Road**. Representatives of HRM will be in attendance along with members of the Association's Executive to help answer your questions.

As the owner of the property identified above, you are entitled to one vote. Please complete the ballot below and either drop it off at the meeting, fax it to 490-5622, or return it in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

If you lose your ballot, or have any questions specific to the balloting process, please contact Gordon Roussel at 490-6468. For questions regarding the goals of the Association, please contact one of the Executive members listed at the end of the enclosed letter from the Association.

**Please note that all Ballots must be received by Friday, October 15, 2010 (Sorry, but we cannot make any exceptions).** If you are mailing your ballot in, please allow adequate time for delivery. Results of the ballot will be posted on the Association's website at [lostcreekpark.com](http://lostcreekpark.com)

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- YES**, I am in favour of paying an area rate of \$50 per year to fund the activities and projects of the Lost Creek Village Community Association.
- NO**, I am not in favour of paying an area rate of \$50 per year to fund the activities and projects of the Lost Creek Village Community Association.

Assessment # AAN

**NOTE:** Only one vote per assessment number will be counted. Ballots with written-in, typed-in, or altered assessment numbers will not be accepted.

**Lost Creek Community Association  
Proposed Annual Budget for 2011-2012  
Note: Budget Year is April 1 - March 31 Inclusive**

<u>Revenue:</u>	Budgeted
Councillors Capital Fund	3,000
Golf Raffle	1,000
Bottle Drive	300
Area Rate Revenue (if approved by property owners)	7,300
Profit from Other Events	2,000
Family Street BBQ	300
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	<u><b>13,900</b></u>
<u>Expenditures:</u>	
General Expenses:	
Mailing & other Admin Fees	400
Webpage Maintenance/Reg	180
Meeting Place Rentals (Halls)	400
Fundraiser Expenses	700
<b>Sub-Total:</b>	<u><b>1,680</b></u>
Events:	
Family Street BBQ	1,000
Family Skate Party	300
Planned Park Expenditures:	15,000
(Money to go toward Capital Cost for Park)	
<b>Sub-Total:</b>	<u><b>16,300</b></u>
<u>Total Expenditures:</u>	<b>17,980</b>
<b>Revenue minus Expenses:</b>	-4,080
<b>Prior Year Surplus - Carried Forward:</b>	<u>4,080</u>
<b>Revenue minus Expenses, plus Surplus:</b>	<u>0</u>

Note: Surplus held in Reserve for future park development



Lost Creek Community Association  
C/O 204 Lost Creek Drive  
Beaver Bank NS  
B4G 1G4

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September 22, 2010

## An Update on the Lost Creek Community Association

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Dear resident of Lost Creek Subdivision:

We live in a great community that is growing fast. The goal of the Lost Creek Community Association (LCCA) is not only to build a park but to better our community. We want to live in a place where we know our neighbors. We want to create a destination for families to gather, for kids to play safely, a place where you can ride your bike, walk your dog, or maybe skate on the pond in the winter.

### **When will all this happen?**

The LCCA will work with the Halifax Regional Municipality to help plan the park. We hope to break ground next spring and start construction of the walking trail and some components of the playground. If we raise enough money, our kids may be swinging and sliding into action this time next year.

### **How much does it cost?**

To create a walking trail, playground, open play space, and asphalt court will cost roughly \$150,000. We're responsible for a third of that amount. It's a lot of money. But it's also an incredible investment in our community. We can enjoy a beautiful park area, encourage healthy, active children and raise the value of our homes. Many other communities, such as Beaver Bank-Monarch and Westwood Hills are already benefiting from such an investment. In addition to a wonderful play space, they've created an association well-equipped to deal with other community issues, such as their low-yield wells.

### **How do we raise the money?**

Fundraising is paramount to making this park happen. For the past two years we've held raffles for free passes to the Lost Creek Golf Course. We held our very first annual Community BBQ on August 8. We had a great turnout and are aiming for bigger and better next year. And we look forward to holding the event at the park in the future.

This summer, one of our youngest volunteers, Julia Leslie, suggested a bottle drive that raised over \$300. Anytime you want to donate your recyclables, the Lost Creek Community Association has an account at Sackville Recycling (434 Sackville drive).

So far we've raised over \$5000. Our goal is to double that by the spring of 2011. Unfortunately, bottle drives and bake sales aren't going to get this park built in a timely fashion. That's why we need the community to pull together and support the area rate initiative. We can collectively get this park developed sooner than later, and continue to hold fun, exciting events for everyone. We need your support to make all this happen, so please vote 'Yes' on your area tax rate ballot!

Our next fundraiser is a bingo and silent auction planned for November 13. It will be held in the hall of the Church of the Good Shepherd on Trinity Lane in Beaver Bank. Please visit our website [www.lostcreekpark.com](http://www.lostcreekpark.com) for updates on this fun event!



We are now starting our letter writing campaign to major businesses in the area for financial or in-kind donations. As well, we are applying for corporate and government grants.

### How can you help?

The proposed park on Heatherglen Drive will benefit everyone not only in Lost Creek, but our neighbors in Kinsac and Beaver Bank as well. The land is there, but to turn into a wonderful community resource takes a lot of volunteers and support from you, the residents.

Here are some ways you can help:

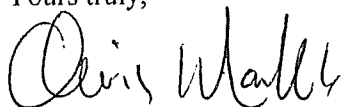
- Vote 'YES' to the Area Rate
- Volunteer
- Donate money
- Support any fundraisers we have on the go!

If you have questions or suggestions here's how you can contact us:

- Visit our website at [www.lostcreekpark.com](http://www.lostcreekpark.com)
- Contact LCCA Chair, Chris Marks at 869-2091 or [lostcreekpark@gmail.com](mailto:lostcreekpark@gmail.com)
- VP Fundraising, Trina Roache at 252-5239 or [trina\\_roache@hotmail.com](mailto:trina_roache@hotmail.com)
- VP Fundraising Maureen Sturgeon at 252-5154 or [moesturgeon@gmail.com](mailto:moesturgeon@gmail.com)

I'd like to thank you in advance for your consideration and assistance with this community minded endeavor and also your continued support. If we all pull together to help build the park, we'll build community spirit as well.

Yours truly,



Chris Marks, President/Chair, Lost Creek Community Association

cc: Trina Roache, Vice-President/Fundraising  
Maureen Sturgeon, Vice-President/Fundraising