



PO Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

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BRIEFING FORM

SUBMITTED BY: Cathy Mellett, Acting Municipal Clerk/ Manager

SUBMITTED TO: District Boundary Review Committee of Council

DATE: November 13, 2009

SUBJECT: HRM Citizen Survey - Governance questions

ORIGIN

At the October 1, 2009 meeting the District Boundary Review Committee the committee requested that staff provide a further update on the HRM Citizen survey and determine if there was an opportunity to review and/or propose a question(s) regarding HRM governance as it relates to the District Boundary Review process.

BACKGROUND & UPDATE

Staff of the Business Planning office of Business Planning and Information Management have been working on finalizing the 2009 version of HRM Citizen survey and aligning it with the outcome and measurement areas HRM is committed on reporting against. That process was not completed until this week. The Business Planning staff have asked for input on the governance area in earlier iterations of the survey, which were provided through the office of the Municipal Clerk.

An RFP for final design and delivery of the HRM survey has been awarded to *Thinkwell Research*, a Halifax-based marketing and research firm. They are working with staff to release the survey to the public by the end of November 2009. Business planning staff have been working with *Thinkwell* to ensure the survey questions meet the accepted standard methodology for surveys of this type, that the questions are clear and understandable, that the questions do not lead to a specific response, and that they provide clear measurable indicators.

A number of governance related questions have been proposed. There is a short window of opportunity to propose to delete, add or amendment the questions related to seeking citizen input in this area.

Staff of the Business Planning Office request that the District Boundary Review Committee

- review the proposed questions and hopefully find that they reflect the type of feedback that would provide helpful around governance issues.
- propose amendments if required.

ALTERNATIVES & ASSOCIATED RISKS

A proposal to substantially change the nature, number, or approach to the questions in the governance area could delay the delivery of the entire survey which HRM requires in advance of the 2010/2011 budget and business planning cycle or could increase the costs to HRM.

IMPACT: *(Other Bu's, Financial, Capacity/resource, etc.)*

Dependent on approach proposed by the Committee

ATTACHMENTS:

Governance related questions proposed for the 2009 HRM Citizen Survey.

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On a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) please circle the number that comes closest to your opinion for each of the following questions:

| | STRONGLY DISAGREE | | | | STRONGLY AGREE | UNDECIDED / NO OPINION |
|--|----------------------|-------|---|---|-------------------|------------------------------|
| a. I am pleased with the overall direction that the Halifax Regional Municipality is taking | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| b. Council as a whole has worked to successfully deal with issues important to HRM | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| c. I feel that Council has demonstrated effective leadership for the Municipality | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| d. Municipal employees provide good customer service and display concern for residents | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| e. I feel my voice is valued / reflected in local government decision making | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| f. HRM recognizes the positive contributions that citizens make | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| g. I am well informed about opportunities to participate in community life | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| h. It is important to me that my local Councillor works to deal with issues important to my local community | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| i. It is important to me that my local Councillor works to deal with issues of importance to the entire region (HRM) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Regional Council currently consists of the Mayor (elected by all residents) and 23 Councillors each representing a District of HRM, who meet weekly as Regional Council. Councillors also meet monthly in six (6) Community Councils to consider local and community issues. Do you feel adequately represented by Council under its current Council and Community Council structure?

Yes No Don't Know

If you answered NO to Question 10 above, what changes would you like to see in how Council is structured so that you would feel more represented?
