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Halifax Regional Council
March 8, 2005

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Nauss", written over a horizontal line.

Bob Nauss, Acting Director, Recreation, Tourism and Culture

DATE: February 23, 2005

SUBJECT: Review of 'Doors Open' Program

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Item 10.2.3- Regional Council-June 29, 2004

'Moved by Councilor Mosher, seconded by Councillor Sloane that HRM obtain information from the Heritage Canada Foundation and prepare a report regarding the feasibility of HRM staff hosting such an event.

Councillor Hendsbee requested that this matter also be referred to the Heritage Advisory committee for input. He further requested that staff tie in the planned application to the Federal Government for HRM to be considered the Cultural Capital of Canada for 2005 Festivals'

BACKGROUND

The concept of the Doors Open Program is to make available to the general public, free access to buildings of historic or architectural significance. There are examples of this program across Canada and all of them run over a week-end. Building owners in each community, open their doors to the public over the two day period. In some cases access is limited to portions of the building. Volunteers at each site help with interpretation, traffic flow and security. Most of the programs seem to have paid staff and volunteers working together to ensure the success of the week-end. Heritage Canada has assumed the role of sponsor for the program in Canada.

There are conflicting accounts as to the origins of the event. France, in 1984, is credited with La Journee Portes Ouvertes and Scotland in 1990 hosted Doors Open Days. In 1991 these, and similar events, were united as European Heritage Days at the initiative of the Council of Europe. In 2003 all 48 signatory states of the European Cultural convention participated in European Heritage Days.

DISCUSSION

The City of Toronto

Year I -The City of Toronto launched the 1st North American Doors Open event in 2000. It was two years in preparation and was undertaken by the Museums and Heritage Services, Cultural Division of the City of Toronto. Initial funding of \$75,000 came from the provincial Trillium Fund and \$30,000 from the Millennium Fund in addition to Toronto's 'in kind' contribution.

An arms length committee of 22 individuals was set up. It included influential people able to attract financial support, as well as architects, developers and business people. A core of six people did the majority of the work and this committee was disbanded after 3 years. Toronto city staff now work directly with volunteers.

In the first year there were 96 buildings open.
Their target was 25,000 visits. They had 71,000.

Year 5- The City of Toronto presently provides \$150-200,000 'in kind' support that covers the salaries of 5 staff who work on the program full time for 6 months of the year. They manage the building liaison, volunteer coordination, sponsorship, fundraising, marketing, promotion, cultural tourism and media relations.

The Toronto Star (joined in the 2nd year) provides \$200,000 in kind support by publishing the program and various news items 10 days before the event.

The Canada Council has contributed \$50,000 and SARS Recreation Fund of the province of Ontario has provided \$59,000.

They hosted 185,000 visits (Toronto population 2.5 million) to 155 buildings in 2004.

Doors Open Ottawa

Year 4- The city works in collaboration with the community, just as in Toronto. The city provides 'in kind' funding to the equivalent of \$200,000 including 1 full time staff member for 9 months, as well as website space, design services, translations, administration, communications, (PR etc) and liability coverage for each building. The Ottawa Citizen publishes the event guide and advertising to an amount of \$65,000 'in kind' each year. CBC also provides 'in kind' support through their programming.

A number of volunteers work throughout the year. There are sub-committees [Building Liaison, Education, Volunteer and Fundraising] that divide the work and meet once a month. New in 2004 is a Special Events Committee that will organize a launch party, fundraising party and volunteer thank-you party. There is a core of 200 volunteers for the 'Doors Open' week-end who are identified by a T-shirt provided by the city.

Each building owner is required to provide their own theft and damage insurance. The City of Ottawa provides liability insurance It is hoped that there will be 100 buildings open this year for the 150th anniversary of the city.

Last year 85 buildings were open and hosted 57,000 visits (Pop. 774,000).

Doors Open Calgary

Year 2-The Municipality does not contribute to the program with the exception of opening some municipally owned buildings for the event and making a city planner available to answer questions The program is managed by a core of 6-10 volunteers with 3 co-chairs to try and head off problems with burnout. There are 5 sub-committees: Research, Building Liaison, Education, Fundraising and Volunteer. They meet once a month until they get closer to the event when they meet bi-weekly; weekly and eventually daily.

In the initial year the funding for the program was provided by the Alberta Historic Resources Foundation. The second year (2004) the Foundation provided \$5000 and the Alberta Association of Architects donated \$500. Individual architects contributed funds as did several of the churches on the tour. The Calgary Herald and the CBC both provided 'in kind' advertising. Insurance is provided by the building owners. As a part of the programming there are some walking tours during the week-end and the sponsoring agencies cover the insurance for the tours. Funding is channelled through the Lockheed House Conservation Society, a registered charity..

The first year the week-end was tied to History Week at the end of July. The second year the week-end was tied to Architecture Week at the end of September. Last year 30 open buildings registered 5000 visits (Pop. 1 million)

HRM

The main objective of the Doors Open program is to create an awareness of the significance of the architectural heritage of a community through increased access. One of the requirements is that the access be 'free' thus ensuring that all citizens will be able to enjoy and appreciate the architecture, both old and new, of their community.

Each of the programs investigated required a large number of staff and/or volunteers to operate. They have each had considerable start up funding and have had the human resources to pursue grants or sponsorships to allow their programs to carry on.

The main volunteer organization associated with architecture in HRM is the Heritage Trust. The organization is not interested in participating in this program at this time. They feel the program would be in direct competition with the fundraising activities of their membership. They would, however, be prepared to cooperate with any municipal educational initiatives which would promote the importance of architectural heritage.

The Heritage Advisory Committee was given an oral presentation, and reviewed an information report. The committee asked questions relating to overall cost of such a project, and staffing requirements. Additionally, the Committee questioned if another non-for-profit organization such as the Nova Scotia Heritage Trust provided a similar service. Overall, the Committee felt there was merit in such as venture, but questioned if there were funds and staff available at present to commit to the project. Additionally, many of the Committee members wondered if there would be enough interest on property owners behalf to have their buildings open to the public.

The Doors Open program was not included when HRM's application was submitted to the Cultural Capital of Canada Program. HRM was not the successful applicant

The Halifax Regional Municipality is presently involved in a number of large initiatives and it is felt the financial or human resources to carry out this program are not available at this time.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

This report is provided for information purposes. If this program were to be pursued at some future date it can be assumed that the cost to the Municipality would be similar to that incurred by Toronto and Ottawa.

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.

ALTERNATIVES

This report is provided for information purposes. The report contains no recommendations for Council's consideration.

ATTACHMENTS

N/A

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.

Betty Ann Aaboe-Milligan, Heritage Tourism Officer

490-5113

Report Prepared by: _____