



PO Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Halifax Regional Council
July 31, 2007

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Dunphy". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Paul Dunphy, Director, Community Development

DATE: June 26, 2007

SUBJECT: Community Art Pilot Project

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

This report originates from staff as part of a commitment to keep Council abreast of on-going activities related to HRM's Community Art Project.

BACKGROUND

HRM's Community Relations Division launched the community art pilot project in March 2006. The concept emerged from both the Cultural and Graffiti Management Plans. Essentially, the Cultural Plan promotes opportunities for more art in the public realm and showcasing local emerging and professional artists. The Graffiti Management Plan emphasizes the importance of engaging youth and communities in art processes as a mean to develop a greater sense of community pride and accountability to their respective neighbourhoods and communities, in general.

A professional mural artist was hired on a short-term contract to facilitate the community art project. The work of the muralist initially focussed on facilitating youth murals. These projects would provide unique opportunities to HRM's young people to actively participate in a process that enhanced their community. To date, there have been many youth mural projects completed, and many more are planned, as generally outlined below.

A) Community Art Projects - Completed:

1. Sackville Drive (Acadia School) - Youth Mural
2. Spryfield-Herring Cove-Armdale(Capt William Spry Centre) - Youth Mural
3. Rockingham (Bedford Highway and Melody Drive) - Youth Mural
4. Halifax Peninsula (Common's Pavilion) - Youth Mural
5. Lakeside (Community Centre) - Youth Mural

The commitment and number of hours the youth have dedicated to these projects is staggering, and demonstrates their commitment to community and their desire to participate in positive and meaningful community building activities. For example, the mural at the Common's Pavilion required a total of 300 volunteer hours among the youth alone

B) Community Art Projects - Underway:

Additional youth mural projects to be completed over the next year will focus on immigration and newcomers to HRM. Staff will support a mural project at the upcoming International Potluck organized and hosted by GHP, HRM staff and the Welcoming Communities Committee. Additionally, a mural project has been scheduled for the Bayers Westwood Housing Community that will involve working with newcomer families to HRM.

DISCUSSION

The positive response to the *Community Art Pilot Project* has resulted in a decision to extend the project for a one year period. Specifically, communities struggling with the effects of youth development, graffiti vandalism, and declining sense of community will be the focus of the project.

The *Community Art Project* will continue to operate in accordance with a set of operational outcomes adopted by the Community Relations division. Each project aims to achieve the following outcomes:

1. ***Social Inclusion*** - youth feel engaged, appreciated and respected, feelings of inequalities or disadvantage are reducing;
2. ***Strong Volunteer Capacity*** - youth have experienced a very positive local government initiative and may be more inclined to volunteer and or help in other community initiatives;
3. ***Safe Communities and neighbourhoods*** - the addition of community art has deterred acts of graffiti so residents feel more confident and optimistic about their safety;
4. ***Sense of Community and Civic Pride*** - youth feel good about and have pride in where they live. They feel they live in a friendly and supportive environment;
5. ***Informed Communities*** - youth learn the difference between art and vandalism, and know where to obtain information on graffiti;
6. ***Active Involvement*** - youth have more access to art education, and meaningful opportunities to participate in civic life. They feel their voice and opinions have meaning.

Additionally, the program will continue to focus on engaging young people and emerging artists in new opportunities to work with each other and within their communities to create vibrant and creative murals. Similar to last year, the muralist will work directly with young artists on a series of murals, however, staff role will extend to other type of art-works that reflect the creativity and spirit of youth culture in HRM. The following highlights some of staff's new activities and initiatives for the coming year:

1. ***Community Justice Program***

HRM's Mural Arts Facilitator has been working with youth arrested for graffiti vandalism in the HRM area. To date, projects have included the design and painting of two garbage cans and two HRM utility boxes. Eight more youth will be assigned to work with the mural arts facilitator on this program over the summer of 2007. The youth are educated in the effects of graffiti vandalism and learn to channel their creative energy into beautifying, rather than vandalizing, community assets.

2. ***Large Scale-Community Projects***

Two large scale community art projects will be held over the summer:

a) ***Bedford Row-July 9 & 10th***

On July 9 and 10th, 2007 the Mayor and Council kicked-off HRM's first large scale community art project. HRM partnered with Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) to facilitate 20 murals on construction hoarding erected during refurbishment of the Dominion Building on Bedford Row. The project will not only help combat graffiti during the 2 year construction period, but will help to beautify the streetscape. The project proved very successful and demonstrated HRM's commitment to supporting local artists, and advancing HRM's Cultural Plan.

b) ***Maitland Street Property-August 18th & 19th***

Due to ongoing concerns and incidents of graffiti vandalism on a property owned by the Waterfront Development Corporation, HRM has struck a partnership with the DWDC, the Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission to host a community art event. The initiative

is designed to engage community in the creation of an outdoor gallery space. This project will help combat graffiti and beautify the newly developed walkway along the Dartmouth waterfront. This project will also provide a unique opportunity to support local artists, community groups, and youth.

3. *Business Property Owners - Murals*

There is a growing awareness within the business community of the success of the mural arts program. Staff have been providing advice and support to local business owners who wish to create artwork as a means to divert graffiti vandalism on their properties. A “Know How to Beat Graffiti” Guide and Toolkit is under development as a resource for business owners and will be available in the Fall of 2007. Staff is also developing a data base of local artist which will be available to businesses wishing to contract an artist for service.

Implementation of a New Traffic Control Box Art Program

Community Relations staff will design and implement a new traffic control box art program for the Fall 07. The program will focus on utilising local artists to create new works on HRM’s infrastructure throughout the region. The work will not only foster a heightened sense of community identity, but will be a key strategy for diverting graffiti from the boxes. The Muralist will be responsible for overall coordination of the program, and will recruit and manage the artists/youth. HRM’s TPW department has agreed to a budget of \$20,000 for launching this initiative.

Conclusions

The direct involvement of youth in community art projects is a very powerful community development tool and an effective means for fostering positive community relations. Through the engagement process youth have the opportunity to work closely and collaboratively with HRM staff, Council members and other youth. Through this interaction, the youth begin to build trust and sound relationships with municipal representatives, and gradually begin to see some value in local government, that likely had not previously existed.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no new budget implications. The approved 2007-08 Business Plan for Community Relations includes a budget for the Community Art Project (D710).

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

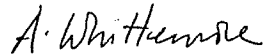
This report complies with the Municipality’s Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ATTACHMENTS

None

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 : Heather Macleod-baudelot, Community Developer 490-5912



Report Approved by: Andrew Whittemore, Acting Manager, Community Development, 490-1585