

Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee
June 6, 2013

TO: Chair and Members of Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee

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SUBMITTED BY: _____
Jane Fraser, Director, Planning & Infrastructure

DATE: April 26, 2013

SUBJECT: Stormwater Management and Lot Grading By-Law

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

ORIGIN

- Regional Plan, Policy SU 28: Stormwater Management Functional Plan.
- Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee, April 16, 2012: Lot Grading By-Law.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

HRM Charter, By-Law regarding stormwater, 353.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee request that Regional Council direct staff to:

1. Consult with external stakeholders, including Halifax Water, the Nova Scotia Homebuilders' Association and the Development Industry, to help formulate recommended objectives for a Stormwater Management and Lot Grading By-Law;
2. Consult with the Regional Watersheds Advisory Board to help identify objectives and desired outcomes of a Stormwater Management and Lot Grading By-Law; and
3. Prepare a recommendation articulating the objectives of a Stormwater Management and Lot Grading By-Law for review and consideration of the Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee.

BACKGROUND

Stormwater management is a major challenge for communities and municipalities. Rainfall events may result in both flooding and/or environmental incidents (sediment loading) affecting lakes and properties.

An outstanding municipal policy and regulatory activity is the development of a harmonized stormwater management & lot grading by-law.

DISCUSSION

During development of a project charter for the by-law development and best practices review, and scanning other by-laws, staff identified a key question: “What specifically is the objective and desired outcome?”

While reviewing other municipal by-laws, staff realized that a stormwater management by-law may face a contradictory objective. The prompt evacuation of rainwater from a property into a storm sewer system may be contrary to the objective of low impact development and slowing of rainwater impact on the storm sewer system. Additionally, potential solutions and regulations may have a variety of restrictive or enabling impacts on homeowners or developers.

Prior to developing the project charter, or developing policy recommendations, it is critical that staff and Regional Council understand and approve direction to meet the community’s desired outcome.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate budget or financial implications to this request. However, a Stormwater Management & Lot Grading By-Law could potentially have compliance and regulatory capacity implications. Those implications would be identified in the development of the By-Law.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This report will lead to community engagement.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Stormwater management has profound impacts on natural assets and physical assets in HRM.

ALTERNATIVES

This Committee may choose to not direct staff to articulate the desired community outcome.

ATTACHMENTS

None

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.

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