

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL MINUTES January 20, 2004

PRESENT:

Mayor Peter J. Kelly
Deputy Mayor Steve Streach
Councillors: David Hendsbee
Ron Cooper
Harry McInroy
Brian Warshick
Condo Sarto
Bruce Hetherington
Jim Smith
John Cunningham
Jerry Blumenthal
Dawn Sloane
Sue Uteck
Sheila Fougere
Russell Walker
Debbie Hum
Linda Mosher
Stephen Adams
Brad Johns
Len Goucher
Robert Harvey
Reg Rankin
Gary Meade

REGRETS:

Councillor Krista Snow

STAFF:

Mr. George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Wayne Anstey, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Jan Gibson, Acting Municipal Clerk
Ms. Patti Halliday, Legislative Assistant

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1. INVOCATION

Mayor Kelly called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with the Invocation being led by Councillor Cooper.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - NONE

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

The following items were added to the agenda:

- 11.1 Councillor Goucher - Update on Burnside Expressway
- 11.2 Councillor Fougere - City Hall Public Accessibility

Councillor Blumenthal requested a leave of absence for the following Council meetings: Feb 10, 17 and 24.

MOVED by Councillor Hetherington, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that Councillor Blumenthal be granted a leave of absence for the Feb. 10, 17 and 24, 2004 Council meetings. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councillor Johns requested that the Halifax Regional Firefighters Interpretation Centre be given the opportunity to make a presentation at next week's Council meeting. Council agreed to the request.

Councillor Rankin acknowledged the recent announcement of the provincial government regarding its decision to build a new high school in the Tantallon/Hammonds Plains area, and requested that a letter be sent to the Province expressing HRM's appreciation for the decision.

MOVED by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Meade, that Council send a letter to the Province expressing its appreciation for its recent decision to construct a new high school in the Tantallon/Hammonds Plains area. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOVED by Councillor Hetherington, seconded by Councillor Sarto, that the Order of Business, Additions and Deletions be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

5. MOTIONS OF RECONSIDERATION - NONE

- 6 MOTIONS OF RESCISSION - NONE
- 7. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - NONE
- 8. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS
 - 8.1 Correspondence - None
 - 8.2 Petitions
 - 8.2.1 Councillor Sarto - Petition - Topsail Blvd.

Councillor Sarto served a petition containing approximately 42 signatures of residents expressing concerns regarding the condition of Topsail Blvd. The Councillor noted this street was on his priority list submitted to Public Works and Transportation Services, and he requested that the petition be referred to staff for a report.

MOVED by Councillor Sarto, seconded by Councillor Hetherington, that the petition be forwarded to staff for a report. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- 8.3 Presentations
 - 8.3.1 Mainland Common Recreation Centre Society
 - (i) Mr. Jack Flemming
 - (ii) Ms. Mary Ann MacGrath, Chair

A presentation was made on the progress of the recreation initiative for Mainland North and to outline what the Board sees as its future direction.

Ms. Diana Whalen, MLA, spoke on behalf of Mr. Jack Flemming who was unable to attend.

Ms. Whalen spoke about the work of the preceding committee which led to the formation of both the November 13, 2003 Business Plan and the new Boards of Directors.

Ms. MacGrath outlined what has happened since the formation of the Board and spoke to its future directions.

Responding to a question of Councillor Blumenthal, Mr. George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer, suggested that, before staff brings anything forward on this issue for Council to consider, they wait until the results of the infrastructure application for funding are known.

Councillor Mosher noted the residents of District 17 are not included in the Captain William Spry Centre figures nor the Mainland Common's figures. The Councillor noted there are 17,000 residents that would probably be equally split between the two facilities, and she requested that they be provided the opportunity for input.

Councillor Warshick requested that once the Board assesses the information regarding sources of funding that it be forwarded to Council.

Councillor Hetherington inquired if the former Committee had been officially thanked. In response, Mayor Kelly stated a Volunteer Recognition event was recently held and letters were sent out, however, he agreed it could be re-examined to ensure that Committee was included.

9. REPORTS

9.1 CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

9.1.1 Tender 03-171, Grey Arena Renovations

C A staff report prepared for Dan English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, regarding the above, was before Council for its consideration.

MOVED by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Warshick, that Regional Council:

- 1. Approve an increase in the gross capital budget to Capital Account No. CB100225, Arena Upgrades by the total amount of \$215,330 with funds in the amount of \$115,330 from CRESPOOL, and an additional amount of \$100,000 with no change to the net budget, to reflect the cost sharing as per the Background Section of the staff report dated January 14, 2004.**
- 2. Award Tender 03-171 to the low bid from Blunden Construction (1995) Limited for materials and services for the quoted lump sum tender price of \$285,300 before taxes, for a total project cost of \$285,300 from Capital Account No. CB100225 - Arena Upgrades with funding authorized as per the Budget Implications Section of the staff report dated January 14, 2004. The Grey Arena is a tax class "B" building with full HST rebate.**

Following a brief discussion, the vote was taken.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

9.1.2 Budget Process Update (staff presentation)

Mr. Gordon Roussel, Budget Coordinator, made a presentation to Council providing an update on the process to date and the next steps. Copies of the presentation were provided to Council.

Responding to a question of Councillor Blumenthal regarding the financial impacts of Hurricane Juan, Mr. McLellan stated staff are working on assumptions of what the impact will be in this current year, but the full claim will not be ready to be submitted until some time next year.

Councillor Harvey inquired what was the rationale for the change in the recommendation not to take the full lift of assessment, as was the case last year. In response, Mr. McLellan stated staff recognizes the Municipality is still faced with the same challenging issues with regard to infrastructure and ways to deal with them are being currently being discussed by staff and alternatives will be put forth for Council to consider.

Responding to questions of Councillor Cooper regarding the time line of the next steps, Mr. McLellan noted there are other dates not included in the time line provided that relate to the Program and Service Review Committee, and he suggested the full schedule could be distributed to Council by email.

Councillor Uteck inquired if there will be any type of program, other than those already in place, to provide tax relief for seniors and those on fixed incomes. Mr. McLellan responded there is nothing of that nature in the proposed budget. The Councillor stated there is a continuing trend of driving an older population out of their homes. In response, Mr. McLellan stated assessment is a provincial issue and there are on-going discussions with respect to the future of assessment, but staff does not intend to change its assumptions in the budget while those discussions are taking place. Mr. McLellan noted HRM does have a tax deferral program while some municipalities do not.

Councillor Hetherington inquired if Council could receive an overview regarding what other municipalities in Canada receive from their respective provinces. In response, Mr. McLellan stated that at the time of the budget presentation to Council staff will include a section that deals with comparing HRM to other comparable municipalities in Canada.

Councillor Walker noted there is also a tax rebate program in HRM for low income homeowners.

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Hetherington, that Council approve the following dates for Committee of the Whole to review the 2004-05 Business Plans and Budgets:

- C Monday, March 29, 2004**
- C Tuesday, March 30, 2004**

- C **Wednesday, March 31, 2004**
- C **Thursday, April 1, 2004**
- C **Friday, April 2, 2004**

A further discussion ensued regarding assessment, and Mr. McLellan stated it was his understanding that the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Affairs has indicated the Province will be moving forward on its views on a new assessment regime by April 1, 2004, and this may be something Council may wish to discuss further prior to that date.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

9.2 HARBOUR EAST COMMUNITY COUNCIL

9.2.1 Case 00415: Amendment to the Municipal Planning Strategy for Dartmouth (Wright's Cove Area)

- C A report from the Harbour East Community Council, regarding the above, was before Council for its consideration.

MOVED by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Hetherington, that Regional Council give First Reading and set a Public Hearing date to consider amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) for Dartmouth as outlined in the staff report dated December 19, 2003.

Councillor Smith requested that the Public Hearing be held on April 6, 2004, to provide staff the opportunity to address an issue that has arisen. Council agreed to the request.

Councillor Smith also requested that, before the Public Hearing, that staff provide a report to: (1) expand on the implications of apply the holding zone to dwellings earlier than October 2, 2001; and, (2) the issue of some sort of protection and the possibility of a residential reserve type of situation.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

9.3 REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

9.3.1 Regional Planning Goals and Objectives (presentation)

- C A report from the Regional Planning Committee, regarding Regional Planning Goals and Objectives, was before Council for its consideration.

MOVED by Councillor Hetherington, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal, that Council hear the Regional Planning presentation this evening, and that discussion

**and debate of the presentation be referred to a Committee of the Whole meeting.
MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Joe O'Brien, Chair, Regional Planning Committee, and Ms. Carol Macomber, Project Manager, Regional Planning, made a presentation to Council regarding Regional Planning Goals and Objectives. Copies of the presentation were circulated to Council.

9.4 GRANTS COMMITTEE

9.4.1 Terms of Reference - Revisions

C A report from the Grant Committee, regarding the above, was before Council for its consideration.

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal, that:

- 1. Regional Council approve amendments to the "HRM Grant Committee Terms of Reference" as detailed in the Discussion section of the Committee report dated January 14, 2004.**
- 2. The revised Terms of Reference shall come into effect April 1, 2004.**

Councillor Walker clarified the wording regarding the scope of the Committee in Appendix A of the Committee report, noting the Grant Committee manages the grant program.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

9.5 MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

9.5.1 Deputy Mayor Streach - Highway Safety in HRM - Driving Practices of Heavy Truck Traffic

Deputy Mayor Streach expressed concerns regarding highway safety in HRM, in particular, with respect to the regulation and reputation of the trucking industry. The Deputy Mayor stated some truckers are giving the responsible truckers a bad name, whether through high speed, disregard for highway conditions or that of their truck, and intimidation of smaller vehicles on the highway. Deputy Mayor Streach stated in his District alone there were four separate incidents involving logging trucks and accidents on the highways. The Deputy Mayor noted there are also attempts by some truckers to avoid scale houses by taking un-patrolled or un-serviced routes.

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Streach, seconded by Councillor Goucher, that this matter be referred to staff for a report and that staff request the RCMP to step up efforts to

curb the dangerous behaviour of some large tractor trailers, throughout greater Halifax, with extra effort in the rural areas. Also, that staff request the Province to instruct the provincial compliance officers to step on their efforts as they relate to spot checks on those highways not served by scale houses. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

9.5.2 Councillor Cooper - Hurricane Juan / Fire Hazards

C Copies of a recent newspaper article by Paul Schneidereit, *Chronicle-Herald*, regarding the above, was circulated to Council.

MOVED by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee, that this matter be referred to staff for a report, by the middle of February, providing an assessment of the damaged areas to be addressed (both public and private property), and recommended procedures and time lines to address the concerns, followed by periodic updates.

Councillor Goucher requested that the report also include some direction relative to residents who wish to embark upon clean up and the possibility of private contractors being employed throughout HRM to assist the residents with these clean ups.

Councillor Hendsbee expressed concern with the fire index and potential for spread of the spruce longhorn beetle in the spring and stated there needs to be an opportunity for public input from the property owners in the affected areas.

Councillor Hetherington stated the report should also include information as to how the Nova Scotia Department of Resources will be involved in the responsibility as much of the damaged land is provincial crown land.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

9.5.3 Councillor Blumenthal - Paint Usage in HRM Owned Buildings

Councillor Blumenthal expressed concerns regarding a recent incident at the Needham Centre where toxic paint was used in the presence of children. The Councillor questioned how this could take place and requested a staff report to respond to his concerns.

MOVED by Councillor Blumenthal, seconded by Councillor Hetherington, that this matter be referred to staff for a report regarding the use of toxic paint in HRM owned buildings, in particular, the recent incident at the Needham Centre. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

9.5.4 Councillor Mosher - Identifying Neighbourhoods and Settlements for

Community Signage

Councillor Mosher stated she and Councillor Adams have been working with residents in the community with regard to community identification within districts. The Councillor noted that, since amalgamation, many areas feel they are losing their identities, and they would also like to reflect the historical nature of the community. Councillor Mosher stated a couple of meetings have been held with the residents and staff regarding signage to reflect the various communities. The Councillor noted staff's concern was that this initiative not take away from the 911 signage project and safety. Therefore, she requested a staff report to identify the communities but, at the same time, have a policy to provide a consistent approach throughout HRM.

MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor Adams, that this matter be referred to staff for a report regarding the identification of neighbourhoods and settlements for community signage.

Councillor Hendsbee requested that staff also review the Halifax RDA report completed approximately five years ago regarding its signage pilot project on Highway #3 as some of the concerns were addressed in that report.

Councillor Uteck stated there was also a policy developed in the former City of Halifax.

Councillor Hum noted she is currently working with the Rockingham Heritage Society on the same issue and would like to receive the staff report as soon as possible.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

10. MOTIONS

11. ADDED ITEMS

11.1 Councillor Goucher - Update on Burnside Expressway

Councillor Goucher stated the construction of the Burnside Expressway would provide relief from traffic congestion for commuters and an alternate truck route into the Burnside area. The Councillor suggested that the projection of the heavy traffic and its connectivity to the MacKay Bridge make consideration of the Expressway as a possible toll route and part of the Halifax-Dartmouth Bridge Commission MacPass system a worthwhile consideration. Councillor Goucher inquired about the status of the Memorandum of Understanding required to advance this project, and the traffic volume/toll revenue forecast study, and put forth the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Goucher, seconded by Councillor Warshick, that Council request a staff report on this issue to be presented at a Committee of the Whole

meeting at the earliest possible time.

In response, Mr. McLellan stated the Memorandum of Understanding has not proceeded to Council as there has been nothing to justify why HRM should undertake, without any quid pro quo, a connector road that is solely the responsibility of the provincial government.

Councillor Goucher stated Council should have an opportunity to become aware of and understand what has gone on in the past with respect to this issue, and what opportunities may be available for an alternate access to the Burnside Industrial Park.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

11.2 Councillor Fougere - City Hall Public Accessibility

Councillor Fougere stated the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) recently commissioned a research study of women in politics across Canada. Ms. Barbara Cottrell, the Halifax researcher for the FCM project, spoke at a recent workshop, held by the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, for women who have an interest in politics. Ms. Cottrell spoke to a number of women in her research, particularly those in marginalised groups, whose perception of City Hall as a location, municipal government as a function, and municipal Councillors as individuals, is that those entities are unapproachable and inaccessible. Councillor Fougere expressed concern with these perceptions and stated Council is in a position to do something out it. The Councillor requested that the issue be referred to staff to find a means by which to address some of the concerns in the preliminary findings.

MOVED by Councillor Fougere, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that Council request a staff report with some suggestion as to how Council may address, throughout the coming year, some of the concerns expressed in the preliminary findings of the FCM research study of women and politics.

Councillor Sloane noted that she is a member of the Committee sponsored by FCM on this issue, and stated it has been an eye-opening experience. The Councillor stated she supports the request for a report wholeheartedly.

Councillor Mosher stated she supported the request for a report, but suggested it may be more appropriate to wait until March when the complete data will be available. The Councillor suggested all groups, not just women, should be considered in examining this issue and that City Hall should be accessible to all.

In response to several comments regarding accessibility of Councillors, Councillor Fougere stated the intent of the report is not to exclude anyone. She noted the issue was brought to light because the particular research being done specifically relates to women and municipal politics. The Councillor noted these are perceptions of people in politics, and

it does not mean that Council, as a group, is not approachable. It means there are public who are, for whatever reason, of the opinion that Council is not approachable or accessible.

Councillor Fougere stated this is something that has been brought to Council's attention and Council has a responsibility to address it. The Councillor noted the research being done covers a broad spectrum of issues that relate to municipal politics and to women.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

12. NOTICES OF MOTION

13. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Jan Gibson
Acting Municipal Clerk