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**Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee
March 6, 2014**

TO: Chair and Members of Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Jane Fraser, Director Planning & Infrastructure

DATE: February 12, 2014

SUBJECT: FEE General Assembly 2016

ORIGIN

Environmental Defence Canada requested that the Halifax Regional Municipality consider nomination as the host city for the 2016 General Assembly of the Foundation for Environmental Education.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Section 3.5.3 of the Terms of Reference of the Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee, "Other related activities in the area of water resource management as identified by the Standing Committee and approved by Regional Council."

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee not make a recommendation to Regional Council to consider funds to co-host the 2016 General Assembly of the Foundation for Environmental Education.

BACKGROUND

Environmental Defence Canada (EDC) is a national non-governmental organization that advocates for environmental change. Founded in 1984, it administers a suite of programs intended to protect the environment and human health. One of these programs is the Blue Flag program in Canada; on behalf of the Foundation for Environmental Education, which certifies safe and clean beaches across Canada.

The Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) is a non-government, non-profit organization promoting sustainable development through environmental education. The FEE is well respected with partners including the United Nations Environment Program, United Nations World Tourism Organization and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Founded in 1981, FEE launched the Blue Flag program in 1985. Today, FEE is mainly active through the Blue Flag and four other environmental education programs: Eco-Schools, Young Reporters for the Environment, Learning about Forests and Green Key. The FEE holds General Assemblies every two years to appoint and/or elect members and organization leaders and transact other business.

DISCUSSION

FEE General Assemblies are private functions run by and for members and leaders of the organization; attendees are members of the organization, its directors and staff. As the primary function of the event is to conduct organization business, the primary costs of event hosting are those of meeting facilities and hotel room rentals plus food and beverages. Field trips and excursions are not standard components of General Assemblies but host organizations may arrange for and offer them at their discretion. These costs are to be covered by the host organization(s), its partners and sponsors. Environmental Defence Canada has proposed that HRM co-host the General Assembly 2016, providing financial support for 50% of the total conference cost, up to a maximum of \$50,000. Hotel quotes for sleeping accommodations, meeting rooms and food and beverage services range from \$59,000 to \$72,000. HRM will not be asked to spend more than \$50,000 if event costs exceed \$100,000, and will be held responsible only for one-half the total costs should they remain below \$100,000. Should HRM decide to support the bid to co-host the 2016 General Assembly in Halifax, EDC will work with Destination Halifax to facilitate event hosting. EDC will also reach out to the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited (owner of the Blue Flag certified Halifax Waterfront), Province of Nova Scotia, Dalhousie University and other local institutions to secure additional financial support for the event. There would be anticipated attendance of 80-100 participants from over 60 countries.

The FEE wishes to announce its selection of a host city during its 2014 General Assembly, to be held this June in Copenhagen, Denmark. To facilitate their decision, Environmental Defence Canada needs to submit nomination papers prior to the April 2014 meeting of the FEE Board of Directors.

Rationale for negative recommendation:

- There is no opportunities for public participation
- The funding of this event may detract from a possible Memorandum of Understanding effort with Clean Nova Scotia or other options meeting the Healthy Communities council priority
- The funding (at \$50,000) appears to provide little return on investment to HRM with respect to council priorities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Contribution to a maximum of \$50,000 for the June, 2016 FEE General Assembly, if approved, will be incorporated in the 2016/17 annual budget planning cycle.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There is no public participation with the event.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications

ALTERNATIVES

Committee may choose to recommend requesting Regional Council to consider funding the event.

ATTACHMENTS

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.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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Original Signed

Financial Approval by:


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