



**HALIFAX EXPLOSION 100<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
SPECIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
April 15, 2015**

**PRESENT:** Mr. Craig Walkinton, Chair  
Mr. Jeffry Haggett  
Mr. Will Robinson-Mushkat  
Mr. David Sutherland

**REGRETS:** Ms. Pat Jessup  
Ms. Marilyn Elliott  
Ms. Renee Gruszecki  
Mr. Dwight Dorey, Vice Chair

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Councillor Jennifer Watts

**STAFF:** Mr. Jamie MacLellan, Public Art Facilitator  
Ms. Elizabeth Taylor, Manager Events and Cultural Initiatives  
Mr. Paul Forrest, Coordinator, Civic Events  
Ms. Peta Jane Temple, Team Lead, Tax, Grants and Special Projects  
Mr. Peter Greechan, Community Developer, Grants and Contributions  
Ms. Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant  
Ms. Cathy Collett, Legislative Support

*The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.*

*The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to the Committee are available online: <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/explosion/index.php>*

*The meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m. and adjourned at 5:04 p.m.*

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:03 without quorum.

The Committee decided to begin with item 6.3.1

**6.3.1 Participation of École St. Joseph's Alexander McKay School, Home & School Association**

The following was before the Committee:

- An information sheet produced by the Home and School Association from École St. Joseph's Alexander McKay School regarding their proposed "Children of the Explosion" project

Ms. Bridget Quigley, member of the École St. Joseph's Alexander McKay Home and School Association, gave a presentation about the school's proposed project to commemorate the Halifax Explosion. The proposed project, entitled "Children of the Explosion," seeks to celebrate the Global Humanitarian response to the disaster and explore the themes of Remembrance, Resilience and Pulling Together. The idea behind the project is that the children of the North End would reach out to all schools and children in the HRM, as well as an element of global outreach.

Ms. Quigley informed the Committee that they are not seeking funding at this time, but are looking for permission and support to go ahead with their project, with the possibility of discussing funding as grant programs are developed.

The Committee asked questions about the scope of the project and Ms. Quigley responded. The Committee expressed interest in the possibility of the project and assured Ms. Quigley that the Home and School Association would be added to the notification list for when the grant program comes available.

Mr. Will Robinson Mushkat arrived and quorum was achieved. The Committee resumed the agenda at item 2.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 18, 2015**

**MOVED by Mr. Jeffrey Haggett, seconded by Mr. David Sutherland that the minutes of February 18, 2015 be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

**MOVED by Mr. Jeffrey Haggett, seconded by Mr. Will Robinson-Mushkat that the agenda be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - None**

**5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – None**

**6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS**

**6.1 Correspondence**

**6.1.1 Correspondence from Sandy Moore, Composer & Sound Designer, dated March 9, 2015**

The following was before the Committee:

- Correspondence from Sandy Moore, Composer & Sound Designer, dated March 9, 2015 re: submission of project to the Commemorative Program

This correspondence will be added to the list of submissions received for future consideration.

**6.2 Petitions – None**

**6.3 Presentations**

**6.3.1 Participation of École St. Joseph’s Alexander McKay School, Home & School Association**

This item was addressed earlier in the meeting. Refer to page 2.

**7. REPORTS/DISCUSSION**

**7.1. STAFF**

**7.1.1 Symphony Nova Scotia Commemorative Performance – Chris Wilkinson, CEO, Symphony Nova Scotia**

Ms. Elizabeth Taylor introduced Mr. Chris Wilkinson, CEO of Symphony Nova Scotia and Mr. Andrew Cox, Coordinator, Civic Events, who has led the explosion event since 1996.

Mr. Chris Wilkinson addressed the Committee. He gave a brief introduction of himself and his involvement in the Symphony and informed the Committee that Symphony Nova Scotia is interested in putting on a large-scale concert as part of the commemoration of the Halifax Explosion. He has booked the Metro Centre for the date of the anniversary and envisions an event that would include a lot of classical music, commissions, and a big choir with a prominent Nova Scotia artist in a solo role. He would like to commission a piece specifically for the event. The piece he imagines would include a big orchestral component as well as a large choral section and would be about 20 minutes long. The Symphony could commission a Nova Scotian composer or they could choose someone nationally or even internationally. In addition to the piece of music, there could be a text, video, or projection component dedicated to some aspect of the commemoration. Mr. Wilkinson emphasized that such an event would be a very powerful act of commemoration and would require a lot of lead-time; deadlines are approaching

As Mr. Wilkinson explained, Symphony Nova Scotia has a several-decades long history of collaborating with other artists. They are also considering the possibility of commissioning Nova Scotia artists to write songs of their own to perform at the event. This would be a way of including something meaningful but more of a “pop” style than classical. The artists could also do something of their own with the orchestra. Ideally, this would not just be a local event, but would garner National recognition. It would be ideal if CBC could record the event, though this may be difficult. If a recording was possible, there could be a CD made of the concert, and if not, it would be good to find another way to produce a recording of the event. The concert could involve the whole community; it could build up to the event with an educational component in schools and some sort of educational package could be produced that culminates with the concert.

Mr. Wilkinson answered questions from Committee members.

Councillor Watts noted that the proposed concert would be on a Wednesday in December and since it will be problematic for people to get to the outside morning ceremony held at Needham Park, this would be an accessible alternative option because it is indoors and in the evening. She commented that the cost should maintain the accessibility of the proposed event and questioned what would be Council’s role in the project? She suggested that it could be done independently and HRM would just keep a place marker for it and not schedule anything for the evening, or alternately, HRM could work in conjunction with Symphony Nova Scotia.

Mr. Wilkinson stated that he believes that they are more likely to be successful securing funds through other grants programs if they are working with HRM. As of now, they could leave it open and state that they are exploring partnership opportunities to support the event.

Ms. Temple informed the Committee that staff is currently working on the draft grants program for events and projects specific to commemoration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Halifax Explosion. A starting point for the possibility of partnering with HRM would be an official letter from Symphony Nova Scotia asking for some indication of cost and assistance. In the draft report that will be brought to the next meeting there will be several proposed funding streams. Ms. Temple reiterated that the sooner something tangible to discuss and recommend is brought forward, the sooner that ground work can be done. She cautioned the Committee that it is important to be careful with sole source awards and a plan for proposals based on merit would be helpful here.

The Committee discussed how to appropriately approach endorsing the project, and what that would require.

Ms. Taylor suggested the Committee could approve in principle the proposal and request that the Symphony Nova Scotia submit something more official in the near future.

Ms. Temple explained that once the formal program is in place, the process will be much easier, and, at this time, it would be inappropriate to endorse this idea above others. There are many mechanisms that can be explored and while all parties involved are very interested in the project, it is important not to risk being viewed as following inappropriate funding avenues.

The Committee encouraged the project in principle and encouraged Mr. Wilkinson to submit something more substantive for the next meeting.

### **7.1.2 Discussion about Commemorative Event**

Ms. Taylor informed the Committee that her team had discussed a number of ideas for the morning ceremony and they would like to make it a more welcoming environment for attendees. The team, however, does not want to change the morning ceremony very much. To some extent, the scale of the ceremony will be determined by the guest list, which will be determined by the Mayor and Council. Ms. Taylor has met with the Mayor and has been informed that he will likely be inviting the Governor General to the morning event. The Governor General would be there as a representative of the Queen, but would in no way take away the localized focus of the event; rather, he or she would add an element of worldwide recognition of the event and would be a way to demonstrate continued respect for the commemorative ceremony. Ms. Taylor explained, in response to the Committee's question as to what the scope of the event would be, it is the Committee who has the vision and will advise staff, and staff will take that under advisement and take their decisions to Council.

Ms. Taylor handed out some event concepts.

As it stands now, the morning event at Needham Park is the only thing planned for the Anniversary; it will take place at 9:06 and has a budget of \$5000.00.

Staff will be managing this event, but would like to engage further in a discussion and brainstorming activity with the Committee that will likely span 2 or 3 sessions. Councillor Watts posed the question of the structure of the ceremony at Fort Needham and commented that there is usually a brief reception at a church following the ceremony, but that the church that historically hosts this will likely not be able to do so in 2017. She noted that many go to the commemorative event for fallen firefighters at 10:00 and then the 11:00 ceremony in Dartmouth. Councillor Watts posed a number of questions: What will happen in 2017? Will all that still be in place? Is it really likely that 3000 people will come out the event on a

Wednesday morning in December? If so, how will that be managed logistically? What would happen in the case of bad weather? How will schoolchildren be involved?

The Committee acknowledged that, historically, citizens go to the hill regardless of weather. Mr. Haggett reminded the Committee that Ms. Cathy Mellett, Municipal Clerk, clearly defined at a previous meeting the parameters of the Committee's responsibility, which do not include determining the scale of the event. The Committee expressed an interest in helping to shape the event.

Mr. Haggett commented that 3000 attendees could be a realistic number if measures are in place for stimulating interest in the event. He questioned how this might occur, what could be done leading up to it? Mr. Haggett expressed his excitement that community groups and artists are interested in creating events and wanting to informally partner with the Municipality. He emphasized the need for reverberation that makes the people who grew up in Halifax, and people elsewhere, remember and realize that this place is unique and special. It is Mr. Haggett's hope that the energy and resilience from the event will continue on and increase pride in our city.

Mr. Sutherland suggested that there needs to be a larger and more representative guest list for the commemorative event – one that reflects a more international response. Staff informed the Committee that the Mayor of Boston will be invited and a member of the public suggested that the guest list also include the Governor of Massachusetts.

Mr. Mushkat suggested that the plans for the event need to be informed by the plans for Needham Park. He acknowledged that he likes the idea of an event that is localized and solemn, but agrees with the other Committee members that it needs to move beyond that.

The Committee discussed other opportunities for citizens to participate. Agreeing that the basic structure of the event does not need to change very much, Committee members suggested that what is needed are new layers to be added to the original framework, such as: children singing, readings, members of the religions community giving prayers, etc. The Committee recognized that this will expand the time of the event and noted the importance of not conflicting with other established events.

In considering the importance of not scheduling conflicting activities, the Committee's discussion shifted from the commemorative event itself to the coordination of community events and projects related to the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Halifax Explosion. Committee members agreed that, at some point, someone should start entering into discussions with other organizers of events to make sure that there is no conflict between schedules. Staff agreed to follow up on that and to enter into a conversation about scheduling with the other organizers.

The Committee agreed that the commemoration of the event needs to be more than what happens on December 6, 2017, rather there needs to be a commemoration thrust composed of a series of events that builds momentum and culminates in the ceremony on December 6, 2017. In order to build a sense of ceremony around the phases of park development, the Committee considered the possibility of Royal participation earlier in the year to give a sense of gravitas to the upcoming anniversary.

Considering the question of who could take on the role of establishing the calendar of events, the Committee acknowledged the limited scope and budget of HRM. Committee members suggested that there should be a coordinator of events to ensure that there is not a conflict. Mr. Walkington asked whether it would be advisable to have a coordinating meeting for all interested parties and Ms. Taylor suggested that it sounds like what is needed is a curator for the event. This would be a big job and it is unclear where, if anywhere, the funding could come for such a position and who the curator would be employed by. The Committee also acknowledged the possibility of a website commissioned by HRM that allows people, with minimal editing, to make posts themselves and schedule their own events in a master calendar. Mr. Haggett agreed that self-curation can work, but reiterated the need for a staff person in charge of overseeing the project.

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Ms. Temple informed the Committee that the goal is to come to the next meeting with a report, outlining the proposed Halifax Explosion 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary designated funding program. She suggested it would not be out of line, given the scope the project is taking, to ask the Mayor's office to involve Governmental Relations and Public Relations at some point.

**7.2 COMMITTEE – None**

**8. ADDED ITEMS**

**9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, May 20, 2015 – 3:00 – 5:00, Room B239, NSCC, 5685 Leeds Street, Halifax**

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Cathy Collett  
Legislative Support