



PO Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

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Halifax Regional Council
May 29, 2007

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Dunphy".

Paul Dunphy, Director, Community Development

DATE: May 23, 2007

SUBJECT: **Bloomfield Planning Process Update**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

May 8, 2007 (item 13.2) - Councillor Murphy requested an update as to the timing for the next phase of the Bloomfield Planning Process.

BACKGROUND

The Bloomfield Centre is a four acre site in the centre of peninsular Halifax. The site has three buildings, two of which are vacant. One of the two vacant buildings is currently inhabitable. Staff have been working to rationalize the property by finding the highest and best municipal use for the site. The site had been chronically under capitalized and underfunded. The property was also not aligned with the municipality's service mandate. The process has been divided into three phases.

Phase I dealt with a review of the building conditions, use and history of the buildings. Phase II dealt with needs and opportunities at the site, environmental assessment, a financial assessment, demographic profile of community, heritage and culture considerations, program and service alignment and community consultation on neighbourhood recreational needs. Phase III is to deal with how the property can best be used for the benefit of the citizens of HRM and in particular the neighbourhoods surrounding the property. This is intended to cover a wide range of community interests including use of the buildings, improvements to the property, urban design guidelines, public service requirements in the community and the potential for the property to be a catalyst in the community. The study will also include a "way forward" financial analysis of the plan.

DISCUSSION

The Phase III project was scheduled for late fall of 2006. It was agreed by Regional Council that the project start was not to begin until Council was satisfied with the staff plan to deal with the current tenants. There were substantive delays in receiving council approval on the planned solution for tenants, which did not come until the end of March 2007. By that time, staff resources had been assigned to previously scheduled council projects which were seasonally and time sensitive. The Bloomfield Phase III project will require substantial staff resources and time. Staff will therefore not be able to commence Phase III in earnest until there is a break in the schedule. The Bloomfield project public consultation will begin this September. In the meantime staff and the area councillor will be meeting with a number of special interest groups including Imagine Bloomfield and staff will be hiring the necessary consultants to carry out portions of the project.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications associated with this report. All work has already been approved by Council and budgeted for. This report does not represent any award of tender but is rather provided as an update to Regional Council and interested citizens.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

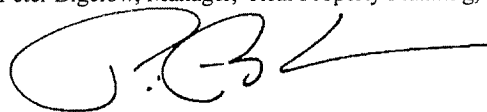
This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

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.

Report Prepared by: Peter Bigelow, Manager, Real Property Planning, Community Development (490-6047)



Report Approved by: _____
Peter Bigelow, Manager, Real Property Planning (490-6047)