

Special Advisory Committee on the 100th Anniversary of the Halifax Explosion Designated Grant Program: Update as of September, 2015

INFORMATION REPORT October 7, 2015

Introduction

The purpose of this briefing report is to review progress in the development of the *Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Grants Program* and key steps in implementation.

Executive Summary

- Approval in principle of policy by Audit & Finance Standing Committee - September 16, 2015.
- Approval by Regional Council – October 6, 2015, with amendments to s. 21(e) and 2(h)(i).
- Application form and guidebook development. Due to timelines for printing a copy was sent to committee members by e-mail October 13, 2015. Printed copies will be distributed to the committee at a later date.
- Launch date, application deadline and reporting timeline to be confirmed in consultation with Corporate Communications.
- Information sessions in Halifax and Dartmouth to be confirmed.
- Materials will be posted on HRM web site.
- Newspaper advertisement to launch program and inform potential applicants of information meetings.
- Follow-up correspondence from staff to unsolicited inquiries directed to advisory committee and eligibility clarification for groups in receipt of an HRM grant for centennial in 2015.

Policy

Administrative Order 2015-003-ADM, as amended, has been posted online (www.halifax.ca) under “legislation”. Under s.4 of the policy the program ends in fiscal year 2017 which means the policy/program is not in effect after March 31, 2018¹.

Guidebook

The guide provides interpretation of policy and some basic assistance for groups inexperienced in grant-writing. Most will refer to the on-line version but printed copies are necessary because not all areas of HRM have Internet access.

In keeping with the guiding principles – to broaden awareness – some small vignettes have been added. These are mostly archival photographs. We have tried to find examples that include non-profit

¹ HRM’s fiscal year is April 1 to March 31.

organizations/general public in preference to a focus on government; the aim is to bring attention to the role that the non-profit sector played and the hope that groups will “see themselves”/relate.

In the 2016 guide we hope to use new images, ideally of projects funded under intake #1 of the 100th Anniversary Grant Program or awards issued under another municipal grant program. A new Appendix can be added with a brief listing of awards by year, program, recipient organization, value and a brief description of the project. Examples to date include the Calvin Presbyterian Church, Veith House/The Halifax Children’s Foundation, and Narratives in Time & Space Society (combined total value over 2 years was \$20,000).

Call for Applications: 2015 and 2016

Table 1. Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Grants Program: Proposed Timelines						
As of October 14, 2014, subject to confirmation						
Fiscal Year	Program Opens (Proposed)	Application Deadline (Proposed)	Award Decision Deadline	Grant Recipient’s Final Report Due	Extension Deadline	Notes
2015	Friday, October 30, 2015	Friday, December 18, 2015 (7 weeks)	March, 2016	March 31, 2017 unless applying to 2 nd intake (Dec 6, 2016)	December 1, 2017	Any extension limited to up to 1 year. Eligibility for further grant suspended.
2016	Tuesday, September 1, 2016	Monday, December 6, 2016 (12 weeks)	March, 2017	December 31, 2017 May require progress monitoring	Not applicable unless stated in award terms and conditions	Project to be complete on or before December 6, 2017
2017	Program closed					

Note: With the exception of an award made by resolution of Council or the District Activity/Capital Fund, an applicant cannot receive funding from more than one municipal program for the same commemorative project in the same fiscal year. Recipients of grants under the Community Grants Program will be provided guidance (the Community Grants program opens January, 2016, with a deadline of March 31, 2016).

Action: Individual letters will be sent by Grants & Contributions to inquiries re: funding, participation or a specific project. Some projects underway that are ineligible for funding could also be included in the 2016 guide: for example, a publication, archive, image of model railway.

Public Notice

All program promotion and media will be managed by Corporate Communications but at a minimum will include public notices in the Municipal Notices section of the Chronicle-Herald and materials will be posted on HRM's web site. There will be a total of two announcements per intake:

- #1. Notice that program open to applications and application deadline. Direction on how to obtain an application form and guide, information sessions (optional). Contact information.
- #2. Notice that program closed to applications. The application form and guide are removed from the HRM web site. Legislation requires that HRM publicize awards in a newspaper circulating throughout the region.

Information Sessions

November, 2015. Proposed three (3) sessions; *locations tentative* and dates to be determined but am aiming for early November. The timing allows groups to read the guide/policy. Proposed sessions focus on defined funding categories:

- Ethno-cultural – North End Memorial Library, Halifax.
- Educational – Alderney Landing Public Library, Dartmouth.
- Interpretation, Exhibition/Display, Event – Alderney Landing, Dartmouth.

Note: these are information sessions only and attendance is not mandatory. This is not a community consultation or an opportunity to lobby for consideration. The venue could provide a networking opportunity for joint submissions/partnerships.

Power Point review of:

- eligibility by (i) organization, (ii) type of project, (iii) expense;
- selecting appropriate municipal grant program;
- timelines and selecting intake #1 or #2;
- answers to any questions received by staff via email or individual questions;
- voluntary sign-up for follow-up (answers to unanswered questions provided to all as applicable);
- copies of formal report with policy, guidebook and application form, business cards;
- grant recipients obligations (we will probably use a contract given the significance of completing a project and standards).

Referral of Unsolicited Requests and Advisory Committee Interests

To avoid confusion or any perceived conflict of interest it may be advisable to clarify the committee's role with respect to unsolicited requests for funding. Now that HRM has a formal policy and Council has approved the committee's role with respect to potential awards it is *critical* to establish and maintain impartiality: the committee cannot be perceived to favour a particular category, project or organization. The Clerk's office will provide a written acknowledgement and any funding requests should be directed to the applicable staff.

The advisory has served a very useful role in providing a means to receive ideas from the public and funding inquiries. Now that we have a formal program, process, and evaluation criteria it is preferable for the committee members individually or collectively to avoid comment on eligibility or the relative merit of a grant proposal. There could be a perceived conflict of interest if the committee advances ideas that are outside the scope of the Municipal Commemorative Program as approved.

Advisory committee input to staff in regard to the Municipal Commemorative Program

vs

Advisory committee comment on funding eligibility or any preference with respect to a particular project idea(s).

In responding to inquiries we cannot presume that all requests are seeking funding. To date, correspondence has encompassed the following:

- inquiries with respect to funding opportunities;
- ideas for consideration under the Municipal Commemorative Program (Fort Needham Park, ceremonial event);
- groups or individuals seeking an opportunity to participate in the centennial in some fashion;
- information on self-directed activities perhaps seeking acknowledgement or affirmation with no financial consideration (eg. musical composition, books, a model railway).

Despite the development of a designated program to augment existing municipal grant program there appears to be a gap: (1) we lack the capacity to connect people, projects and places in a cost-effective manner with relevant or as applicable geographical reach/inclusion, and (2) we currently lack a means to acknowledge initiatives that will take place independent of the Municipal Commemorative Program and/or municipal financial assistance.

Could an enhanced “commemorative program” address these gaps ?

1. A example of a large-scale project that could encompass a broad scope of participation is the committee’s suggestion of markers for burial sites/individual graves. The scale of project could be large if different faiths, unmarked graves or non-denominational locations ² are included. These sites could be linked using a standard marker perhaps augmented with a web-based interpretative feature. Probably requires self-identification through a public call for Expressions of Interest. Is the scale of such a project within the capacity of a non-profit group/consortium to complete prior to December 6, 2017?
2. Some projects undertaken by the non-profit sector can/will be completed independent of any municipal funding. Some individuals or groups appear to be seeking an acknowledgement or a means of making their project known to the general public (book, music, archival collection, an

² For example, Potter’s Field, Bayer’s Road.

artefact etc). A ‘sophisticated’ web-based “narrative platform” would be one means to enable individuals and groups to share information and perhaps interact. Technical capacity would have to be high to accommodate video or interactive components, national and international links etc.

The examples listed above are for illustration purposes only but the potential scale and sensitivity of this type of project might be better addressed through a formal Request for Proposals process rather than a grant.

Immediate Follow-Up (Grants & Contributions)

The list included below in Table 1 is not exhaustive; staff will have to review all correspondence to date in an effort not to omit in error. Copies of correspondence will be sent to the advisory committee in relation to inquiries directed to the committee.

Table 1. Unsolicited Inquires from Groups or Individuals – Potential Funding or Partnerships		
Organization or Individual	Brief	Response: Grants & Contributions
Ms. Swim	Artwork	Individual ineligible for grant but a community-based project could be considered. Grants to send letter with overview of eligibility and suggestions (local craft groups, community museums etc).
Nursing History NS	Memorial	Proposed location at Fort Needham to be confirmed by Parks & Rec staff (Master Plan). Funding may be contingent on an alternate location.
Veith House	Memorial	Letter re: eligibility.
Ecole St. Joseph’s Alexander MacKay School & Home Association	Unspecified	Letter to direct to Explosion grants program and provide guidance re: eligibility.
Symphony NS	Concert	Letter to direct any request to a municipal grant program. \$10,000 threshold. If HRM were to commission an original work with higher value remuneration would probably be through an RFP. ¹
Shambhala School Home & School Association	Info request	Letter with referral to Explosion program.
Camp Hill Veteran’s Memorial Hospital	Info request	Letter with referral to Explosion program and provide guidance re: eligibility (including service clubs, legions etc).
Academic conference	Unspecified	Request identification of the source: potential funding to an ancillary element (eg. an exhibit open to the general public).
Mary Baker Eddy Library	Archive	If an archival source of information could include in Appendix 3 of 2016 guide.
Ms. MacInnes	Book	Ineligible for grant (individual/commercial publishing) but could include in Appendix 3 of 2016 guide.
Mr. Wahay	Model	Could include image in 2016 guide.

Ms. Halsay	Book	Ineligible for grant (individual/commercial publishing) but could include in Appendix 3 of 2016 guide.
Ms. Graham	Book	Ineligible for grant (individual/commercial publishing) but could include in Appendix 3 of 2016 guide.

Notes to Table 1.

1. Unlikely that a municipal commission would be sole-sourced or restricted to one music genre (other options include Gospel, First Nations, choral, military band, orchestral, or combination). Sensitivity to the fact that there was an original orchestral score commissioned by NS Youth Orchestra “*Variations on the Halifax Explosion for Orchestra*” (2003).

Other:

Awards Tracking: Update pie-chart to show total value of awards issued under designated grant program and other municipal programs/discretionary awards. Can start now with ‘other municipal grant programs’ to show awards issued under Community Grants Program (and others if applicable) and Fort Needham capital project.

Note: Not all costs associated with Fort Needham Park are specific to the commemoration; generic maintenance and repairs and some capital elements may need to be excluded .

Program Evaluation: 2017: develop evaluation protocol for committee input.