

6.1

**Item No.**  
**Governance & Boundary Review Committee**  
**November 19, 2010**

18

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of the Governance & Boundary Review Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:**



Cathy J. Mellett, Municipal Clerk

**DATE:** November 15, 2010

**SUBJECT:** Phase 2 Public Consultation – Polling District Boundaries

**ORIGIN**

Commencing October 25, 2010 public input was sought regarding the proposed polling district boundary revisions for the 2012 Municipal Elections in accordance with the guidelines of the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board. This report presents the feedback received.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Governance and District Boundary Review Committee adopt the following three (3) minor revisions to the proposed boundary changes in response to the Phase 2 public consultation:

- 1) Reestablish the District 4 polling district boundary at the previous location on Bissett Road, and that be the only change adopted to the proposed District 4 boundary. This change will place District 4 slightly above the +/-10% polling district average at 13.7% but is justifiable based on strong community identification and feedback.
- 2) To replace the estimated 400 voters resulting from retaining Bissett Road in District 8 the proposed boundary for District 8 be moved to include a portion of the Russell Lake commercial and residential development off of Highway 111 in the Baker Drive, Freshwater Trail, Basswood Run area. This boundary change would serve to better balance the voter distribution between District 7 and District 8 and has better association with the interests of the rest of District 8 regarding future development and transportation corridors around the Shearwater lands. (NOTE: this change has not been done and the percentage deviations attached to this report DO NOT include this change)
- 3) The area around Rosebank Dr., Dorothy Dr. & Irene Avenue be placed back in District 20, following the previous district boundary in that area. This will result in District 20 being slightly above the +/-10% polling district average at 12.2% but is justifiable based on community identification and the overall stability of the District 20 District.

And that these three (3) changes be the only revisions to the proposed District Boundaries to be recommended to Regional Council for submission to the NSUARB.

## **BACKGROUND**

Through past decisions the NSUARB has provided direction on how the boundary review is to be conducted. It stated the first phase of the review should focus on the governance structure and only following a decision on governance, including the role of Councillor and size of Regional Council, should a review of polling district boundaries be undertaken.

The Halifax Regional Council, following the guidance of the UARB undertook a two phased approach to the 2012 review of Boundaries. Phase 1 was about governance and concluded August 3, 2010 when Regional Council voted to retain the status quo of twenty-three (23) districts and Councillors and to encourage the strengthening of the Community Council responsibilities as the form of governance and representation most acceptable to the residents and elected Council of HRM.

*In future applications the Board considers that municipal councils should, prior to any consideration of setting boundaries or variances from voter parity, first determine the number of councilors which is appropriate. The decision as to the number of councilors is an especially important one, and should be made by a municipal council only after extensive public consultation, as well as consultation with others, such as senior staff or consultants...In the second step of the process Council should determine the boundaries for polling districts – once again only after extensive public consultation.....Section 121 NSUARB decision on the HRM application [2004]*

Phase 2, the Review of polling district boundaries based on the decision of Regional Council began immediately.

Staff were directed by the Committee to begin to draft proposed boundary revisions based on the demographic data provided through Environics Analytics, voter and household data provided by NS Elections and HRM data on permit activity and growth within HRM. A cross department team of HRM staff used direction provided from the NSUARB, feedback from voters during the 2008 elections, as well as the specific language of the HRM Charter (MGA) to determine the most acceptable approach to the revision of polling districts boundaries required for the 2012 Municipal Elections.

Upon review of the initial boundary revisions the Governance and Boundary Review Committee provided the following principles for the preparation and adoption of the proposed polling district boundaries to be taken to the public for consultation:

- Taking growth into account – look out to 2012 and 2016
- Strive for parity between districts
- Minimize change to voters where possible
- Keep communities and areas of interest together within an electoral district where possible

- Use highly identifiable boundaries where possible
- Meet the NSUARB requirements of equity (+/- 10% of average) or as closely as possible

Based on those principles a number of boundary revisions were drafted and provided to the Committee. At the meeting of September 30, 2010 the Committee directed staff to take the proposed polling district boundaries out for consultation with the public.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

During Phase 2 of the Public Consultation on Polling District boundaries HRM made extensive use of the HRM web site [www.halifax.ca/boundaryreview](http://www.halifax.ca/boundaryreview). A presentation and overview of the proposed changes along with detailed mapping that could be searched and zoomed in to street level was provided on the web site. Feedback was encouraged and provided to residents through emailing, faxing or writing in their comments directly to the Office of the Municipal Clerk.

A total of ten (10) written submissions were made to the Clerks office, up to Monday November 15, 2010, during Phase 2 of the Public Consultation on specific polling district boundaries.

#### Public meetings

Seven (7) public meetings were held throughout the region primarily in those areas most directly affected by any proposed boundary changes. The meetings were held on the following dates.

Date	Location
Wednesday, November 3, 2010 7:00 p.m.	Cole Harbour Place, Westphal Room 51 Forest Hills Parkway, Dartmouth
Wednesday, November 3, 2010 7:00 p.m.	Halifax West School Cafeteria 283 Thomas Raddall Drive, Halifax
Thursday, November 4, 2010 7:00 p.m.	St. Andrews Centre, Seniors Room 6955 Bayers Road, Halifax
Monday, November 8, 2010 7:00 p.m.	Basinview Drive Community School 273 Basinview Drive, Bedford
Monday, November 8, 2010 7:00 p.m.	Dartmouth High School, Cafeteria 95 Victoria Road, Dartmouth
Wednesday, November 10, 2010 7:30 p.m. ( <i>Please note time</i> )	St. Margaret's Centre, Multi-Purpose Room 12 Westwood Blvd, Upper Tantallon
Wednesday, November 10, 2010 7:00 p.m.	Gordon Snow Community Centre, Multi-Purpose Room 1359 Fall River Road, Fall River

### Notification

Notification of the meetings and information on the HRM and other means of getting information on the proposed boundary changes or participating in the process were provided through:

- An easy to access icon on the front page of the HRM web site
- 16 notices published in two (2) local and eight (8) community newspapers
- 44 – 30 second advertisements on C100 and C104 radio stations
- 3 public service announcements
- Handouts at public meetings
- Columns placed by the Mayor and Councillors in newsletters & community papers

### **DISCUSSION**

Generally, the public meetings were not well attended, except in two locations where local residents felt strongly (positively or negatively) regarding the proposed changes. While this can be construed in a number of ways given the feedback received at the meetings and in the written submissions it is staff's position that this generally reflects residents satisfaction with the approach taken to the boundary review which was to limit the change proposed to the district boundaries and for voters.

#### Eastern HRM

At the Cole Harbour meeting over 60 residents attended to express their disagreement and concern regarding having a portion of Bissett Road that contains the Cole Harbour trail and views and the lands of the former Nova Scotia Rehabilitation Centre removed from District 4. The primary concern expressed by the community in regard to the proposed boundary changes is the retention of the Bissett Lake Road area in District 4. As the Bissett Road area represents less than 400 voters there is the opportunity to adjust the boundary around Bissett Road to address community concerns.

Two (2) presenters also spoke to a desire to keep the Cherry Brook, Lake Loon in District 4, and adding the Westphal communities to District 4 rather than in District 6. Having extensively reviewed the 2007 UARB decision a representation from the Westphal and Cherry Brook communities was expected. There was one (1) speaker from Cherry Brook and one (1) from Westphal. Taken together the Cherry Brook, Lake Loon and Westphal area represents almost 2000 voters. It is not possible to retain the communities proposed by the two residents all within District 4 and retain any voter parity for the district. During community consultations undertaken by HRM in 2010 there was no one opinion expressed by residents of the area regarding drawing community boundaries. The community expressed as much of an association with the Westphal area already in District 6.. What was expressed is a stronger identity as independent communities within the larger Dartmouth/Cole Harbour community rather than an association specifically with Cole Harbour. On balance the proposed boundary, along Main Street and Highway 7, serves to acknowledge and recognize the significance of the Cherry Brook, Humber Park, Lake

Loon Westphal as communities while ensuring their voting association remains together in a community to which they also have a long standing association.

The Dartmouth High meeting was attended by four (4) residents and three (3) Councillors. The concern expressed by three (3) residents, including the building owner representative, was the removal of the Horizon Court High towers from District 5. There is a requirement to move a number of voters from District 5 into District 9 as District 5 is the only direction from which voters can be added to District 9 because of the barrier created by DND lands around Magazine Hill. District 9 needs to increase by at least 500 voters to comply with the increased voter average per district. The Horizon Court properties represented the opportunity to move a number of voters who represent an autonomous development and have an association with Dartmouth Crossing (District 9) as well as the surrounding neighbourhood of Mic Mac Boulevard (District 5). Alternatively the boundary could be adjusted to bring voters along all of Windmill Road into District 9. However, that community has an even longer standing association with District 5 and downtown Dartmouth.

Through correspondence one resident expressed their agreement with moving all of Newcastle Street back into District 5 and two (2) residents expressed agreement with the move of the Lakeshore Park Terrace area from District 6 to District 5.

#### Central HRM

The meeting at the Gordon Snow Community Centre in Fall River was the second largest attended meeting with approximately 20 residents of the Lakeview community expressing their positive support for Lakeview continuing within District 2. They pointed to the strong association and relationship between Lakeview, Windsor Junction and Fall River, in sharing a Fire Station and Community Hall.

At the Basinview Drive meeting there were four (4) residents and one (1) Councillor. Support was expressed for retaining the Bedford boundary substantially unchanged from 2008. In the Sackville area support was expressed for keeping the neighbourhood around Dorothy Drive and Irene Avenue in District 20 as those neighbourhoods are closely associated with the rest of Lower Sackville and are currently in District 20. The argument was made that District 20 is a primarily stable district with limited growth so being slightly above the average number of voters but more closely aligned as a community, and with the provincial voting boundaries, would serve the community well.

#### Western HRM

There were no residents in attendance at the meeting held on the peninsula at St. Andrew's Centre. The Clerk's office received two (2) written submissions in support of adding the area around Mumford Road up to Joseph Howe Drive into District 14 on the Peninsula of Halifax.

At the meeting at Halifax West High School there were five (5) residents and four (4) Councillors in attendance. There was a concern expressed by one of the Councillors about Mount St. Vincent moving from District 16 to District 15. However, the Mount serves as an

identifiable boundary for the newly redrawn district in keeping with the principles adopted for boundary changes. One (1) resident expressed concern that the proposed boundary revision between District 17 and District 18 along the Herring Cove Road at Williams Lake Road might serve to divide the Spryfield Community. However, District 17 already has a substantial part of the new Spryfield community and over half of the Williams Lake Road neighbourhood. The boundary change is intended to consolidate those neighbourhoods in one (1) voting district while providing a much more identifiable District Boundary along the Herring Cove Road, and add the additional voters required in District 17 to meet the district average. The only other option available would be to extend District 17 along the Purcell's cove Road to capture all the coastal communities up to and including Herring Cove, which was not deemed to be a desirable approach.

The meeting at the St. Margaret's Bay Centre in upper Tantallon was attended by five (5) residents and two (2) Councillors. A discussion was held on the rationale and pros and cons for moving the White Hills and Glen Arbour Communities into District 19 from District 23. The common development and growing transportation connections between the interests of the White Hills and Glen Arbour and Upper Sackville communities were discussed. While not disagreeing that there were common and growing shared interests between the communities one (1) resident from White Hills also noted the common interests with the wider Hammonds Plains road communities. Two (2) residents from the same area stated they saw it as an advantage to have two (2) councilors aware of their interests and concerns, and that their wider community would be represented by both councilors within the same community council. Attendees agreed with the approach of ensuring all of Kingswood was within one district rather than being divided between two districts, as it is currently.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications to this report.

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

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

### **ALTERNATIVES**

The Committee would advance the proposed boundaries unchanged to Council for adoption as HRM's submission to the NSUARB. This is not the recommended option as the proposed minor revisions reflect what staff understand to be the achievable adjustments resulting from the public consultation and serve to strengthen and improve HRMs submission to the NSUARB.

The Committee could propose other revisions based on the Phase 2 public consultation. This is not the recommended options as beyond minor revisions the balance of +/-10% district voter averages need to be maintained.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- 1) East, Central and Western HRM maps showing revisions proposed based on Phase 2 public consultation (to be circulated)
  - 2) Minutes of Public Meetings (to be circulated)
  - 3) Revised district vote projections and percentage deviations
- 

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

Report Prepared by: Cathy J. Mellett, Municipal Clerk & Ken Lenihan, GIS Services

---

ATTACHMENT 3

DIST_ID	Total Voters 2012	Percentage Deviation	Notes
1	12,791	-10.2%	A
2	15,978	12.2%	B
3	15,285	7.3%	
4	16,202	13.7%	B
5	13,861	-2.7%	
6	14,822	4.1%	
7	15,035	5.6%	
8	13,222	-7.2%	
9	13,513	-5.1%	
10	14,985	5.2%	
11	13,472	-5.4%	
12	12,836	-9.9%	
13	13,232	-7.1%	
14	13,716	-3.7%	
15	14,417	1.2%	
16	12,995	-8.8%	
17	13,237	-7.1%	
18	13,059	-8.3%	
19	15,126	6.2%	
20	15,985	12.2%	B
21	14,349	0.7%	
22	15,136	6.3%	
23	14,361	0.8%	

Total Projected 2012 Voters from Environics Analytics Report	327,613
Average Voters/District	14,244
10% Lower	12,820
10% Higher	15,668

Nov. 15, 2010 version

Notes

- A: Is slightly under the threshold
- B: These are now over the threshold