



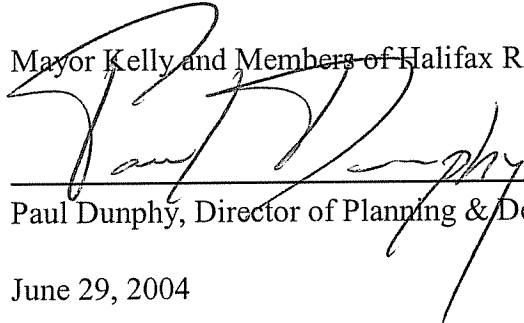
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Regional Council
July 13, 2004

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:


Paul Dunphy, Director of Planning & Development Services

DATE: June 29, 2004

SUBJECT: Servicing Boundary Status Sheet Items

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

- August 19, 2004 (item#10.3.1) Water Service Boundary Adjustment - Cow Bay Road, Eastern Passage
- May 6, 2003 (item#10.2.1) Amendment to MPS to extend water services to Spider Lake Road and Spider Lake Estates
- November 13, 2003 (item#8.3) - North West Community Council - Extending the Water and Sewer Service Boundary in Beaver Bank up to and including Kinsac Road

BACKGROUND

The above noted status sheet items are among a large number of similar issues related to the expansion of municipal water and sanitary sewer services being investigated by various HRM Departments including Environmental Management Services, the Halifax Regional Water Commission, Planning and Development Services and Regional Planning.

Requests to extend centralized municipal services typically come to staff in various forms. In addition to requests from Regional or Community Councils for individual reports and recommendations, staff have been approached directly by developers and property owners, by community groups such as ratepayers' associations, by developers making formal applications to amend current planning policies related to servicing, requests made in conjunction with planned capital works/infrastructure construction projects, or requests by individual Councillors acting on behalf of property owners or community groups.

Requests to extend municipal servicing infrastructure beyond the extent of existing servicing boundaries into new areas are usually not routine matters. More often than not, such requests entail significant changes to existing municipal land use and servicing policies. Additionally, extending services to existing communities is typically quite expensive.

Service boundaries have been established in many of HRM's Municipal Planning Strategies to identify where development on piped water and/or sewer service systems should occur. In respect to piped sewerage systems, delineated areas represent the extent of servicing capabilities of existing infrastructure components such as wastewater treatment plants. In respect to piped water systems, in most cases, the boundaries (ie. Water Service Districts) delineate areas in which the former Halifax County allocated its share of water supply from the Pockwock and Lake Major water supply systems. All areas inside these boundaries were excluded from recent Planning Strategy and By-law amendments to create an Interim Growth Management Area in support of Regional Planning.

Amending servicing boundaries normally entails significant analysis as such a change in municipal policy can have far reaching implications for municipal form and costs borne by the municipality to service new growth. This represents a major issue to be resolved through the Regional Planning Project. Staff intend to put a recommendation to Council in November as to where the new growth boundary for serviced growth should be placed in HRM. This will be followed by a period of policy development and community consultation prior to Council actually establishing this boundary further to holding a public hearing.

DISCUSSION

In early June, a staff committee on service boundary changes was formed to examine the many requests for service extensions that have been submitted to the Municipality and to create a protocol for investigating requests for service boundary extensions and subsequent recommendations to Council. Staff intends to develop a planned response to requests for water and sewer infrastructure extensions and present this to Regional Council for consideration. This will enable Council to consider individual requests for service extensions in a broader regional context in order to facilitate decision making. It is contemplated that the program would address the following:

- a. establish a consistent method for requests to be forwarded to HRM and to staff;
- b. establish criteria for the prioritization of projects;
- c. define various roles, responsibilities and expected time-lines for stakeholders;
- d. define resource and analysis (ie. water sampling) requirements;
- e. identify potential funding sources;

- f. consult with and define the role of the Halifax Regional Water Commission, Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour, the Medical Officer of Health, and other regulatory agencies as required.

The staff committee recognizes that consideration must be given to identifying those areas where existing environmental or health problems place residents of current subdivisions at risk in order to develop an appropriate response. Under existing municipal policies in respect to water service extensions, there are substantial costs associated with investigating health and environmental risks including such studies as subsurface hydro geological analysis and well water quality testing. The committee will report to Council in September on the overall recommended approach to resolving questions as to where service boundary extensions or where expansion of municipal water and sanitary sewer should occur based on health and safety factors. The committee's recommendation will include the disposition of the status sheet items referenced in the origin section of this report.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

None associated with this report.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ATTACHMENTS

None

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.

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