

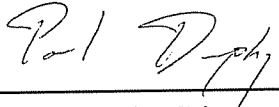


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Halifax Regional Council  
June 26, 2007

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**   
Paul Dunphy, Director, Community Development

**DATE:** June 6, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Increased Funding for Commercial Heritage Properties

### INFORMATION REPORT

#### ORIGIN

At the May 29, 2007 Regional Council meeting, Deputy Mayor Uteck requested a staff report outlining ways to increase the funding program for larger commercial heritage properties.

#### BACKGROUND

Council has requested heritage staff research ways to increase funding for larger commercial heritage properties. Under the existing Heritage Incentives Program, the maximum funding available to an individual project is \$10,000. To encourage quality work which would be in keeping with the historic value of many commercial heritage properties, this amount of funding is not significant enough for substantial exterior restoration projects.

## **DISCUSSION**

The existing Heritage Incentives Program began in 2003 with a budget of \$50,000 and was limited to residential heritage properties. In 2004, a commercial component of \$100,000 was added creating a total budget of \$150,000.

At the inception of the program, a phased approach was envisioned which would gradually increase funding to allow for the inclusion of institutional heritage properties. To date, only the residential and commercial properties are eligible, and while improvements have been made to the administration of the Heritage Incentive Program, no increase in funding has occurred since 2004.

Staff will begin to explore other financial incentives for registered heritage properties. Some of the opportunities currently being considered are:

- allocating additional funding to the Heritage Incentives Program for large scale commercial restoration projects;
- creating a tax incentive to offset the costs of the restoration projects (this is presently permitted under Section 22 of the *Heritage Property Act*);
- reducing or waiving building permit fees for projects which meet HRM's Building Conservation Standards for Heritage Properties. Implementing this option would require an amendment to HRM's Fee By-law (F-200).

There are pros and cons to each of these approaches, and once staff have concluded the necessary research, these will be fully outlined. Incentives are generally offered to provide heritage property owners with assurance of tangible community support, as well as the financial means necessary to assist with the restoration and maintenance of built heritage resources to the benefit of the whole community. It is anticipated that this report would be presented to Council in the fall of 2007.

## **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

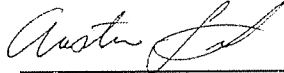
There are no budget implications for this report.

## **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.

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

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Report Approved by: Austin French, Manager of Planning Services- 490-6717