

Councillor Request for Information

Included on Agenda
(Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office
by Noon Thursday)

Added Item
(Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office
by Noon Monday)

Date of Council Meeting: HECC – January 10, 2008

Subject: Main Street BID

Request: Request to endorse plebiscite – required before letters can be sent

Reason:

The Main Street Streetscape project is proceeding and one of the recommendations is to create a Business Improvement District. This requires that businesses vote on the establishment of an area rate to fund the BID.

Policy requires that the community council endorse holding of a plebiscite prior to sending out the registered letters to all businesses.

Community Council endorsement is required by January 16, 2008 in order for this to be in place prior to the BID information meeting scheduled on January 16th at 10am for area businesses.

Motion as follows:

“That HECC endorse a plebiscite by registered mail to determine interest of businesses in the proposed Main Street Business Improvement District, as per HRM policy and in accordance with the Municipal Government Act section 56.”

I would like this response as:

- Email to Mayor and/or Councillor/Municipal Clerk's Office
- Memo to Mayor and/or Councillor/Municipal Clerk's Office
- Information Report to Community Council Regional Council
- Recommendation Report to Community Council Regional Council

Andrew Younger

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Councillor

District (Number)

Establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID)

SUMMARY OF PROCESS

Provincial Legislation (section 56 - Municipal Government Act)

Under the Municipal Government Act (MGA), the Municipality has authority for business area improvements and promotions. The municipality may provide services in the following areas:

- to beautify and promote a business district,
- to identify and promote a business district as a place for retail and commercial activity,
- to establish or maintain parking facilities and/or to beautify, improve and maintain public property in the area.

To finance such initiatives, the Municipality may levy an area rate applicable to commercial property and business occupancy assessments in the area of those who benefit by the expenditures. The municipality may provide these services directly, contract the service, or provide grants to another body to support the promotion of the business district.

There are currently four Business Improvement Associations which operate

within HRM's Capital District. The BIAs are supported by a tax levied on the commercial and business occupancy assessment of those businesses and commercial landowners located within Downtown Dartmouth, Downtown Halifax, Spring Garden Road, and Quinpool Road. The Municipality has by way of a management agreement, established a contract with these associations to provide services related to the beautification, promotions, and marketing for each of their respective districts.

- *registered letter required effective August 25, 2004.*

BID Consultation Process

Area rates for Business Improvement Districts (BID's) are intended for local business communities and are meant to be driven by business community stakeholders.

Objectives of the process:

- √ Encourage business community involvement
- √ Ensure broad support for the levy
- √ Communicate the process to stakeholders: community, Council, staff
- √ Ensure public meetings and votes are fair, open and conducted in a manner that ensures the wishes of the majority are followed
- √ Ensure accountability: before and after a levy is introduced

To build the public and business community support needed, the entire process may take a year or more to complete. The following steps should be completed to establish a BID (Business Improvement District):

1. Formation of a Non for Profit Society must be established in order to enter into a management agreement with HRM at a later date. This should be tackled in tandem with the following steps so it is in place once the BID is approved.

Contact:

Registry of Joint Stocks

PO Box 1529

Halifax NS

(T) 424-7770

www.gov.ns.ca/bacs/rjsc

2. A letter of request should be sent to Community Councillor for the area advising their intent to establish a BID. Community Council must support the business association's request to move forward with a plebiscite.

3. A business case prepared by the business association and reviewed by Capital District will outline the overall goals of the organization, geographic boundaries and proposed levy formula. HRM Finance will help to solidify assessment boundaries and the proposed levy formula. BID levies are only charged on commercial and business occupancy assessments. Non for profit agencies and some government offices are exempt from BID levies. (*Contact: John Marsh - HRM Finance – 490-6473*)

4. It is critical to mobilize the resources that will be necessary for a highly visible and political process. At least one public meeting must be advertised and held. The advertisement will include:

√ date, time, location

√ purpose

√ proposed levy formula

√ boundaries of the commission

5. Following the public process, a petition is then conducted by HRM's Councillor's Support Office wherein one questionnaire is sent * *by way of registered mail*, to each proposed assessed member (those individuals paying business occupancy and or commercial taxes), providing information, cost estimates and details on the rate. 50%

plus 1 of the returned ballots must agree with the establishment of the BID, otherwise the process stops. All administration costs associated with the petition are charged back to the proposed BID committee. The level of support is tabulated and a report is prepared for Council by HRM staff. Included in the report as a resolution of Council, the Business Association should be recognized as the body to be contracted.

6. A management agreement is written between the non for profit society and the Halifax Regional Municipality. It is signed by two authorities from the society and the Mayor and City Clerk on behalf of HRM. The management agreement along with the levy rate must be approved by Regional Council as part of the report.

7. Following approval, a letter is sent to each assessed members detailing the levy formula for the area.

Please Note: The process must follow the budget and business planning guidelines and timetables established by HRM. Processes which do not meet these time lines will be included in the next fiscal year.

8. Each year, as part of the fall business planning process, the Society must submit its annual financial statements, activity plan and budget to the Capital District Project Coordinator. In addition, these items will be presented to Community Council in an information report.

For more information on the process please contact:

Marion Currie

Capital District Project Coordinator

Halifax Ferry Terminal, 2nd Floor, PO Box 1749

Halifax, NS B3J 3A5 Canada

Tel: 902-490-6735 Fax: 902-490-5730

Email: curriem@halifax.ca

Web Site: www.region.halifax.ns.ca

- *registered letter required effective August 25, 2004.*