

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MARCH 9, 2000
MINUTES

PRESENT: Mayor Walter R. Fitzgerald
Deputy Mayor John Cunningham
Councillors: Steve Streach
Keith Colwell
Ron Cooper
Harry McInroy
Jack Greenough
Condo Sarto
Bruce Hetherington
Clint Schofield
Graham L. Downey
Sue Uteck
Sheila Fougere
Russell Walker
Bill Stone
Graham Read
David Merrigan
Robert Harvey
Peter Kelly
Reg Rankin
Jack Mitchell

ABSENT: Councillor Jerry Blumenthal (regrets)
Gordon R. Snow
Stephen Adams

STAFF: Mr. Ken Meech, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Wayne Anstey, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Julia Horncastle, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Mayor Walter Fitzgerald.

SOLID WASTE

In response to Councillor Cooper as to when the 35% diversion from the ICI sector will be achieved, Mr. Jim Bauld advised there are a number of programs in place and businesses were given a date at which significant improvements and efforts needed to be made to remove organics from loads coming to Otter Lake; otherwise, they would be rejected. He advised the loads are inspected and if not acceptable, a waste discrepancy report is written up and a letter followed up to the generator. He stated after the third time photographs are taken and a meeting is set up with the business involved.

In response to Councillor Colwell, Mr. Brian Smith advised staff is working through the Resource Recovery Fund and the provincial Department of the Environment to have enviro depots authorized to accept hazardous waste.

Councillor Sarto requested a report on comparisons with other jurisdictions of tonnage costs for waste water come forward at a future date.

Councillor Rankin stated the ICI sector is not hitting the diversion targets.

TOURISM, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Mr. Meech, Chief Administrative Officer, advised the key modifications to the budget for this year are a \$50,000 provision which is to be apportioned to the CIAU national basketball championship and the Tattoo. He advised there is an additional amount for civic events and an amount for the Tall Ships. He advised Cruise Marketing and Travel Media Services as well as a Marketing position are being reinstated and there is a one time expenditure for the Dartmouth Millennium.

Mr. Lew Rodgers noted there are aspects of the budget that are cost shared with the Province noting, one of these are the visitor information centres.

In response to Councillor Kelly, Mr. Rodgers advised the major reduction this year is as a result of FCM which HRM hosted in the past fiscal year.

Councillor Uteck stated that the Heritage aspect of Halifax needs to be addressed and suggested an additional staff person be put in place.

In response to Councillor McInroy, Mr. Rodgers advised he would investigate the inability of tour operators from the Dartmouth side of the harbour to tie up on the Halifax waterfront.

MOVED by Councillors Harvey and Uteck that staff provide information on how the Heritage Incentive Program can be reinstated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

No discussion.

WRAP UP OF OPERATING BUDGET

In response to Councillor Kelly, Mr. Meech advised that the increase in gas prices will be factored in and will be presented as part of the final modifications.

In response to Councillor Cooper, Mr. Meech advised he would provide detail on the breakdown of costs with respect to the Harbour Solutions project and development of the shadow bid.

Councillor Hetherington expressed concern that the Province had assessed the Portuguese Societys' building prior to its completion. The Councillor advised the Grants By-Law states that if a By-Law change causes financial hardship to an organization then that organization could be referred back to the Grants Committee and considered for a grant. He requested Council approve the Portuguese Society be referred to the Grants Committee for consideration of a grant for 1999.

Councillor Walker advised there were no funds available in the grants budget for this year.

Councillor Hetherington noted the amount in question was \$17,000 and recommended it be included in the 1999 budget.

There was general consensus that the amount be added to the 1999 budget.

2. CAPITAL BUDGET

Mr. Dan English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, provided an overview of the Capital Budget advising it was being recommended this budget be reviewed by category rather than department or business unit.

Mr. English advised the gross budget for this year is up from \$45 million to \$66.8 million with funding being realized from cost sharing, the Province and other sources. He noted there is an increase in reserves from \$9 million to \$20 million. Mr. English advised the provincial grant this year will be \$4 million as compared to \$4.8 last year. He advised after all other sources are utilized, the remaining source of funding to finance the Capital Budget would be by borrowing.

In response to Councillor Hetherington, Ms. MacLennan advised the amount of provincial grants has been declining steadily over the last four or five years, thus a small decline has been factored in.

BUILDINGS

Mr. English advised \$1.3 million under the building budget is block funding for the Rose Facilities Management program and \$2.2 million is fully recovered from revenues received from the Halifax Family Court and Ferry Terminal building; \$3.10 million is being directed towards the new fire station and, \$800,000 for restructuring of the police headquarters on Gottingen Street.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Mr. English advised one of the major items is \$500,000 for major facilities upgrades at Centennial Pool, Cole Harbour Place and Halifax Forum. He advised there is an amount of \$434,000 under Mainland Common and \$250,000 for Beazley Field house upgrades.

Councillor Mitchell advised he is not satisfied with the amount of \$70,000 proposed for District 23 and requested staff review the District 23 budget as some items were removed.

In response to Councillor Kelly regarding the amount of funding for development of a passive park, Mr. Blair Blakney, Recreation Coordinator, advised the Municipality has applied to the province but funding has not been approved at this point and is not reflected in the budget.

Councillor Kelly questioned why there was a low allocation under skateboarding. In response, Mr. Blakney advised the skateboard initiative for Cole Harbour and East Dartmouth is approximately five years old and is the highest priority. He advised staff has been working with the Atlantic Skateboard Association to identify locations and help in the design of these parks. He advised the skateboard park in the Halifax Commons and Sackville need to be upgraded due to safety concerns.

On further question, Mr. Blakney advised the cost per site would be approximately \$30,000.

In response to a query by Councillor Kelly regarding plans to maintain and upgrade the existing sports fields, Mr. Stephen King, Manager, Parks and Natural Services, advised one of the priorities is to undertake repairs and upgrading on existing facilities with over seeding to help extend the life of existing fields.

Councillor Stone noted the Stratford Way Park is under construction and requested consideration be given to adding some funds to the park. The Councillor noted opportunities for the Mainland Common have been lost as a result of the road from Stratford Way into the Common not being constructed, stating he would like to see the construction of this road phased in. In response, Mr. Blakney advised the cost of the road is approximately \$700,000 and, in the overall envelope of prioritizing projects, it did not make the list.

Councillor Stone stated he would like to see consideration for phasing of this project this year.

In response to Councillor Cooper, Mr. Jim Naugler, Regional Coordinator, Recreation Facilities, advised fees will remain the same a 1999. He advised the anticipated recovery in the operating budget is \$165,000 with \$120,000 being transferred over to parks into the athletic and sports field budget.

In response to Councillor Cooper as to what type of time frame is being looked at to get the fields restored to the levels prior to last year, Mr. Naugler advised Council has the option to put more money into upgrading the fields noting, if this is the process, then another field will have to be taken out of action.

Mr. Stephen King advised a turning point will be realized in this budget year and staff will be working with the sports groups and Councillors to identify priorities.

In response to Councillor Colwell, Mr. English advised, if Council agrees, funding may be provided in the Capital Budget to undertake a study relative to recreation in the North Preston area.

Councillor Uteck requested LeMarchant St. Thomas be brought forward and recommended for phase 2 this year as it is a highly used playground play area and upgrades would be funded through district capital funds.

In response to Councillor Rankin, Mr. Jim Naugler advised that the Blue Mountain site will be completed with new equipment and landscaping in this current budget year. The other sites to be developed in Kingswood are primarily a ballfield and some passive trail areas.

Councillor Sarto requested the Roblea Playground be given consideration for future upgrades.

In response to Councillor Cooper, Mr. King advised there is a portable chipper being purchased to address the issue of safety on walkways.

3. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councillors Hetherington and Walker that the meeting be adjourned to Monday, March 20, 2000 at 9:30 a.m. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Julia Horncastle
Assistant Municipal Clerk