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Item No. 12.1.6

Halifax Regional Council
November 13, 2007

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dan English".

SUBMITTED BY:

Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Wayne Anstey".

Wayne Anstey, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer - Operations

DATE: November 1, 2007

SUBJECT: Grass Cutting and Landscape Maintenance - Season End

ORIGIN

Halifax Regional Council, Item 8.2, September 11, 2007.
Committee of the Whole, Item 7.12, September 12, 2006.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Regional Council authorize staff to:

1. award the second year of the four year contract for nine (9) grass mowing and landscape maintenance contracts listed in the background section of this report, with a total award of \$760,556.20 for the periods May 1 to November 1, 2008 with funding from Operating Account R710-6603, Grounds and Landscaping as outlined in the Budget Implications section of this report.
2. include the areas within the right-of-way between sidewalk and curb along the main arterials in HRM, as outlined in Attachment "B" at an additional cost of \$56,900.00.

BACKGROUND

In 2006, Halifax Regional Municipality publicly advertised for and awarded ten (10) tenders for a four (4) year period for Grass Mowing and Landscape Maintenance for various locations across the HRM. At the March 6, 2007 session of Regional Council, it was moved by Councillor Mosher (seconded by Councillor McCluskey) that “the second, third and fourth year award would be contingent upon an annual performance review and... would return to Regional Council for approval.”

It is recommended that the tenders below, issued on November 29, 2006 be renewed for the 2008 summer season:

06-398 East 1 (Rural) - Athletic Fields (includes Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)
06-399 West 3 (Rural) - Athletic Fields (includes Districts 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23)
06-400 East 2 (Core) - Athletic Fields (includes Districts 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9)
06-401 West 4 (Core) - Athletic Fields (includes Districts 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17)

06-402 East 1 (Rural) - Parks and Green Spaces (includes Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)
06-403 West 3 (Rural) - Parks and Green Spaces (includes Districts 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23)
06-404 East 2 (Core) - Parks and Green Spaces (includes Districts 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9)

06-406 East Shrub Bed Maintenance (includes Districts 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 19, 20, 21)
06-407 West Shrub Bed Maintenance (includes Districts 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17)

* 06-405 West 4 (Core) - Parks and Green Spaces (includes Districts 10 - 17) to be re-tendered for 2008.

DISCUSSION

Performance Based Contracts

With the expiration of the previous performance based grass cutting tender in November 2006, staff issued a new series of performance based grass cutting and landscape maintenance tenders. The tenders were designed to ensure the contractors are responsible for work, which comprises the supply of all labour; materials; equipment; fuel; transportation; supplies; supervision; and communication, reporting and customer service requirements necessary to perform grass cutting and landscape maintenance services in HRM. The contractors are to perform to a prescribed performance standard which is outlined in the contract:

- < Athletic Fields to a height of between 2 ½ to 4 inches (5 - 10 cm);
- < Parks and Green Spaces to a height of between 2 to 3 ½ inches (4 - 9 cm);
- < Shrub Beds to (A) Service Level (i.e. 6 cuts) and (B) Service Level (i.e. 3 cuts),
- < Weekly inspection and log reports.

Failure to perform is controlled with various non-performance penalties. Municipal Operations

Supervisors manage contractors' performance to ensure the desired end result is achieved.

The main advantages of Performance Based Contracts is the accountability of the contractor and predictability for budgeted resources. Since the contracts are a fixed rate for the summer, there are not the fluctuations associated with variable weather patterns. In addition, contractors have ownership of their inventories, which eliminates debates on the question of any damage which may result.

The new maintenance contracts clearly describe the level of services expected. The provision of service by the contractor is measured according to established service standards and expected levels of performance. The service provision and performance of the contractors is routinely monitored by Municipal Operations' Contract Supervisors who are dedicated to the evaluation of these contracts and are responsible to ensure the performance of the contractor is acceptable and meets the provisions outlined in the contract. This type of contract is designed to foster collaboration and communication between HRM and the contractors, which is key to the success of these contracts. If any of the aspects of service, communication, reporting and customer service fall below the expected level, appropriate recourses are administered.

Issues in 2007 Season

From January - December 2005, the total number of calls received through the Hansen Customer Response Module (CRM) regarding grass length (parkland, playgrounds, boulevards, athletic fields, and other HRM open spaces) was 270; this number rose to 486 in 2006. At the time, staff acknowledged that there were areas within the program where the level of service and contract management needed to be improved.

In 2007, the total number of Hansen Service Requests was 527, with a performance score of 97% resolution within 3 business days:

Contract Type	Hansen Service Requests
Parks & Green Spaces	347
Private Property (Bylaw S-300)	46
Athletic Fields	21
School Properties	19
Shrub Beds	10
Misc. (Inquiry, Within Standard, Code Error, etc.)	84
Total	527

Contract 06-405 (West Core - Parks and Green Spaces)

Of the 347 Hansen Service Requests listed under “Parks and Green Spaces” 173 or 50% were in the West Core area (i.e. Districts 10 - 18). Throughout the summer, staff issued a number of penalties for non-performance for this particular contract. To ensure a better level of service for 2008 and beyond, staff will review and re-tender this contract. It is staff’s intention to return to the CAO / Regional Council in early 2008 with the results of this tender for a formal award according to normal Procurement practise.

School Properties

There is a Service Level Agreement established between HRM and HRSB, whereby HRSB essentially pays HRM to manage the grass cutting contracts for the schools on its behalf. As in any client/service provider relationship, the HRSB establishes the standard by which HRM carries out the service (i.e. how much they're willing to pay). In the past, this servicing level was eight (8) cuts per season (between May and November).

When the contract came up for renewal for 2007, the decision was made to increase the service level to match HRM’s servicing standard of 2 - 3 ½ inches (4 - 9 cm). Staff has noted significant improvement in this area of the program, due to this servicing level change. This is supported by the low number of complaints received (19) through the Hansen CRM.

Athletic Fields and Shrub Beds

Staff was generally pleased with the maintenance performance in the areas of Athletic Fields and Shrub Beds. In total, 21 Hansen complaints were received with respect to grass cutting on Athletic Fields (sport fields and ball diamonds) and 10 complaints for maintenance of Shrub Beds. Though there is little change from 2006 in the performance for shrub bed maintenance, staff note a significant improvement in service performance for mowing HRM Athletic Fields.

Weather

According to Scotia Weather Services, the average rainfall normal values based on the climate period 1971 - 2000 for May is 110.8 mm; June, 107.8 mm and; July, 107.4 mm. The rainfall amounts for 2006 and 2007 are shown in the table below (Refer to Attachment A for further details.):

Rainfall Amounts (mm)			
Month	Avg. 1971 - 2000	2006	2007
May	110.8	124.5	91.9
June	107.8	219.3	123.5
July	107.4	180.5	139.8

Though there was higher than normal rainfall for the months of June and July, staff has determined that it was not enough to pose a significant impediment to servicing ability.

Bylaw S-300

According to Part 2, Section 11 of Bylaw S-300 (Streets), “abutters, except where grass cutting and maintenance service is provided by the Municipality, shall maintain any grass which is between the sidewalk and curb closely clipped and to a height not greater than six inches and shall keep such areas in good order including raking and renewal of the grass as necessary”.

Previous to the last contract, and before Bylaw S-300 was enacted, the former City of Dartmouth and Town of Bedford provided this service as part of the regular operational practise. However, due to the continual expansion of the servicing area, it became necessary for HRM grass cutting and turf maintenance to focus solely on HRM-owned lands. These measures were designed to provide a consistent level of service for all citizens in the municipality.

This change in responsibility resulted in some confusion by constituents in the Dartmouth and Bedford/Sackville areas. To address this problem, staff began a process of mailing educational-based letters to residents and businesses who were found to be in violation of Bylaw S-300. This educational approach continued in 2007 through the development and distribution of marketing materials, to help citizens become fully aware of their responsibilities with respect to turf maintenance. The cost of these materials is nominal at \$300 per 1000 copies. However, a need was recognized for by-law enforcement. The enforcement approach involves administrative and enforcement staff from Bylaw Services at a cost of roughly \$31,000.00 for service delivery for the months of May to October. (Note: these costs do not include the cost of Call Centre, Works Control, and Contract Services staff time in processing the preliminary aspects of the complaints.)

Over the course of the summer, Municipal Operations staff met with Bylaw Services to develop a process whereby the education and enforcement of Bylaw S-300, Section 11 would become a responsibility of Bylaw Services. It was determined that Bylaw Services would follow up on complaints that involved overgrown grass between the curb and sidewalk in front of residential and business properties. This approach is in keeping with the manner in which sidewalk snow removal is also enforced through By-Law S-300, Respecting Streets. Commencing in August 2007, By-Law Services began receiving Hansen Service requests for enforcement of complaints on private property. As of October 1, 2007, By-Law Services received a total of 32 Hansen Service Requests. In all cases, the resident was notified in writing of their responsibility under Bylaw S-300.

Grass Cutting in Municipal Right-of-Ways

At the September 11, 2007 session of Regional Council, staff was asked for a report to outline the pros and cons of expanding grass mowing services in the street right-of-way.

According to the Municipal Services Systems (Red Book) Guidelines,” the travelled portion of a walkway shall be centered within the right-of-way unless approved otherwise and shall have a minimum width of 1.8 m. Topsoil and sod shall be placed on each side of the travelled portion and shall extend for the full width and length of the walkway right-of-way”.

The grass boulevard facilitates increased safety, better snow storage and added green space. From a safety standpoint, these sodded areas provide a buffer zone between pedestrians and vehicular traffic and aid groups such as the disabled community (particularly the visually impaired) to recognize the edge of the sidewalk and thus prevent them going off course into the street.

In addition to the 32 Hansen complaints received by Bylaw Services, an additional 46 complaints were received through Municipal Operations Works Control, for a total of 78 complaints for the 2007 season.

Staff recognize that there are challenges to residents, particularly seniors and the disabled in mowing additional grass areas at the back of their properties, or where infrastructure such as retaining walls, guardrails etc., impede their easy access. A servicing strategy which respects the intent of the Bylaw while offering a supportive remedy has been staff’s goal. Providing grass cutting services at sidewalks along the main arterials in HRM, as identified in Attachment “B” provides a much needed improvement to the appearance of the streetscape, particularly along high traffic areas such as those leading into the downtown(s). As well, this approach would provide support to abutters who currently may be unduly burdened with maintenance activities in the right-of-way, and ensure that right-of-way areas in front of vacant properties would be maintained in keeping with the rest of the neighbourhood.

It is proposed that staff add this level of service for the 2008 season. This would include the areas between the sidewalk and curb as well as clearances of .3 metres (approximately one foot) back from the inside edge of the sidewalk. In areas where there are no sidewalk, staff propose the same .3 metre clearance but at a lower servicing standard (i.e of a few times per season as opposed the stated standard of 3 ½ inches (9 cm). This would result in approximately 284,524 square metres of turf areas being added to the various existing contracts at an estimated cost of \$56,900 (assume 284,524 square metres x .20 per square metre).

This approach would not require an amendment to the bylaw but would provide staff with clear direction in the management of the grass cutting program and the public with a reasonable and cost-effective approach to maintenance servicing. Abutters along residential roads would still be expected to mow the areas between the sidewalk and curb for frontage areas. Generally speaking, the public has been obliging in this regard even before Bylaw S-300 was set in place.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Funding for the approximately \$ 760,556.20 will be available from Account R710-6603, Grounds and Landscaping, pending approval of the 2008/09 Operating Budget.

Budget Summary R710-6603

Assuming same budget for 08/09	\$ 1,614,200.00
Less: Grass Cutting and Landscape Maintenance	\$ 760,556.20
Less: Sidewalk Servicing	<u>56,900.00</u>
Balance	\$ 796,743.80

The remaining budget will be applied to additional servicing pursuant to the overall program, such as community partnerships, shrub bed maintenance, guardrail maintenance, cemeteries, etc.

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

Staff recommendation, excluding areas within the right-of-way between sidewalk and curb along the main arterials. This would not have HRM incur the additional cost of the services. This is not recommended because the additional costs are manageable with the current operating budget and this would be a reasonable increase to the current level of service.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment "A" - Scotia Weather Services Inc. - Rainfall Amounts by Day for Halifax, 2007
Attachment "B" - Main Arterials

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.

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Report Approved by: _____
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For Catherine Sanderson, Senior Manager - Financial Services, 490-1562

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Mike Labrecque, Director - Transportation and Public Works, 490-4855

Attachment "A"

Daily Precipitation Total – Halifax International Airport

May, 2007		June, 2007		July, 2007	
Day	Rainfall (mm)	Day	Rainfall (mm)	Day	Rainfall (mm)
1	4.2	1	T	1	1.4
2	0	2	T	2	0.3
3	T	3	T	3	0
4	0.5	4	18.8	4	0.2
5	1.1	5	6.4	5	21.7
6	0	6	19.4	6	3.7
7	0	7	1.7	7	T
8	0	8	0	8	1.2
9	0	9	0	9	T
10	0	10	8.8	10	T
11	1	11	23.2	11	0.7
12	6.7	12	3.9	12	5.6
13	0.2	13	T	13	0
14	0	14	T	14	0
15	T	15	0	15	0
16	9.3	16	0.3	16	0
17	7.8	17	1.3	17	0
18	0.3	18	2	18	0
19	46.9	19	T	19	12.7
20	13.3	20	T	20	11.8
21	0.6	21	17.6	21	47.3
22	T	22	1.5	22	0.3
23	0	23	11	23	T
24	T	24	7.6	24	T
25	T	25	0	25	0
26	0	26	T	26	0
27	T	27	T	27	0
28	T	28	T	28	T
29	T	29	T	29	6.9
30	0	30	0	30	26
31	0			31	0
Total	91.9	Total	123.5	Total	139.8

Prepared by: Scotia Weather Services Inc
Date: 2007

Main Arteries

Halifax Peninsula

Agricola Street - from Bloomfield to Lady Hammond Road

Barrington Street - from Inglis Street to the MacKay Bridge

Bayers Road - from Joseph Howe Drive to Windsor Street

Chebucto Road - from Armdale Rotary to Windsor Street

Connaught Avenue - from Jubilee Road to Windsor Street

Joseph Howe Drive - from the Armdale Rotary to Bedford Highway

Lower Water Street - from Terminal Road to Duke Street

North Street - from Chebucto Road to the McDonald Bridge

Quinpool Road - from the Armdale Rotary to Robie Street

Robie Street - from south end Halifax to north end Halifax

Sackville Street - from Brunswick Street to Lower Water Street

South Park Street - from Inglis Street to Sackville Street

South Street - from North West Arm to Hollis Street

Spring Garden Road - from Robie Street to Barrington Street

Windsor Street - from Quinpool Road to Kempt Road

Halifax

Cowie Hill Road - from Herring Cove Road to North West Arm Drive

Dunbrack Street - from Main Avenue to Kearney Lake Road

Dutch Village Road - loops around Joseph Howe Drive

Herring Cove Road - from Armdale Rotary through Spryfield to Lynette

Kearney Lake Road - from Hwy 102 Overpass to Blue Mountain Road

Lacewood Drive - from Vimy Avenue to Chain Lake Drive

Leiblin Drive - Old Sambro Road to Rockingstone Road

Main Avenue - Dunbrack Street to Bedford Highway

Old Sambro Road - from Herring Cove Road to 4-way intersection at Rockingstone Road

Purcells Cove Road - from Herring Cove Road to John Brackett Drive

Parkland Drive - from Lacewood Drive to Kearney Lake Road

St. Margarets Bay Road - from Armdale Rotary to Timberlea Village

Williams Lake Road - links Herring Cove Road with Purcells Cove Road

Dartmouth

Alderney Drive - Windmill and Wyse to start of Prince Albert Road

Bissett Road - from Cole Harbour Road to Cow Bay Road

Burnside Drive - from Hwy 111 to Akerley Blvd.

Caldwell Road - from Cole Harbour Road to Shore Road

Caledonia Road - from Main Street to Montebello Road

Forest Hills Parkway - from Cole Harbour Road to Main Street

Main Street - from Hwy 111 to Hwy 107

Nantucket Avenue - from the Mcdonald Bridge to Victoria Road

Pleasant Street - from Prince Albert Road and turns into Eastern Passage Road

Portland Street - from Alderney Drive and turns into Cole Harbour Road at Caldwell Road

Prince Albert Road - downtown at Alderney Drive to Parco

Victoria Road - from Portland Street and becomes Windmill Road; from Portland Street to Park Avenue

Waverly Road - Parco out to Portobello Road

Windmill Road - Alderney Drive becomes Windmill Road at Park Avenue and turns into Prince Albert Road

Woodland Avenue - from Victoria Road to Mic Mac Blvd.

Woodlawn Road - from Mount Edward Road to Main Street (school section)

Wyse Road - from Windmill Road to Albro Lake Road

Bedford/Sackville

Beaver Bank Connector - from Old Sackville Road to Sackville Drive (guardrail)

Beaver Bank Road - from Sackville Drive and Barrett Road

Beaver Bank Windsor Junction Cross Road - from Beaver Bank Road (guardrail)

Bedford Hwy - from Hammonds Plains Road to Rocky Lake Drive

Bedford Hwy - from Fairview Overpass at Evans Avenue to Hammonds Plains Road

Cobequid Road - from Sackville Drive to Rocky Lake Drive

Dartmouth Road - from the Bedford Hwy to Eaglewood Drive

Fall River Road to Hwy #2

Glendale Drive - from Cobequid Road to Beaver Bank Road

Hammonds Plains Road - from the Bedford Hwy to Hwy 102 overpass. Also Hwy 102 Exit 3B or Hwy 103 Exit 5 Upper Tantallon.

Holland Road, Fall River

Lucasville Road - from Sackville Drive to beyond Old Sackville Road

Rocky Lake Drive - from the Bedford Hwy to Duke Street

Windsor Junction / Fall River Road to Hwy #2