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Item No.
**Community Planning & Economic
Development Standing Committee**
November 19, 2015

TO: Chair and Members of Community Planning & Economic Development
Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by _____
Brad Anguish, Director of Parks & Recreation

DATE: November 3, 2015

SUBJECT: Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Commemorative Program Update

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Part 12 of Administrative Order 2014-005-GOV Respecting the Special Advisory Committee on the 100th Anniversary of the Halifax Explosion which requires the submission of a written report to the Community Planning & Economic Development Committee on the status of the Municipal Commemorative Program at least twice annually.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Section 79 (1), The Council may expend money required by the Municipality for; (k) recreational programs; (x) lands and buildings required for a municipal purpose; (ai) public grounds, squares, halls, museums, parks, tourist information centres and community centres

BACKGROUND

In 2013, Regional Council approved a plan to commemorate the 100th anniversary through three specific projects:

1. An enhanced civic commemoration event on December 6, 2017;
2. A legacy capital project; and
3. A grants program to support non-profit organizations and charities in their commemoration of the event.

Regional Council also appointed a Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Special Advisory Committee (HEAAC) to advise staff on the development and implementation of the commemorative program. The committee has been actively meeting over the past year and has identified the following vision for the commemorative program:

The Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Commemoration will honour the memory of those who died and suffered as a result of the explosion, will educate current and future generations about the significance of the event, and will celebrate the resilience of Halifax in rising from destruction to restore the full potential of the city and its people.

DISCUSSION

Pursuant to the Terms of Reference of the Special Advisory Committee, this report provides the bi-annual update on the status of the Municipal Commemorative Program. A summary of the Committee's initial considerations of the municipal program and achievements to date is included, as well as an update and current status of the three specific project areas indicated above from 2014 to present.

The Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Staff Advisory Committee

The Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Advisory Committee (HEAAC) is a staff advisory Committee and is supported administratively by staff from the Office of the Municipal Clerk and Parks & Recreation. The Committee held their initial meeting on August 27, 2014, and have been meeting monthly with staff from Culture & Events, Policy & Planning, and Grants & Contributions. The Committee has established guiding principles and created a vision statement (Attachment 1). In addition to the monthly meetings, the Committee has held workshops with staff and external subject matter experts and continue to provide input on the three programming areas. As per the Administrative Order, the Committee membership is comprised of eight members. Currently there are two vacancies and a process to fill these vacancies is underway.

The Committee has completed the following tasks:

- Workshop with guest speakers regarding Halifax Explosion. Content included archival resources and events;
- Development of a vision statement and guiding principles for the municipal commemoration program, which was approved by the Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee (CPED) on February 12, 2015;
- Request to Mayor Savage, on behalf of Regional Council, to write to Canada Post and the Canadian Royal Mint that a stamp and coin be produced that commemorates the Halifax Explosion and its significance as a major historical event in our country;
- Request for the creation of an emblem to identify HRM's endorsement of specific projects and events;
- Management of unsolicited requests and correspondence pending details of the commemorative program content;
- Requests and receipt of information from staff regarding grants best practice, commemorative programs, events, Fort Needham project, and potential cultural programming;
- Participation of some Committee members in the Fort Needham Memorial Park public consultation process;
- Endorsement of an Advisory Committee role with respect to making recommendations to HRM Grants Committee regarding grant applications to the designated grant program; and
- Workshop on concepts for the 100th Anniversary Commemorative Program. Proposals submitted by various organizations and individuals were also addressed.

Next Steps:

The Committee will submit a recommendation report to staff over the coming months. Ongoing input and Committee participation in the three project components will occur as required. With the completion of initial vision for the commemoration program and the initiation of the staff implementation of the various components, the need for monthly meetings with senior HRM staff will be replaced with quarterly meetings. This schedule will allow staff to further review the ideas, concepts and themes received from the Committee within the context of the municipal process and move forward to the appropriate implementation phase. Upon review and confirmation of appropriate funding sources, staff expects to return to CPED with a recommendation report for consideration in the spring of 2016.

Civic Commemorative Event

During the HEAAC deliberations, it was determined by the Committee that to properly commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Halifax Explosion, support should be provided for a series of events leading up to the civic commemorative event on December 6, 2017. As such, they requested that Project 1 be divided into two sub-components:

- a) The December 6, 2017 Expanded Commemorative Ceremony; and
- b) The 100th Anniversary Commemorative Program.

Expanded Commemorative Ceremony

Regional Council has directed the delivery of an “Expanded Commemorative Ceremony” based on the ongoing annual commemoration ceremony at Needham Bell Tower held every December 6th. This event is well-attended with several hundred people.

While the 2017 event will require additional planning and involve a greater ceremonial weight, it is limited by the outdoor nature of the event given the time of year. Possible enhanced components may include:

- Extending invitations to dignitaries from Canada and around the world (e.g. Massachusetts, Belgium, France, United Kingdom);
- Increased dedicated event infrastructure onsite (tents, heat lamps, etc.);
- Greater ceremonial component (choirs, poet laureate, readings and speakers, etc.);
- An “opening event” for the refurbished memorial bell tower and surrounding plaza, other memorial park elements;
- Broadcast/live stream of ceremonies in Halifax and Dartmouth; and
- A post ceremony civic reception.

The 100th Anniversary Commemorative Program

Since its inception, the Advisory Committee has received submissions from community members and organizations outlining an interest to commemorate certain aspects of the Explosion. The majority of these ideas and proposals will be eligible to apply through the Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Grant Program, while others can be addressed as possible elements of an expanded Commemorative Ceremony in December 2017.

For the other submissions with no current program fit, the Committee has identified a gap in the current commemorative program approved by Council. The proposals at issue represent higher-order budget items of a professional quality:

1. Signature Commissions of a scope and scale not achievable under the conditions of the Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Grant Program (e.g., the commissioning of a signature artwork).
2. An interactive online platform to centralize the “storytelling” and provide ease-of-access to information related to the Explosion and its history, including community events and commemorations related to 100th Anniversary.

These proposals are seen by HEAAC as program components that would be specifically undertaken by the Municipality with potential intra-governmental and institutional partnerships. These proposals represent an additional program outside Council’s approved scope of work and budget; therefore, staff continues to consider the suggestions from the Advisory Committee. Staff will return to CPED with a presentation of the 100th Anniversary Commemorative Program with proposed program structure, budget and process to Regional Council in the spring of 2016.

Staff has completed the following tasks:

- Provided an overview of the annual, commemorative event;
- Presentations by municipal archivist, Municipal Clerk, Assistant Deputy Minister and National Directors-Canadian Heritage;
- Formed an ad-hoc external Stakeholder Staff Working Group – To allow for alignment of programs and funding for the Explosion Commemoration between all levels of government. Representation is currently from NS Archives, NS Libraries, Maritime Museum, Province, Parks Canada, Canadian Heritage, DND, etc.
- Presentation of scenarios for the 100th Anniversary Commemorative Program and expanded the December 6, 2017 event to the Advisory Committee for preliminary feedback; and

- Workshop presentation on possible program structure and process for the 100th Anniversary Commemorative Program.

Next steps:

- Development of plan for 100th Anniversary Commemorative Program and expanded December 6, 2017 event program in conjunction with feedback received from the Advisory Committee and the workshop;
- Application to Canadian Heritage *Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage: Community Anniversaries* Community Anniversary;
- Review provincial funding opportunities;
- Liaise with Corporate Communications for Commemorative Emblem process, stamp and coin;
- Liaise with Mayor's office on protocol and process for invitation list;
- Presentation of 100th Anniversary Commemorative Program with proposed program structure and process to advisory committee;
- Presentation of 100th Anniversary Commemorative Program with proposed program structure, process to Regional Council in spring 2016; and
- Pending the approval of Regional Council of the 100th Anniversary Commemorative Program process, release of program via Request for Proposal(s) process in the summer of 2016.

Legacy Capital Project

The Fort Needham project will be advanced in phases with the first two phases serving as the physical memorial to the victims and the legacy of impact of the Explosion. Central to the design of the space will be geographical ties to the Explosion, new interpretive features, as well as restored interpretive and commemorative elements as well as improved infrastructure for commemorative events

Staff has completed the following tasks:

- Site visit to Fort Needham with the Committee to discuss opportunities, issues and constraints;
- Public Workshop with community and Committee members for Fort Needham Master Plan;
- Committee workshop to aid staff and consultants in interpreting the Vision and Guiding Principles as they relate to the Master Plan;
- Initial exploration of potential partners for implementation of the Fort Needham Master Plan;
- Public Presentation of Fort Needham Master Plan;
- Meetings with Canadian Heritage regarding planned application to the Legacy Fund;
- Meetings with ACOA regarding project suitability to the Canada 150 Fund;
- Discussions with citizens concerned with aspects of the Fort Needham Master Plan (i.e., off-leash area users, advocates for protecting natural area at the north end of the park); and
- Presentation of Fort Needham Master Plan to CPED and Regional Council (adopted on October 27, 2015).

Next steps:

- Secure consultant services for detail design;
- Carry out schematic design, interpretation plan and class C cost estimates, including consultation with community interests and the Advisory Committee;
- Applications for funding from potential partners;
- Produce final detail design and budgets for Advisory Committee input and Regional Council consideration;
- Communications plan to park users and general public;
- Manage construction in seasons 2016 and 2017; and
- Rededication of Fort Needham Park, Fall 2017.

Grants to Non-Profit Organizations

The proposed Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Grants Program is intended to broaden community participation in the centennial through projects undertaken by local non-profit organizations and charities. Funding is merit-based and focuses on educational initiatives for children and youth, ethno-cultural communities, interpretation, exhibitions or displays, and ceremonial or dedication events. The program

also accommodates an opportunity to celebrate stories of personal and community resilience and resurgence. The maximum value of each grant will be \$10,000.

Staff has completed the following tasks:

- Overview of grants and contributions best practices;
- Overview of government funding to commemorative programs;
- Presentation of proposed designated grant program to advisory committee for feedback;
- Recommendation to include advisory committee in grant decision-making process as may be considered by Council;
- Presentation of Administrative Order 2014-005-GOV to Regional Council for approval; and
- Launch of new Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Grants Program.

Next steps:

- Administration of Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Grants Program;
- Creation and management of review panel; and
- Presentation of recommendations to Grants Committee for recommendation to Regional Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications at this time.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Advisory Committee is comprised of volunteer members of the community. The Committee regularly meets on a monthly basis, and all meetings are open to the public, unless stated otherwise on the agenda. Agendas, reports, and minutes are available online.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Commemorative Program Guiding Principles and Vision Statement

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.php> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Commemorative Program Vision Statement

The Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Commemoration will honour the memory of those who died and suffered as a result of the explosion, will educate current and future generations about the significance of the event, and will celebrate the resilience of Halifax in rising from destruction to restore the full potential of the city and its people.

Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Commemorative Program Guiding Principles

1. It will be a solemn, respectful and reflective commemoration honouring the victims of the Halifax Explosion, the response, and the legacy.
2. It will acknowledge and tell the diverse personal, national and international story, which had a lasting legacy.
3. It will reflect diversity of all the communities impacted such as relatives of survivors, African NS and Mi'kmaq communities.
4. It will educate and connect people, particularly youth, to the history and meaning of the Halifax explosion in different ways.
5. It will encourage community members participate through a variety of cultural and creative modes.
6. It will capture the local and National imagination and attention.
7. It will acknowledge and explore the scope of the compassionate response.
8. It will explore institutional responses to the impact of disaster, including within the context of war.
9. It will have a perpetual meaning for future generations.
10. Its legacy projects will strive to be compelling, meaningful, evocative and an enduring commemoration.

*Developed by the Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Special Advisory Committee, and approved by the Committee on January 14, 2015.
Approved by the Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee on February 12, 2015.*