

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COUNCIL MINUTES December 9, 1997

PRESENT:

Deputy Mayor Reg Rankin
Councillors: Bill Dooks
Gordon R. Snow
David Hendsbee
Ron Cooper
Harry McInroy
Jack Greenough
Condo Sarto
Bruce Hetherington
Clint Schofield
John Cunningham
Jerry Blumenthal
Graham L. Downey
Larry Uteck
Howard Epstein
Russell Walker
Ron Hanson
Stephen Adams
Barry Barnet
Bob Harvey
Peter Kelly
Jack Mitchell

REGRETS:

Mayor Walter Fitzgerald
Councillor Bill Stone

STAFF MEMBERS:

Mr. Ken Meech, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Wayne Anstey, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Vi Carmichael, Municipal Clerk
Ms. Patti Halliday, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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INVOCATION

Deputy Mayor Rankin called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with the Invocation.

Due to the large number of people in attendance wishing to speak on Item 1.3 Public Hearing - Second Reading By-Law T-201 Respecting Tax Exemptions, Councillor Hendsbee requested that all other business on the agenda be dealt with first. Council agreed to this request.

3. REPORTS

3.1 COMMITTEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

3.1.1 Recruitment and Selection of New Advisory Committee Appointments

- A report from Councillor Kelly, Chair, Committee Advisory Committee dated December 3, 1997, regarding the above, was before Council for consideration.

Councillor Uteck questioned Recommendation #3 of the Committee Advisory Committee's report which read as follows: *Approve the establishment of the Membership Selection Committee where membership is comprised of the Mayor, ex-officio, and one Councillor appointed as representative from each of the five Community Councils.* The Councillor suggested this item be deferred until the Mayor is present.

MOVED by Councillors Uteck and Blumenthal that this matter be deferred to the next Council meeting when the Mayor is in attendance.

Councillor Kelly expressed concern with the time frame with respect to advertising for volunteers to serve on the various boards and committees. Ms. Barb Nehiley, Priority and Policy, advised that a number of current appointments expired on November 2, 1997.

Councillor Greenough suggested the process could proceed with the exception of the composition of the Membership Selection Committee, which could be deferred until the first Council meeting in January.

MOVED by Councillors Greenough and Downey that Council approve the following:

- 1. Extend the appointments of sitting members, both Citizens and Councillors, where applicable, to boards, commissions and advisory committees to February 28, 1998.**
- 2. Approve the placement of a NOTICE in the two major metro newspapers during the first two weeks of January 1998 for the purpose of recruiting**

volunteers for Council advisory committees, boards, commissions and work groups. The application deadline will be January 21, 1998.

3. **Approve the selection process outlined in the Committee Advisory Committee's report and request the Community Councils to submit their appointed representatives to the Municipal Clerk's Office by January 15, 1998.**
4. **Direct the Membership Selection Committee to bring appointment recommendations to Regional Council on or before February 10, 1998 with new appointments to take effect March 1, 1998.**
5. **Defer approval of the composition of the Membership Selection Committee until the first Council session in January 1998.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3.2 CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

3.2.1 Terms of Reference and Calls for Proposals for the Western Region Needs Assessment Study (the Western Common)

- A staff report prepared for George McLellan, Commissioner of Regional Operations, and Dan English, Commissioner of Community Services, regarding the above, was before Council for consideration. The report recommended that a Call for Proposals be solicited for a study as set out in the terms of reference presented as Attachment II of the report; and, a maximum of \$75,000 be allocated from the Municipality's sale of lands capital reserve fund for the study.

Councillor Greenough advised Councillor Bill Stone communicated to Council, suggesting that this proposal be deferred until Capital Budget discussions.

MOVED by Councillors Barnet and Mitchell that:

1. **A Call for Proposals be solicited for a study as set out in the terms of reference presented as Attachment II of the report; and,**
2. **A maximum of \$75,000 be allocated from the Municipality's sale of lands capital reserve fund for the study.**

Councillor Walker stated Councillor Stone was suggesting this issue should be examined during Capital Budget discussion with respect to priorities. Councillor Walker suggested this matter be deferred to December 16 and that Mr. Paul Morgan, Planner, and the Chair of the Western Region Needs Assessment Committee be requested to attend.

MOVED by Councillors Walker and Epstein that this matter be deferred to December 16, 1997. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

3.2.2 Appointment of Traffic Authority

- A staff report prepared for Wayne Anstey, Director, Administrative Services, recommending Council adopt Administrative Order Number 12, was before Council for consideration.

MOVED by Councillors Sarto and Cunningham that Council pass Administrative Order Number 12 appointing Mr. Ken Silver as the Traffic Authority and Mr. Paul Connors as the Deputy Traffic Authority for the Halifax Regional Municipality. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

PETITIONS

Councillor Hanson submitted a petition from concerned residents regarding lands of Harold James Sutherland - 9 Milton Drive. Correspondence had been previously received by the Municipal Clerk from Ms. Allison Scott, Solicitor for Mr. Sutherland, and was forwarded to Legal Services.

Councillor Schofield submitted a petition from residents of Limardo Drive and Russell Street in Dartmouth, regarding removal of leaves in the gutters and streets.

2. PRESENTATION - Tabling of the 1998/99 Capital Budget

- Copies of the 1998-99 Capital Budget Presentation were circulated to members of Council.

Mr. Ken Meech, CAO, gave a summary of the 1998/99 Capital Budget, in particular, the 1998/99 Capital Budget Projects by Priority Grouping. Mr. Meech stated the gross capital budget for 1998/99 is \$94,931,000. However, the largest item, Solid Waste Projects, is a fulfilment of a commitment that was made when it was decided to move ahead with the waste management strategy.

Mr. Meech then reviewed the nine projects in the priority grouping which included the following: Solid Waste Projects, Infrastructure Program, Projects Funded Through Reserves, MacDonald Bridge Ramps, Maintenance of Existing Assets, Alderney Landing (Dartmouth Waterfront), Integrated Financial Mgt/Year 2000, etc., New Central Library and Community Council Allocation.

Mr. Meech advised preliminary figures for the 1998-99 Operating Budget are being developed, and suggested it will be a major challenge to try to balance the budget and, at this point, indication is that it will dictate a tax increase.

Mr. Larry Corrigan, Commissioner, Corporate Services, continued the presentation and began by focusing on the net funding amount for the 1998-99 Capital Budget which was \$79,709,000. Mr. Corrigan noted this amount does not include the area rated projects which are an additional \$2,000,000. The Solid Waste Projects account for \$37 million of the net funding amount.

Mr. Corrigan advised there is a debt management plan that covers a ten year period, and a five year plan for spending. In reviewing the Summary of Proposed 1998-99 General Capital Program, Mr. Corrigan noted there is more cost sharing this year than last.

With respect to funding sources for the 1998/99 Capital Budget, Mr. Corrigan noted \$59,399,000 is debt; \$22,256,000 is cost sharing; \$7,700,000 is operating; and, \$5,576,000 is reserves. The total debt approved and outstanding is \$340 million, which is comprised of \$267 million of pre-amalgamation debt and \$114 million of post-amalgamation transactions. Mr. Corrigan reviewed the categories that contribute to the \$340 million of debt, noting it is expected, in the future, that the Roads and Streets and Solid Waste categories will expand more than the other categories. Mr. Corrigan also reviewed the History/Forecast of "Net" Debt charges and the Summary of Capital Budget Targets and Future Requests.

With respect to the economic impact of the Capital Budget, Mr. Corrigan made the following points:

- HRM's Capital Budget represents a significant portion of all government capital in Nova Scotia
- 90 percent of construction companies in the region rely on HRM for part of their business
- 1998/99 Capital Budget spending (\$95 million gross) will generate 1600 jobs.

In closing, Mr. Corrigan stated the Capital Budget worksheets will be tabled on December 16, 1997, and, at that time, there will be a presentation from the Library Board. Staff is proposing January 7, 8 and 9, 1998 be set aside for debate of the Capital Budget with approval of the budget on January 9, 1998.

MOVED by Councillors Hetherington and Greenough that the 1998-99 Capital Budget be tabled. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councillor Blumenthal stated he hopes priorities have been set up for areas which have high priorities and have not previously been receiving capital funding.

Councillor Hendsbee requested that staff provide clarification next week regarding area rating of capital projects for recreational facilities that are on HRM owned properties outside the core area.

1. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1.1 Case 7592 - Development Agreement Application by Pier 21 Society

- A report from Robert K. Daley, Chairman, Peninsula Planning Advisory Committee, regarding Case 7592 - Development Agreement Application by Pier 21 Society, was before Council for consideration.

- Correspondence from The Hardman Group Limited, Acting Agents for Pier 21 Society, dated November 25, 1997, was before Council for consideration.
- Correspondence from Mr. H.F.H. Pullen, President, Peninsula South Community Association, expressing concern regarding the development agreement, was circulated to Council.

Mr. Paul Morgan, Planner, explained the purpose of the application is to enter into a development agreement to allow for an immigration exhibition centre and multicultural hall. Staff is recommending approval of the development agreement which has been given minor adjustments after review by the Peninsula Planning Advisory Committee.

Deputy Mayor Rankin called for speakers in favour of the proposal.

Mr. Louis Lemoine, The Hardman Group Limited

Mr. Lemoine, representing The Hardman Group Limited, Project Managers for The Pier 21 Centre, spoke in favour of the proposal, asking Council for its support for this project. Mr. Lemoine noted Mr. Andy Lynch, Lydon Lynch Architects, was also present to respond to questions.

Dr. Ruth Goldbloom, Chair, The Pier 21 Society

On behalf of The Pier 21 Society, Dr. Goldbloom spoke in favour of the proposal, making the following points:

- Pier 21 is the last remaining immigration shed in Canada.
- One in five people in Canada can claim some affiliation with Pier 21.
- The benefit of Pier 21 to HRM is enormous.
- This is a national and international project as well as a regional project.
- The first \$2 million dollars for the project had been raised without going public.

Deputy Mayor Rankin called three times for additional speakers in favour of the proposal. No one came forward.

Deputy Mayor Rankin called three times for speakers against the proposal. No one came forward.

**MOVED by Councillors Greenough and Sarto that the public hearing be closed.
MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MOVED by Councillors Downey and Schofield that Case 7592: Development Agreement Application - Pier 21 Society be approved with the amendments proposed by the Peninsula Planning Advisory Committee. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

1.2 Properties Recommended for Heritage Property Registration

- A staff report prepared for Dan English, Commissioner of Community Services, regarding Recommendations for Heritage Property Registration, was before Council for consideration.

Deputy Mayor Rankin called for speakers In Favour of the recommendations.

Mr. Blair Beed, 6467 Summit Street, Halifax

Mr. Beed spoke in favour of the recommendations, but expressed concern with some of the studies not being complete. For example, with respect to 2275 Brunswick Street, there was no mention of the fact that the Mayflower Curling Club was used as the base of the mortuary for the Titanic victims in 1912. Regarding 2237 Brunswick Street, there is no mention of its resident, Dr. Murdoch Chisholm, being reported dead in the papers 1917 because he was so severely injured in the Halifax Explosion. Therefore, Mr. Beed suggested the two properties (2485-87 and 2573-75 Brunswick Street) not being recommended for registration should be sent back to HAC for further study.

Mrs. Elizabeth Pacey, Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia

Mrs. Pacey expressed concern with 2579 Brunswick Street as new information has recently come to the attention of Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia. Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia would like the opportunity to reinvestigate the historical research for this particular property. Therefore, Ms. Pacey recommended that 2579 Brunswick Street be referred back to the Heritage Advisory Committee.

Deputy Mayor Rankin called three times for additional speakers either in favour or against the recommendations. No one came forward.

MOVED by Councillors Hetherington and Blumenthal that the public hearing be closed. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Responding to questions from Councillor Downey, Mr. Norris stated a notice regarding the Public Hearing was sent to Ms. Nancy Wooden, Harbour City Homes, and he has had several conversations with her regarding this matter. There will be opportunity for Harbour City Homes to come forward and apply for grants for restoration of its heritage properties, but it will be up to Council to make the final decision.

MOVED by Councillors Downey and Epstein that the following properties be registered as heritage properties 2146 Brunswick Street, 2415 Brunswick Street, 2427-29 Brunswick Street, 2461-63 Brunswick Street, 2519-23 Brunswick Street, 2275 Brunswick Street, 2237 Brunswick Street, and 5675 North Street. Also, that 2579 Brunswick Street, 2485-87 Brunswick Street and 2573-75 Brunswick Street be referred back to the Heritage Advisory Committee for further study. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

1.3 Second Reading By-Law T-201 Respecting Tax Exemptions

- Correspondence was received from the following regarding By-Law T-201 Respecting Tax Exemptions: Gail MacDougall, Executive Director, Canadian Mental Health Association; Cathy Love, Director, Bryony House; Paul O'Hara, Counsellor/Advocate, North End Community Health Centre; Tracey Sullivan, Member, Board of Directors, East Preston Day Care Centre; A. Bruce Collins, General Manager, Nova Scotia Construction Safety Association; R. D. Harris, Manager, The Waegwolitic; Joyce V. Beaudry, Director, Sackville Family Day Care Association; Kim Conrad, Chair, Trustees of Eastern Star Lodge #51; Scott Loga n, Executive Director, Sport Nova Scotia; Quentin Brown, Bread of Life Ministries and Street Connection; Dartmouth Curling Club (tax exemption application); Halifax Curling Club (tax exemption application); Robert Boger, Director, Mount Traber Bible Camp and Conference Centre; Carol Goddard, Big Brothers & Sisters of Dartmouth-Halifax Metro Area (tax application); Darryl D. Haley, Chair, St. Margaret's Arena Association; Rhonda Marks, Administrative Assistant, Twin Oaks Senior Citizens Association; Peter Crowell, Comptroller, Children's Aid Society; Matthew and Carolyn Thomas, East Preston Day Care; Carol Charlebois, Executive Director, Metro Non-Profit Housing Association; Ken W. MacDonald, Vice President, Maskwa Aquatic Club; Allan Crandlemire, Flag Officer, Atlantic Division, Canadian Canoe Association; Heather Hansen-Dunbar, Kids R Kids, Bronwien Richardson, Dutch Village Road Child Care, Liz Hicks, A Child's World, for The Administrators of Private Licensed Child Care Centres; R. John Furneaux, Cheema Aquatic Club; Linda Woodbury, Concerned and Worred Parents, Cheema Aquatic Club; Noreen Butler, Taoist Tai Chi Society of Atlantic Canada; Eleanor J. Werner, Secretary-Treasurer Agent, I.O.O.F. Lodges; John Dorey, President, and Fred Voegeli, Treasurer, Osprey Archery Club in support of the Atlantic Beagle Club; Frank Bailey, Soccer Nova Scotia; N. Bruce Kelloway; Ian and Shannon Ross, Cheema Aquatic Club; John van Gulp, St. Joseph's Children's Centre.

Deputy Mayor Rankin advised this was a continuation of public presentations from the November 4, 1997 Public Hearing.

Ms. Barb Nehiley, Priority and Policy, briefly reviewed the Tax Exemption Program and its criteria. Copies of her presentation were circulated to Council.

Councillor Hendsbee, Chair, Grants Committee, thanked the members of the Grants Committee and staff for their work on this report. The Councillor reviewed the background of the formation of this by-law.

Councillor McInroy referred to the minutes of the November 4, 1997 Regional Council meeting at which time members of the Eastern Passage/Cow Bay Lions Club spoke on this issue. The Councillor did not feel it was necessary for them to speak again this evening. Ms. Nehiley replied staff indicated at that meeting they could support 100 percent exemption for this group. She further stated she believed the Grants Committee is prepared to change the category for this group to Community Service

where a 100 percent exemption would be appropriate. Ms. Nehiley stated those organizations, currently exempt will maintain their exemption to the end of this fiscal year.

In response to a question from Councillor Hetherington, Ms. Nehiley stated \$948,000 was set aside for non-profit organizations for tax exemptions. This figure was based on the value of last year's exemptions plus an additional \$400,000 to accommodate new applications.

Deputy Mayor Rankin called for members of the public wishing to speak on the proposed By-Law.

Mr. George Butt, Trustee, Dartmouth Yacht Club

Mr. Butt spoke against the proposed zero exemption for the Dartmouth Yacht Club making the following points:

- A lot of the members are retired and have limited incomes.
- At full commercial taxation, their tax bill will be increased from approximately \$8,000 per year to almost \$38,000 per year. The property is currently taxed on three acres, and the rest of the property is exempt.
- Yacht clubs have a false connotation and stigma.
- The Club offers other services such as junior sailing schools open to the public and hosting international regattas.
- The Club is non-profit and would like to be taxed fairly like other non-profit groups.
- Yachting is recognized as recreation and they would like this to be taken into consideration.

Mr. Howie Westhaver, Sheet Harbour Snowmobile Club

Mr. Westhaver spoke in opposition to the proposed tax structure for the Sheet Harbour Snowmobile Club making the following points:

- The Club provides other services such as a ball field, an outdoor skating rink, annual bursaries and donations for campus security to Duncan MacMillan High School, financial assistance to the Duncan MacMillan Nursing Home, as well as financial assistance to many other community organizations and events.
- The Club has been placed in a category not relevant to their association and the recommendation for a zero percent exemption should be reconsidered.

Mr. Peter Brown, Treasurer, Taoist Tai Chi of Atlantic Canada

Mr. Brown gave the following reasons why his organization is requesting partial exemption:

- All instructors are volunteers.

- The goal of the organization is a health benefit.
- The organization provides the following services: donation of certificates, demonstrations, information booths, some free classes at senior centres and health clinics.
- The organization is currently paying \$15,000 per year in taxes for the Halifax location on North Park Street.
- Mr. Brown read a letter from Dr. A. I. Bernardo, who is a member of the organization, regarding the benefits of Tai Chi for people with special needs.

Mr. Garfield Hiscock, Representative, South End Day Care

Mr. Hiscock spoke against the proposed tax exemption for the South End Day Care making the following points:

- The Centre cannot afford to pay any taxes.
- The Centre services low income families and students from many areas of the Municipality.
- The Province froze the Centre's funding in 1994.
- The only way the Centre could afford to pay the taxes is to raise parents' fees which would be \$200 per child.
- The Centre shares its city owned property with Spencer House, a seniors centre, which is being recommended for 100 percent tax exemption.
- Mr. Hiscock questioned why animal shelters would receive 100 percent exemption, while day care centres receive 50 percent.
- Mr. Hiscock submitted a **petition** from 59 people in support of requesting Council to consider providing non-profit day care centres with 100 percent tax exemption.

Mr. David Faloon, Representing Halifax, Dartmouth and Mayflower Curling Clubs

Mr. Faloon spoke against the by-law making the following points:

- The three curling clubs are all non-profit organizations currently receiving no tax relief.
- The clubs provide the following services: provide a safe friendly environment for all family members, open membership policy, generous rental policy for recreation and social activities involving other members of the community, exposure for the community through curling events run entirely by volunteers, tremendous economic spinoff to HRM from these events, support for other charities, support (with volunteers) the municipality's recreation program for curling, junior development programs and seniors recreation programs, as well as providing local employment.
- The clubs lost fifteen percent of their revenue as a result of the HST.
- Mr. Faloon requested consideration of the curling clubs under this proposed by-law, and, at this time, submitted application forms.

Ms. Joyce Ross, Executive, East Preston Day Care Centre

Ms. Ross spoke against the proposed by-law making the following points:

- The Centre has been in operation for the past 23 years and is located in a community in an economically deprived area with high unemployment.
- The Centre operates on a deficit. The cost to operate is \$26.01 per child per day.
- The former Halifax County Municipality granted the Centre 100 percent exemption for the last 23 years to which Ms. Ross expressed thanks.
- If the Centre is required to pay taxes, it will be forced out of business.
- Other than day care, the Centre also provides a pre-natal program, asthma workshops, collective kitchen program, summer reading program, and a parent and child educational program.
- Ms. Ross submitted a **petition** with 137 names in support of day care centres being given 100 percent tax exemption.

Ms. Nancy Wooden, Harbour City Homes

As Ms. Wooden spoke at the November 4, 1997 Public Hearing on this issue, Council agreed that she be given one additional minute for further comment.

Ms. Wooden stated Harbour City Homes would need to spend \$83,000 to receive a \$20,000 grant under the Heritage Incentive Grants Program. Ms. Wooden requested a partial or full tax exemption to allow Harbour City Homes to keep its properties in the proper state of repair.

Mr. Scott Logan, Sport Nova Scotia

Mr. Logan asked those members of the public representing sport to stand and be recognized. Approximately 30-40 people arose, and it was noted there were many others downstairs. Mr. Logan spoke in support of tax exemption for Sport Nova Scotia and the sport clubs it represents by extension. Mr. Logan made the following points in his presentation:

- A package outlining the benefits of sport was circulated to Council prior to the meeting.
- Taxation on the top of reduced funding makes the job of delivering sport and recreation twice as difficult.
- If sport and recreation can flourish in the Municipality, it can enrich the lives of those living in it.
- Mr. Logan asked that Council reconsider the rejection of Sport Nova Scotia's application for tax exemption as it has a negative impact on all of its members by extension.
- Taxation of the various sport clubs will limit their ability to deliver programs.
- The application of exemption from sport to sport is inconsistent. All sports should be dealt with in the same manner and not be taxed.

- HRM could not provide the tremendous amount of sport and recreation that takes place in the municipality through these organizations.
- Sport and recreation keeps children off the streets and exposes them to good life experiences and role models.
- Mr. Logan requested that Council only tax Sport Nova Scotia for the space it leases to non-profit organizations and that taxation for all sport clubs be eliminated in terms of their non-commercial property devoted to youth programming.

Councillor Hetherington asked if Sport Nova Scotia has approached the Provincial government requesting forgiveness of the HST on memberships. Mr. Logan replied they have, and there has been no constructive response.

In response to a question from Councillor Sarto, Mr. Logan stated other municipalities in the Province assist them with tax benefits and contributions to programs.

Mr. Peter Whalen, Maskwa Canoe Club

Mr. Whalen spoke in support of the 50 percent tax exemption for the Maskwa Canoe Club.

Mr. Allan Crandlemire, Flag Officer, Atlantic Division, Canadian Canoe Association

Mr. Crandlemire outlined the concerns of the paddling community regarding By-Law T-201 which were as follows:

- Most of the Association's volunteers and activities are based in HRM.
- The organization includes eight canoe clubs in HRM and registration of competitive athletes totals about 1,300 annually, as well as recreational participants. The largest registrations are for categories under age 15.
- Canoe clubs provide the organization, facilities, fundraising and the programs essential for recreational and competitive paddling opportunities for youth.
- National and international events on Lake Banook bring hundreds of people to HRM providing a significant boost to the tourism sector.
- Canoe clubs make their infrastructure available to scouts, schools and other community groups.
- Sources of funds are fundraising and user fees. Increased user fees will prohibit participation by the economically disadvantaged.
- Mr. Crandlemire requested that 100 percent tax exemption be maintained for all canoe clubs in HRM.

Ms. Karen Furneaux, Member, Cheema Aquatic Club

Ms. Furneaux, a recent World Championship medalist in kayaking, spoke in favour of tax exemption for canoe clubs, making the following points:

- Canoe clubs, like Cheema, depend on volunteers and parents, and survive by continuous fundraising efforts.
- The removal of the tax exemption places a great deal of additional financial pressure on small clubs such as Cheema, and may force some to close completely.
- 300 children participate in Cheema's summer and year round programs. If these programs cannot be provided, HRM will need to spend more money to provide a service that is now being provided by volunteers.
- The World Championships held in Dartmouth this year attracted athletes from 43 countries and provided economic benefits to the municipality.
- Ms. Furneaux requested Council to reconsider the proposed By-Law and provide canoe clubs with 100 percent tax exemption.

Councillor Hendsbee noted Cheema and Maskwa Canoe Clubs are located on provincial properties, and the Grants Committee is requesting clarification and further information from these organizations regarding lease arrangements with the Province and taxation requirements. Normally, provincial properties are not permitted to be taxed.

Mr. Bruce Collins, Nova Scotia Construction Safety Association

Mr. Collins spoke against the recommendation of zero percent exemption for the Nova Scotia Construction Safety Association making the following points:

- The Association has 3,200 member firms employing 30,000 people in the construction industry in the Province, and 2,600 associate members employing 50,000 people in the Province, of which 72 percent operate within HRM.
- The Association is in the business of occupational health and safety and training.
- As a result of training for HRM and the waiving of membership fees, the net benefit to the Municipality has been more than \$37,000
- Mr. Collins believes the Association should pay tax, however, it should be a reasonable amount. Their current taxes are \$48,000 per year which is greater than the Association's mortgage payment.

Mr. Bob Russell, President, Banook Aquatic Club

Mr. Russell spoke in support of 100 percent exemption for canoe clubs, making the following points:

- The club operates for the sole purpose of providing recreation to the community.
- The club cannot afford to currently heat the building.
- The club provides other community services such as school canoe programs, use of facilities for fund raisers, program for special needs paddlers and a scholarship program for people who cannot afford memberships.
- The high profile sport of paddling promotes the Municipality.

Mr. Allan MacDonald, Mother Berchmans Centre, Mount Saint Vincent

Mr. MacDonald introduced Sister Doris Schoner, Administrator, Mother Berchmans Centre, also in attendance. Mr. MacDonald spoke in support of tax exemption for the Centre making the following points:

- He reviewed the history of the Mother Berchmans Centre.
- The Centre consists of an 81 bed infirmary which is taxed at \$78,700 and currently receives no tax relief.
- Mr. MacDonald requested that the Centre be given some tax exemption.

Mr. Charles Ritcey, President, Board of Directors, Waegwoltic

Mr. Ritcey introduced the following representatives of the Waegwoltic: Mr. Ron Harris, General Manager and Ms. Maureen Mullally, Secretary/Treasurer, also in attendance. Mr. Ritcey requested tax exemption for the Waegwoltic, making the following points:

- The club provides services, such as swimming, tennis and boating, to over 6,000 members of the community.
- The club had a tax exemption in the past that was revoked several years ago. The club now pays in excess of \$130,000 per year in taxes.
- Mr. Ritcey requested that Council consider reinstating the previous exemption.
- Similar facilities in HRM are receiving partial or full exemption.
- The club is a non-profit organization and works on a break-even budget.
- The club provides a high profile for the Municipality.
- Mr. Ritcey submitted a summary statement of the clubs concerns.

Mr. Ike Kent, Treasurer, Association for Women's Residential Facilities

Mr. Kent introduced Ms. Marlene Cullen, who is responsible for fundraising and public education for the Association. Mr. Kent spoke in favour of tax exemption for this organization making the following points:

- The Association runs Adsum House and Venita Court
- For the past five years the per diem rate has been frozen.
- In 1996, \$129,696 was received from donations and fundraising.
- The understated budget for 1998 indicates a required fundraising of \$147,000 which will be difficult to meet.
- Fundraising covers 40 percent of the administration and operational costs for Adsum House, which fulfills a much needed community service.
- With respect to Venita Court, the municipality has, to date, eliminated taxes assessed to this property.
- Mr. Kent requested 100 percent exemption for both properties.

In response to questions from Councillor Schofield, Mr. Kent made the following comments:

- The possibility of the Housing Authority taking over Venita Court was explored with a negative response.
- The original intent for Venita Court was to be short term stay, but history has indicated that residents stay longer than six months.

Ms. Betty Cutcliffe, Dartmouth Day Care

Ms. Cutcliffe spoke requesting 100 percent tax exemption for the Dartmouth Day Care, making the following points:

- 83 percent of the Dartmouth Day Care's budget is for salaries which are under the poverty line.
- The Centre cannot afford to pay any taxes.
- Ms. Cutcliffe requested that their exemption be increased to 100 percent.

Mr. Leo Blackburn, Commodore, Sack-a-wa Canoe Club

Mr. Blackburn spoke on behalf of the Club making the following points:

- Sack-a-wa Canoe Club is a non-profit organization and is actively involved in promoting the sport of canoe and kayak racing and non-competitive canoeing for families.
- The Club provides safe fun recreation on First Lake. Activities include daily training, weekly regattas and non-competitive paddling instruction.
- As Commodore, Mr. Blackburn is registered with the RCMP and the Fire Department for any emergencies that may occur on any lake in Sackville.
- The property and docks are used by the Fire Department, the Department of Fisheries, local fishermen and for water and boat safety lessons.

Mr. Quentin Brown, Bread of Life Ministries and Street Connection

Mr. Brown spoke in support of the Bread of Life Ministries and Street Connection requesting tax exemption for the organization. Copies of Mr. Brown's presentation were circulated to Council. In his presentation, Mr. Brown made the following comments:

- Bread of Life Ministries is an Inter-denominational registered non-profit organization that operates a soup kitchen on wheels and a portable children's Sunday School Program which operates in four low income areas of HRM.
- The soup kitchen serves approximately 300 people a week.
- All supplies are donated and there is no government support provided.
- The Sunday School Program operates three days a week and has an average weekly attendance of 200 children.
- The Ministry is requesting 100 percent tax exemption for the garage that houses the bus. The garage is currently being taxed at the commercial rate which amounts to \$1,729.88 as of September 30, 1997. The owners cannot afford to pay this on top of their own residential tax.
- Mr. Brown requested that Council grant Bread of Life Ministries 100 percent tax exemption for the garage and that the decision be retroactive to the building's construction.

Mr. Farmer spoke in support of Street Connection making the following comments:

-
- The organization operates on a shoestring budget.
Deferral of the decision will place hardships on this organization and its owners.

At this time, a portion of a video illustrating the work of Bread of Life Ministries and

Councillor Hendsbee noted the original request from this organization was to reclassify the taxation from commercial to residential. Also, the HRM does not have the authority

Mr. Peter Zimmer, President, Board of Directors, St. Joseph's Childrens Centre

Mr. Zimmer spoke in support of exemption for the Centre, making the following points:

The Centre operates seven day care centres in Halifax and Bedford serving about 250 families.

The Centre has 200 places that are provincially subsidized.

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- while other organizations such as animal shelters, Neptune Theatre and
- Mr. Zimmer urged Council to defer approving the By-Law as it is currently
- Mr. Zimmer submitted a from 28 parents of the Quinpool Road Centre.

Mr. Al Bennett, Board Chairman, Oakwood Terrace

Mr. Bennett spoke in support of exemption for Oakwood Terrace, making the following points:

- Oakwood Terrace was previously granted 100 percent exemption from the former City of Dartmouth.
- Oakwood Terrace houses 111 long term care residents, average age 85 years, and employs 150 people.
- Any cost increase would have to be passed on to the residents of the centre.
- The centre has never received any provincial or municipal grants.

Ms. Barbara Cottrell, W. Williams Non-Profit Housing (Alice Housing)

Ms. Cottrell introduced Ms. Elizabeth Blanchette, Chair, Alice Housing Board of Directors. Ms. Cottrell spoke in support of this organization receiving full tax exemption for the following reasons:

- Alice Housing offers a specialized program that supports women as they take the necessary steps to keep themselves and their children safe from violence.
- Services offered include the following: counselling, workshops, advocacy, referrals for educational upgrading, employment opportunities, etc., as well as sponsoring projects such as literacy initiatives and a new entrepreneurial project.
- The service provided enhances the quality of life for disadvantaged people with a special need.
- The program cannot be provided without outside support.
- Ms. Cottrell asked Council to join Alice Housing in its efforts to keep women of Nova Scotia safe by approving their request for 100 percent tax exemption.

Mr. Jim Bungay, Atlantic Beagle Club

Mr. Bungay spoke on behalf of the Atlantic Beagle Club making the following points:

- The Club has been in existence since 1949 and has operated in Shad Bay since 1963.
- The Club promotes and encourages the welfare of beagles and other hunting dogs.
- Mr. Bungay requested that the Club's residential tax status be reinstated as was the case prior to amalgamation.

Ms. Rhonda Marks, Twin Oaks Senior Citizens Association

Ms. Marks spoke in support of the Association making the following points:

- The Association is a long term care facility located in Musquodoboit Harbour with a catchment area that runs from Lawrencetown to Middle Musquodoboit down as far as East Ship Harbour.
- The Association is a non-profit charity that has provided nursing care for forty residents since 1979.
- Some services provided are as follows: an Alzheimer's program, respite beds and seniors outreach programs.
- The facility has paid taxes in the past while similar facilities in HRM have been exempt.
- Ms. Marks asked Council that exemptions be applied fairly and equitably.

In response to a question from Councillor Blumenthal, Ms. Marks stated the centre has a two prong admission system. Residents are assessed by the municipality or the agency for means testing or they can pay as a private resident. Responding to a question from Councillor Hendsbee, Ms. Marks stated the municipal tax bill for this fiscal period is about \$11,000. Deputy Mayor Rankin asked if this amount is incorporated in their submission to the Province for per diem rates to which Ms. Marks replied it is factored in.

Ms. Joyce Beaudry, Sackville Family Daycare

Ms. Beaudry spoke in support of tax exemption for the Sackville Family Daycare making the following points:

- The Sackville Family Daycare is an in home child care service and is administratively based out of the Cobequid Multiservice Centre in Lower Sackville.
- Ms. Beaudry stated she believes day cares are entitled to 100 percent tax exemption.
- The Sackville Family Daycare provides the following additional services: parenting education, drop-in programs for parents, clothing depot, toy, book and video lending library, basic cooking programs, smoking cessation programs, special programs for Dads and their children, etc.
- Ms. Beaudry submitted correspondence supporting her request.

Mr. Michael Wood, Board Member, Senobe Aquatic Club

Mr. Wood spoke in support of tax exemption for Senobe Aquatic Club making the following points:

- Paddling programs are available due to the support of many volunteers.
- Senobe has approximately 250 paddlers and offers the following programs: recreational and competitive paddling, swimming and water safety programs.
- The budget is 55 percent based on membership fees, 22 percent from fundraising, 20 percent from federal and provincial employment grants.
- The impact of no longer having a tax exemption would be phenomenal for the Club.
- The Club provides an excellent program in a cost effective manner. If HRM had to provide the paddling program, it may not be financially possible.

Mr. Art Ward, Resident

On behalf of his children, Mr. Ward spoke in support of tax exemption for sport as it makes it affordable for many families. If sport is taxed, it will be a detriment to many families in this community.

Mr. Frank Hubley, Past Commodore, Abenaki Aquatic Club

Mr. Hubley spoke in support of tax exemption for Abenaki Aquatic Club making the following points:

- Abenaki serves about 150 families resulting in approximately 600 members.
- This is the first year they have been required to pay taxes of approximately \$13,000.
- The Club is stressed to raise money and to survive.

- Mr. Hubley requested that Abenaki receive the 100 percent exemption they have had in the past.

Ms. Valerie Blaau, South End Community Day Care

Ms. Blaau spoke on behalf of non-profit day care centres making the following comments:

- Non-profit day care centres allow parents who use their service to work and be self sufficient.
- If they are required to pay taxes, the fees will be increased and a lot of parents will not be able to afford the service.
- The Centre maintains the municipally owned building in which they are located.

Deputy Mayor Rankin called three times for additional speakers either in favour or against the By-Law. No one came forward.

Councillor Cunningham submitted correspondence from Mr. Kim Conrad, Eastern Star Lodge #51, who could not attend tonight's meeting.

MOVED by Councillors Hendsbee and Hetherington that the Public Hearing be closed. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested the information received at the public hearing be referred to the Grants Committee and staff for further consideration and possible amendments to the by-law.

MOVED by Councillors Hendsbee and Hetherington that the information and correspondence received at the Public Hearing regarding By-Law T-201 Respecting Tax Exemptions be referred to the Grants Committee and staff for further consideration and a report back to Council early in the new year. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Councillors Blumenthal and Uteck that the meeting adjourn at 9:40 p.m. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Vi Carmichael
Municipal Clerk