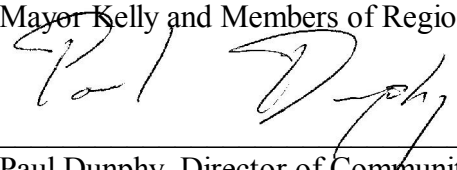


**Item No. 5**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**November 13, 2007**

**To:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Regional Council

**Submitted by:**

  
Paul Dunphy, Director of Community Development

**Date:** November 6, 2007

**Subject:** **Project 00854 - Wind Turbines: Project Update and Community Consultation – Phase II**

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**INFORMATION REPORT**

**ORIGIN**

- On November 21, 2006 Regional Council initiated a Phased planning process to prepare policy and land use regulations for the location and siting of the wind turbines in HRM.
- On January 23, 2007 an information report was tabled outlining the community consultation process for Phase 1 of the Wind Energy Project.
- On October 24, 2007, motion was passed by the Regional Planning Advisory Committee to begin community consultation for Phase II of the Wind Energy Project.

## **BACKGROUND**

On November 21, 2006 Regional Council initiated a phased planning process for the purpose of creating policy and regulations for the siting of wind turbines in HRM. In January of 2007, a report was sent to Regional Council describing the community consultation program for Phase I. The Phase I consultation, which addressed rural HRM, was completed in April of this year.

At the time of initiation of the HRM wind energy project, it was unforeseen that a number of related processes for wind energy would be initiated at the Provincial level. Over the course of 2007 these processes ran independently of the HRM wind energy project, yet the outcomes could have a significant impact regarding decision-making for the siting of wind turbines in HRM.

It was initially envisioned that the Phase II community consultation would commence immediately following the approval of plan policy and regulations for Phase I (rural HRM). The final Provincial process deliverable – a Best Practices Guide and Model Land Use By-law– is to be completed for UNSM in the next few months. Given these external initiatives, staff feels it is prudent to slightly adjust the project timeline and public consultation program for Phase II.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Wind Energy project was initiated in response to the rapidly growing interest (and subsequent demand) for wind energy projects in Nova Scotia. In order to facilitate HRM's interest in wind energy, the Jacques Whitford Wind Energy Master Plan study was commissioned as a basis upon which to commence the community consultations and consider the issues of siting wind turbines in HRM. Factors that influenced the rising demand for this project at that time included the following:

- < emphasis on renewable energy targets recently established by NSPI;
- < the lack of existing regulations at the Municipal level for the siting of wind turbines in HRM;
- < the growing interest from private wind energy developers who seek to expand capacity in this key sector; and,
- < the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy requirement to address wind energy through the Community Energy Functional Plan.

Early in 2007, months after council initiated the HRM Wind Energy project, the Province launched a series of interrelated processes to provide conditions for NS Municipalities to begin to adopt regulations for the siting of wind turbines where none had previously existed. Three of these processes have had a direct relationship to the HRM wind energy project.

### *Provincially Initiated Processes*

1. May/07 release of New Environmental Assessment Guidelines for Wind Turbines
2. September/07 release of the new NS Wind Atlas data, and;
3. Dept of Energy/UNSM RFP to prepare Best Practices Guide and a Model Land Use By-law for Wind Turbines in Nova Scotia, scheduled for completion in late 2007/early 2008.

At the time of its conclusion, the Jacques Whitford Wind Energy Master Plan study provided the

most accurate data to date to inform decision-making for wind turbines in HRM. However, the aforementioned Provincial processes (which had not been initiated at the time of the study's conclusion) have ultimately impacted staff decision-making in key areas of consideration including the following:

- appropriate planning and development approval processes;
- wind turbine location suitability in HRM, and;
- recommended standards for wind turbine siting.

The relationship between the Provincial/UNSM processes and HRM's wind energy project, prompted staff to consult with the Regional Plan Advisory Committee (RPAC) and the Energy and Underground Services (EUGS) Committee. On three separate occasions between July and October staff appeared before these committees to provide updates and to seek direction. The intention was to provide information to these committees about the complexities of siting large and small scale wind turbines, planning approval options, and to provide an explanation of the project timelines.

To this end, staff are assessing the new wind atlas data and participating in the Province/UNSM Best Practices Guide and Model Land Use By-law for the Siting of Wind Turbines in Nova Scotia. At this time, it is considered prudent to analyze the product of this study prior to concluding Phase I of the project. Further, staff intends to use the time available to begin the Phase II community consultation program, rather than awaiting the conclusion of Phase I. A motion to commence the Phase II consultation program was approved at the October 24/07 meeting of the Regional Planning Advisory Committee.

#### *Community Consultation*

Typically, community consultation for an issue of Regional importance occurs on the order of one meeting per Region. This procedure has been established in other projects of Region-wide significance including such issues as Capital Cost Contributions, C&D sites and the Parkland Dedication review process.

Staff are in the process of scheduling three public meetings, the purpose of which is to provide information and receive feedback on the opportunities and issues related to the placement of accessory wind turbines in the urban/ suburban areas of HRM. The three meetings are being scheduled as follows:

#### *Meeting Locations*

- < 1 meeting in the Bedford/ Sackville area
- < 1 meeting in the Dartmouth/Cole Harbour/ Eastern Passage area
- < 1 meeting in the Halifax area

In addition, meetings will be scheduled with the Greater Burnside Business Association and the Bayers Lake Business Association to discuss the opportunities and issues associated with accessory wind turbine development in the business parks.

The public meetings will be duly advertised, and invitations will be extended to all Community

Councils, and PACs and the Regional Plan Advisory Committee. Stakeholders such as NSPI will also be invited to these sessions to make comment.

It is anticipated that the community consultation for Phase II will commence in December and run through January of 2008.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

None. The costs to process this HRM initiated project are covered under the C-320 operating budget.

### **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN**

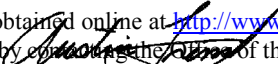
This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

None

### **ATTACHMENTS**

None

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  of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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