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Halifax Regional Council
May 1, 2007

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

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

Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer

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

Wayne Anstey, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer - Operations

DATE: April 19, 2007

SUBJECT: **Petition for Pathway Closure - Riverside Drive and Nordic Crescent, Sackville**

ORIGIN

December 5, 2006 (item 8.2.2) - A petition was received by Halifax Regional Council requesting closure of the pathway extending from Riverside Drive and Nordic Crescent to Metropolitan Field and Leslie Thomas Junior High.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council not support the closure of the pathway at Riverside Drive and Nordic Crescent and instead implement physical changes and patrol measures to alleviate the situation.

BACKGROUND

The HRM owned pathway located between Riverside Drive and Nordic Crescent is part of a much larger system of pathways connecting a significant series of neighbourhoods in Sackville. It was designed as part of the primary pedestrian circulation system in the community connecting neighbourhoods, two elementary schools and one junior high as well as facilities at Metropolitan Field and public lands and recreation facilities around First Lake. There are few other direct means of pedestrian access to these areas. The pathways are very well used.

Unfortunately, a few users have repeatedly verbally harassed abutting residents and committed acts of vandalism, stone throwing and theft. The majority of incidents seem to be occurring closer to Metropolitan Field and Leslie Thomas Junior High School.

DISCUSSION

Staff (RCMP, Community Response, Real Property Planning and TPW Operations) have met several times over the issue and discussed possible solutions.

Closure - Staff looked at closure as requested by the petition. It was very much noted that when the area was developed the neighbourhoods and streets were laid in long looping series of neighbourhoods all connected back to the primary streets of Glendale, Smokey and Stokil Drives. This type of subdivision is sometime referred to as "Spaghetti" or "Dead worm" subdivision owing to long circuitous streets. There are advantages to this type of design. It generally creates low traffic, quiet streets with a good deal of individual privacy and the streets can be better accommodated to the existing terrain. Many people enjoy living on these types of streets and they have been the prevalent type of subdivision for over thirty years.

There are also disadvantages. Primary among these being that this type of subdivision becomes car oriented as pedestrians must travel long indirect routes to get to even local destinations. In this particular subdivision most of the streets were built without sidewalks. There was, however, an interconnected series of green belt pathways built by the developer behind houses and between streets to overcome this. The pathways are the most direct route to important public amenities as well as local commercial areas. Closure of this pathway would cut off entire areas of this community and neighbourhoods beyond the subject area from these amenities. Further these paths are planned to serve as neighbourhood collectors to convey pedestrians and cyclists to regional trails and active transportation routes planned for this area.

Physical Changes - Staff looked at physical changes which could be made where the incidents have been largely occurring. In comparing the physical layout of this location against those where there have not been incidents, it was quickly observed that the pathway is closest to the backyards and decks of abutting residents. Staff feel that by mimicking the layout of other areas where the pathway is pulled away from the private properties and a certain amount of vegetation is planted to protect the abutting properties the opportunity for unwanted activity against the private homes will be

reduced. (Staff intend to be cautious with the use of screening vegetation as there are benefits to having neighbours monitoring the pathway.) A fence would be placed on HRM property adjacent to the newly moved path to ensure that the separation is maintained. HRM would remain in ownership of the property between the backyards and the fence and be responsible for its maintenance.

Policing and Monitoring - Sackville RCMP have increased regular patrols to monitor the area. Police intend to increase patrols of this site and on Metropolitan Field this spring. Efforts are being made to augment the neighbourhood watch and citizens on patrol programs and there has been support for a “take back our neighbourhood” attitude expressed at public meetings. The RCMP Cadet program has targeted the area for monitoring, patrol and a program to increase neighbourhood awareness for reporting of incidents. Finally the school liaison officer is working within the school to educate and inform students regarding pathway incidents.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The cost for relocating the path and installing the fence has been estimated at \$10,000. An amount of \$2,700 has been earmarked for the project under CPU00937 reservation number 1241 and the area Councillor has reserved a contribution from District 20 Capital Account Funding of \$7,300 under reservation number 12821.1.

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

Council could direct staff to move towards closing the pathway which would trigger a public hearing process.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Aerial Photograph of Pathway Area


Petition for Pathway Closure - Riverside Drive and Nordic Crescent, Sackville
Council Report

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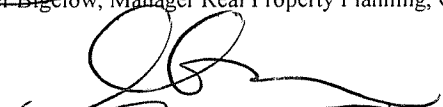
May 1, 2007

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

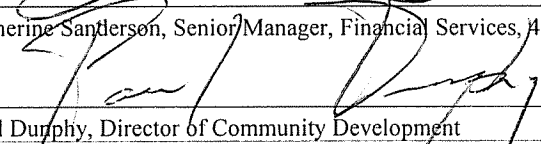
Report Prepared by:


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Report Approved by:


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