



**HALIFAX EXPLOSION ANNIVERSARY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
November 18, 2015**

PRESENT: Craig Walkington, Chair
Ms. Pat Jessup
Mr. David Sutherland
Mr. William Robinson-Mushkat
Ms. Marilyn Elliott
Councillor Watts

REGRETS: Ms. Renee Gruszecki

STAFF: Mr. Peter Greechan, Community Developer, Grants & Contributions, HRM Finance
Ms. Carolle Koziak Roberts, Landscape Architect, HRM Parks & Recreation
Mr. Peter Bigelow, Manager, Policy & Planning, HRM Parks & Recreation
Ms. Elizabeth Taylor, Manager of Culture and Events, Parks & Recreation
Mr. Jamie MacLellan, Community Developer, Parks & Recreation

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

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

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m. and adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 21, 2015

MOVED by Mr. William Robinson-Mushkat, seconded by Ms. Pat Jessup

THAT the minutes of October 21, 2015 be approved as circulated.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

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

Additions: 8.3 Update – Committee Vacancies

MOVED by Ms. Marilyn Elliott, seconded by Mr. William Robinson-Mushkat,

THAT the agenda be approved as amended.

Two-third majority vote required.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Update – Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Grants Program

Mr. Peter Greechan, Community Developer, informed the Committee that an add has been placed in the newspaper announcing the opening of the Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Grants Program and that the guidebook has been distributed to interested parties and placed on the HRM website. Two information sessions will be held in November, one at the Alderney Gate Public Library on November 25th, 2015 from 6:00-7:30 p.m. and one at the Halifax North Memorial Public Library on November 26th, 2015 from 6:00-7:30 p.m. The application deadline is Friday, December 18, 2015.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence

6.1.1 Correspondence from Don Snider dated October 23, 2015

The following was before the Committee:

- *A letter from Don Snider dated October 23, 2015, re: Firefighters*

6.1.2 Correspondence from Robert Doucette, J.A. Snow Funeral Home, dated October 26, 2015

The following was before the Committee:

- *A letter from Robert Doucette, J.A. Snow Funeral Home dated October 26, 2015, re: involvement in commemoration*

6.1.3 Correspondence from The Presbyterian Church of Saint David dated November 4, 2015

The following was before the Committee:

- *A letter from The Presbyterian Church of Saint David dated November 4, 2015 re: memorial service*

8.1 Correspondence from Shelley Wilcox dated November 4, 2015

The following was before the Committee:

- *An e-mail from Shelley Wilcox dated November 4, 2015 re: ship's hull remnant*

8.2 Correspondence from Ismael Aquino, Canadian Red Cross dated November 14, 2015

The following was before the Committee:

- *A letter from Ismael Aquino, Provincial Director of the Nova Scotia Canadian Red Cross, dated November 14, 2015 re: memorial service*

7. REPORTS/DISCUSSION

7.1 STAFF

7.1.1 Fort Needham Park Master Plan – Mr. Peter Bigelow and Ms. Carolle Koziak Roberts, Parks & Recreation

Ms. Koziak Roberts informed the Committee that Regional Council's adoption of the master plan moves the Fort Needham Park Plan into Phase 2 – Detailed Design. The first construction phase will begin in summer of 2016, and the second will occur in the summer of 2017, leading up to the 100th anniversary of the Halifax Explosion on December 6, 2017.

Ms. Elizabeth Taylor and Mr. Jamie MacLellan arrived at 3:10

As Ms. Koziak Roberts explained, Fort Needham Park is a Regional Park with cultural significance, most noted for its association with the event of the Halifax Explosion in 1917. The Halifax Relief Commission built the park as a memorial to the victims of the Halifax Explosion to be used as a public park.

Master Plan:

A balance of goals

1. Commemorative experience as a significant cultural landscape.
2. A range of healthy, vibrant and active recreation opportunities
3. Overcome the functional impediments

Formative Design Ideas:

- Rebuild lost connection to ground zero
- Connect better with surroundings: entrances and physical access
- Commemorative Experience of the Bell Tower: Stage for gathering, landmark, personal reflection, education, procession & walkways
- Bell Tower as Iconic landmark

Phase 1:

- Memorial Bell Tower
- Main Park Entrances and Access
- Central Seating Area
- Opening views.

Phase 2:

- Relocate sport lawn
- Internal circulation loop: Allee, Esplanade, Shattered Path, Sensory Playground.

Phase 3:

- Community Recreation Hub
- Fort Needham Redoubt
- Rose Garden

Themes & Stories:

1. Fort Needham Halifax Defence Complex:
 - ❖ Fort Needham Redoubt and Blockhouse
 - ❖ Proposed Citadel on Needham Hill
 - ❖ British Military – Captain William Spry, Captain Cook
 - ❖ Polo recreation and military training
 - ❖ Fort Needham's role within the greater Halifax Defense Complex and network of fortifications
2. Tragedy and Loss:
 - ❖ Wartime Halifax
 - ❖ The Mont Blanc and Imo
 - ❖ Force of the Explosion – blast, tidal wave and fires
 - ❖ The loss – human toll, devastation
 - ❖ Neighbourhoods and peoples lost (Richmond, Africville, Turtle Cover)
 - ❖ The Hill stories – protection from blast, spectators and sailors blown up the hill, etc.
 - ❖ Heroes and victims (Vince Coleman, Charles Mayer) Collision and Explosion's impact, Human toll and devastation
3. Rebound and Recovery:
 - ❖ First responders
 - ❖ The relief efforts
 - ❖ Assistance from nearby and abroad
 - ❖ Halifax Relief Commission
 - ❖ Thomas Adam's plan for north end Halifax
 - ❖ The Hydrostone and the rebuilding of Richmond
 - ❖ Halifax today "A park for living"

Interpretative Approaches

1. Literal Approach – uses interpretive panels and exhibits to tell the stories
2. Cerebral Discovery – active involvement in learning; using many senses; self-discovery; use of sculpture, short verses, tactile exhibits, new virtual technologies.

Interpretative Technologies

1. Augmented Reality and Beacons – smart phone Apps, overlay real time information; mobile beacons serve information up to smart phones for virtual tours; Beacons located in park; in HRM and other communities.
2. Explosion Markers – Place around the city, Nova Scotia, North America where the key events occurred, series of interpretative markers with stories, maps, and images, fitted with iBeacons to transmit info to mobile devices.

Master Plan: Interpretive strategy to guide the themes, stories and design approaches for future implementation.

Next Step: Develop an Interpretation Plan that coordinates with the park's redevelopment

- ❖ Detail Design in Fall 2015 and Winter 2016
- ❖ Funding Assembly – Capital Budget and partnerships
- ❖ Tender April/May 2016
- ❖ Two construction seasons: 2016 and 2017
- ❖ Rededication of Memorial Park: December 2017

Ms. Koziak Roberts concluded the presentation by addressing three questions to Committee members and requesting that they start to think about ways to honour the memory, educate and keep history relevant, and showcase resilience and potential of Halifax today:

1. How to handle grant proposals for site projects in Park?
2. Direction on balancing community uses with commemorative uses and the conflicts that came up from public feedback
3. What are the Committee's priority commemorative projects?

Ms. Koziak Roberts answered questions of clarification from Committee members.

Mr. Bigelow remarked on the need to maintain the functionality of the park above all.

Mr. David Sutherland questioned if the park will be a sustained construction zone for 2 years.

Mr. Bigelow replied that the two-phase construction period will allow the work to be done one season at a time, leaving the park useable for both residents and the December 6, 2016 ceremony between the two phases.

Mr. Robinson-Mushkat questioned if there will be changes to the off-leash portions of the park.

Mr. Bigelow replied that there will be changes to specific areas, but that the park will still be providing an off-leash area. He continued to remark that dog owners are some of the most consistent uses and that staff will seek to provide their needs.

Councillor Watts informed the Committee that she has received a lot of feedback from residents regarding the park. She emphasized that the park has always been a regional park and that no change is being made to the designation; at the same time, it has also always been a memorial park that was given to the City by the Relief Commission in memory of the Halifax Explosion. Councillor Watts explained that some residents do not want the park to become a tourist attraction or to be focused on a traumatic event. She commented that there will be another public engagement session in the future.

Mr. Bigelow echoed Councillor Watts' remarks, explaining that the initial public consultation was on the Master Plan, after that was approved by Council staff went back to the public and received additional detailed feedback, and will do the same when it comes to the detailed design.

MOVED by Ms. Pat Jessup, seconded by Ms. Marilyn Elliott

THAT Mr. Barry Cahill be allowed to address the Committee.

Two-thirds majority vote required.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

Mr. Barry Cahill commented on the importance of Needham Park as a memorial park, reiterating that the intention of the Relief Commission, which the City accepted, was to designate it as such.

Councillor Watts commented that many residents did like the proposal when they saw it, but that the anxiety stemming from concerns about the loss of the off-leash dog park may have influenced residents' impressions about the project as a whole.

Ms. Marilyn Elliott commented that she is a resident of the North End and has heard nothing but positive feedback from her friends and neighbours in the area.

Committee members commented that they appreciated the archived documents Ms. Elizabeth Taylor circulated.

The Committee turned their focus to the questions posed by Ms. Koziak Roberts. Commenting that they had already covered question two in their discussion, Committee members addressed question one, regarding grant proposals for site projects in the park.

Mr. Bigelow explained that there are a couple of ways to handle such proposals; one being to develop criteria for projects specific to the park, another would be to have the consultant identify opportunity sites that are available for other commemorative aspects.

The Chair stated that he prefers a designated area with specific criteria that would not interfere with the Master Plan. He commented that the park should not become cluttered and that the feedback from the community suggests that the commemorative aspect should be pared down. Committee members all indicated their agreement.

Staff questioned what the priority commemorative projects would be to Committee members.

Mr. Robinson-Mushkat replied the sensory playground, especially focused towards a lack of vision given the ocular injuries caused by the Explosion.

The Committee discussed the importance of displaying the names of the victims.

Mr. Robinson-Mushkat expressed concern that there might not be a comprehensive list of the fatalities, and that there may be marginalized groups who would be disproportionately not represented in the list.

The Committee agreed that for a project involving names to be carried out properly, much research and authenticating would need to be done first.

7.2 COMMITTEE

7.2.1 Draft Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Commemorative Program Committee Recommendation Report to Staff

MOVED by Ms. Pat Jessup, seconded by Ms. Marilyn Elliott

THAT the Committee approves the report as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Addressed during correspondence

8.2 Addressed during correspondence

8.3 Committee Member Vacancies – Update

The Legislative Assistant informed the Committee that the recommendations for appointments would go to Regional Council in December and the Committee would be advised of the new members after the offers were accepted.

Mr. Billy Comer gave a brief outline of the December 6, 2016 commemorative service and invited Committee members to arrive at 8:15 to hand out brochures and help usher attendees.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – December 16, 2016 – 3:00-5:00 p.m. HEMDCC Meeting Space, Main Floor, Alderney Landing, 40 Alderney Drive, Dartmouth.

9.1 Approval of 2016 Meeting Schedule

MOVED by Mr. Robinson-Mushkat, seconded by Ms. Elliott

THAT the Halifax Explosion Anniversary Advisory Committee approves the time and dates of the proposed meeting schedule, with every third meeting being held at a Dartmouth location, subject to availability.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

Cathy Collett
Legislative Assistant