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Halifax Regional Council
July 13, 2004

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:


Dale MacLennan, Director, Financial Services

DATE: July 9, 2004

SUBJECT: Sackville Arena - Request for Infrastructure Program Priority

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

On July 5, 2004, Councillor Bob Harvey, District 20, forwarded a letter dated July 3rd, 2004 from the Lake District Recreational Association (LDRA) requesting support for the renovation of the Sackville Arena. This letter is attached as Appendix "A".

A staff report on the LDRA request was requested by Councillor Harvey.

BACKGROUND

Since January 2001, Council has maintained a policy not to include projects for non-HRM assets on its list of recommended, or priority, projects for the Canada / Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program.

At the January 9th, 2001 Committee of the Whole meeting of Regional Council on the topic of the Canada-NS Infrastructure Program, Council agreed that non-municipal projects -- those for non-profit or other associations -- would not be included on HRM's list of recommended infrastructure program projects. Council's policy has not changed since then.

DISCUSSION

In the July 3rd, 2004 letter from the LDRA, they request that HRM include the Sackville Arena renovation project as an HRM priority on its list of projects for federal Infrastructure Program funding. Although the LDRA, in its letter, makes a clear case for the need of the renovation and the benefit of the facility to the community, current HRM policy does not permit non-HRM assets to be included on its list of recommended Infrastructure Program projects.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Letter from Bob Rines, President, Lake District Recreation Association

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Andre MacNeil, Financial Consultant, 490-6241

Report Approved by: _____
Dale MacLennan, Director, Financial Services

Appendix A

July 3, 2004

Councillor Bob Harvey
Halifax Regional Municipality
272 Hallmark Ave.
Lr. Sackville, N.S.

Councillor Bob Harvey:

I would like to take the opportunity to give you and Halifax Regional Municipality Council a brief update on Sackville Arena, project history, goals, project, financing and intrinsic features. If you can remember five years ago the arena in Springhill where the structure came down after a storm, as a result of this the province have been conducting studies on facilities across the province.

In 2001, The Provincial Arena Structural Assessment Program was established by Sport Nova Scotia to alert arena operators of maintenance and/or structural reinforcing required within their facility. The program, which runs in co-operation with Dalhousie University's Department of Civil Engineering, is intended to allow students' the opportunity to analyze a "real world" situation, and at the same time the province can determine which arenas need remediation. The engineering students prepare a report stating their analysis, findings and recommendation and provide a copy to the arena owners. It is then the onus of the individual arena owners to hire an engineering firm to further analyze the areas of the arenas that the students find to be deteriorated, deficient or overstressed.

During the summer of 2003, the Nova Scotia Sport and Recreation and Dalhousie University conducted a preliminary structural assessment of the Sackville Arena. Students and their supervising professors discovered that the arena structure does not meet the snow loads it could experience under today's codes.

In order to obtain accurate results, Sani Engineering Limited was hired, under the team of Roberto Sani, P.Eng, Jonathan Langille, B. Eng, and Lesley Creech, C.Tech, visited the site to complete a more in depth structural review of the main frames and secondary steel throughout the building. Sani Engineering's analysis of the Sackville Arena was conducted based on the preliminary analysis completed in the summer of 2003. Areas that the Dalhousie University study "red flagged" or expressed concerns of, were also the main focus during this analysis. Although all areas of the main frame were considered, emphasis was directed toward areas of overstress and under- design. The analysis gave positive indications that the arena was in need of some repairs and upgrading.

Lake District Recreation Association (LDRA) owns and operates Sackville Arena on First Lake Drive in Lower Sackville. The facility is one of the prim ice surface used by Sackville Minor Hockey as well the home for Sackville Blazer Junior B Club, Sackville High School, Millwood High School, and a number of other hockey related organizations during the winter months. As well, lacrosse programs, ball hockey and other indoor sports programs are run during the summer months. The facility is also used by the community for non sports activities related to child programs run by individual community groups.

In its capacity as owners, LDRA responded to recent events which closed Nova Scotia facilities of like construction and age, because of structural failure. There are three aspects to the goals LDRA will strive to meet:

- 1. The arena must meet engineering requirements for structural integrity so that the risk and liability to the community is nil in terms of building failure.**
- 2. The arena must perform no worse than the best rated facilities of like construction, regardless of age.**
- 3. The facility must be renovated at a time of least impact of the community and maximum value so as not to negatively impact operations.**

The project has reached the point where LDRA has decided to proceed with a renovation. The liability shortfall has been determined and the association has accepted its role in safeguarding the users of the facility. The tender process has been initiated and a tender call will be executed July 12, 2004.

The budgets have been set out approximately \$400,000.00 and approved to accomplish the goals set out and the final result will be a facility which meets structural integrity standards as well being accessible for the physically impaired.

All avenues for financing are been explored which might help to minimize the financing required by LDRA. The Provincial Government through Sport Nova Scotia has said they would help the project but only in 2004/2005 budget and will contribute 30% on the cost and also would fund the wheel chair accessible project.

We met with The Federal Government through Ms. Lynn Adams of the Atlantic Canada Opportunity Agency (ACOA) who are being actively perused through the federal infrastructure program and ACOA programs.

You will note that one of the financing options is through federal infrastructure program administrated by ACOA. The program can assist us but presents an unusual hurdle. Since the arena is within the HRM boundary, ACOA requires the project be listed as a priority

item by HRM to qualify under the federal government infrastructure program. I believe HRM would see structural integrity issues of their properties as priority issues if only from the liability perspective and that HRM would have little difficulty in accepting structural integrity as a priority any time a renovation is contemplated. Furthermore, HRM is in a position to suggest as a guideline for associations such as LDRA, structural integrity to be a priority in renovation discussions if only because the particular structures fall within the HRM boundary.

At the very least, such an action would demonstrate leadership on behalf of HRM in so far as there has been structural failures throughout Nova Scotia. I would ask that you raise this issue with HRM, understanding that it has significant implications for LDRA. We want to be perfectly clear that we are not asking for nor shall we be asking for financial assistance through HRM. LDRA will finance the cost share arrangement under the federal infrastructure program applied for according to the guidelines of the particular applications.

Intrinsic Features

The value of the renovation is easily underestimated. Should the structure fail during a severe test such as unusual snow then the entire community loses. Programs would be suspended indefinitely as the first consequence. However there would be the loss of employment, the contribution to the economy in services requirements, and also the loss of the purchasing power of the arena. The arena contribution to the economy the past year was \$422,000.00.


Please find below the intrinsic features that will be added to the arena that will enhance the community usage of this facility:

- The facility will have a wheel chair ramp added to the mezzanine level and wheel chair accessible washrooms.
- The facility will have its natural life span extended indefinitely.
- The facility will be safe to be in under extraordinary circumstances.

This Arena has been the focal point of the community since it was built in 1973. LDRA wants to ensure that it continues to be their for the community activities for many years to come and I am sure HMR does as well.

Any support that HMR can provide us would be greatly appreciated.

Yours respectfully



Mr. Robert (Bob) Rines

President

Lake District Recreation Association