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Item No. 4

Halifax Regional Council
April 15, 2008

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Cathie O'Toole".

Cathie O'Toole, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management

DATE: April 3, 2008

SUBJECT: Sweden - Halifax Regional Municipality - Sustainability Initiative

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Staff is providing Regional Council with a snapshot of the Sustainability Initiative with Sweden.

BACKGROUND

In early 2007, Boverket, the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning for Sweden had approached Canada's national environment department, Environment Canada about linking up with a Canadian city to share information on sustainability including climate change management.

Environment Canada, who partner with HRM on a number of initiatives including HRM's national award winning Climate SMART program, had suggested HRM among a handful of Canadian cities.

The Swedes, after reviewing HRM's corporate and environmental web sites, were quite interested in HRM. HRM staff learned later on that there was considerable interest in HRM's various environmental initiatives and in particular climate change and sustainable land use planning (i.e. Regional Plan).

In early April 2007, the Sustainable Environment Management Office received a request from Dr. Sofie Adolfsson Jorby and from the Director-general of Boverket (copy attached to this report) requesting a fall 2008 working stay with HRM.

Boverket saw an opportunity to have one of their senior environmental experts further develop their working skills through a practical working stay abroad. They also envisaged mutual benefits for the host city or country. Boverket also confirmed that they would finance Dr. Sofie Adolfsson Jorby's stay in Canada.

DISCUSSION

The Fit and Opportunity for HRM

HRM is committed to being a healthy, sustainable, vibrant community and has commenced the journey through an integrated systems approach to clean air, land, water and energy. A corporate Sustainability Transition Team with representation that transcends the organization is in place. A recent reorganization has created the Infrastructure and Asset Management Department and places design, construction, policy and strategy under one roof, including the environment. This effectively completed the internal governance for sustainability and the environment by providing a corporate home base.

Key priorities include sustainability performance measurement and bench marking. This opportunity with Sweden provides for both.

Sweden is a world leader in sustainability. For example greenhouse gas emissions on a per capita basis are around 6 tonnes in Sweden. In Nova Scotia they hover around 23 tonnes.

Boverket is also responsible for Sweden's national environmental performance measurement, and Dr. Sofie Adolfsson Jorby is directly involved in these efforts. She also represented Sweden in an expert working group of the European Union on environmental management plans and systems for cities and towns.

HRM can learn greatly from these international experiences as we continue along our own road to sustainability.

The Working Stay

Dr. Adolfsson Jorby, and her husband Anders, will be in HRM in Mid April to finalize their fall arrangements. A foreign worker permit is required and all appears to be in order to date.

While here in April, Dr. Adolfsson Jorby will be presenting at the Atlantic Canada Sustainability Summit. HRM is one of the founding partners of the Atlantic Canada Sustainability Initiative.

The fall 2008 stay is from September to December and will work from the Sustainable Environment Management Office. The knowledge exchange plans are presently being finalized and will include a number of speaking engagements and sessions with local groups, agencies and academic institutions. Considerable dialogue with HRM staff is also planned.

A presentation/ event involving Sweden's Consulate in Canada is also being discussed for this fall. Staff will be back to Regional Council when details are known.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The Swedish national government through Boverket will be financing Dr. Adolfsson Jorby's working stay and this is confirmed in the attached letter from the Director-general of Boverket.

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.

Regional Plan and Sustainability

This sustainability knowledge exchange fully supports the intent of the Regional Plan. It also provides an opportunity to learn about Sweden's sustainability performance measuring, reporting and bench marking.

ATTACHMENTS

Letter dated March 23, 2007 from the Director-general of Boverket.

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 : Stephen King, Manager, Sustainable Environment Management Office, 490-6188

Boverket

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Mr Stephen King
Manager-Senior Adviser
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Dear Mr King,

I am writing this letter to recommend Sofie Adolfsson Jörby, supporting her wish to have a working stint for some months in the autumn of 2008 at your organisation.

The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning – Boverket – is the central government authority for planning, the management of land and water resources, urban development, building and housing under the Ministry of the Environment. Boverket monitors the function of the legislative system under the Planning and Building Act and related legislation and proposes regulatory changes if necessary. To ensure effective implementation Boverket also provides information to those engaged in planning, housing, construction and building inspection activities.

When developing more sustainable societies, one very important task to tackle is climate change. In Sweden this issue has currently reached the top of the political agenda, and at Boverket we are more and more focusing on how to adapt to change such as more frequent storms, flooding in urban areas and milder winters, all matters of concern when planning and building. Moreover, we have to consider what can be done to reduce CO₂-emissions within our areas of responsibility, e.g. how to reduce transport (to some extent a question of physical planning) and use less energy when heating our houses. Within this field another task of Boverket is to assist in developing wind energy. We give advice in handbooks, and from this year we decide on planning subsidies for wind energy to local authorities.

Boverket is responsible for the assessment of the national environmental quality objective "A Good Built Environment" as well as the comprehensive goal of "Spatial planning and Resource Conservation of Land and Water". Since 2001, when Boverket employed Sofie Adolfsson Jörby she has had the overall responsibility for environmental issues at the Board coordinating our work with the national environmental objectives. This work consists of analyses of environmental achievements, development of implementation methods at regional and local lev-

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els and reporting to the Government. Sofie Adolfsson Jörby also represents Boverket on the working committee of the Swedish Environmental Objectives Council.

Another item on the current Swedish agenda is regional expansion and sustainable development. Sofie Adolfsson Jörby is much involved in our work on this matter, which concentrates on regional development planning and sustainability. Late in 2005 she was responsible for a report, published by Boverket in Swedish, "Is regional expansion sustainable?". There is a great demand for this report, and Dr Adolfsson Jörby has presented it at several large conferences in Sweden as well as elsewhere in Europe.

Sofie Adolfsson Jörby is very experienced in working with environmental and sustainable development issues at local, regional and national level. In addition to her MSc as a Chartered Surveyor she has studied physical planning one year in Denmark and she also is PhD in environmental science. In her thesis she analysed and discussed the Local Agenda 21 processes of four Swedish municipalities focusing on how natural resources and local democracy were managed in the four local administrations.

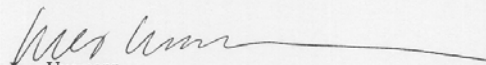
At Boverket we benefit from Sofie Adolfsson Jörby's broad and deep knowledge within all these fields, and we are pleased to be able to support her financially when she wants further to develop her skills and broaden her experience during some months of practical work at Halifax Regional Municipality.

Boverket has not yet very much experience of employees who develop their skills by practical working stints abroad, but I believe this to be a very good way to build up broader knowledge and make future contacts. I am sure Boverket will have great use of the knowledge and experiences you and your colleagues will share with Sofie Adolfsson Jörby, and I am convinced that you and she will agree on an interesting programme during her stay for the best mutual benefit.

Boverket will finance Sofie Adolfsson Jörby's stay in Canada. The support includes her salary, her personal expenses for housing as well as travel costs to and from Canada and official journeys within Canada.

I hope you will consider this proposal and accept to have Sofie Adolfsson Jörby at your office during autumn of 2008.

Yours sincerely,


Ines Uusmann
Director-general

