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Item No. 2

Halifax Regional Council
January 20, 2009

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "P. Townsend".

Management

Phillip Townsend - Assistant Director, Infrastructure and Asset

DATE: January 12, 2009

“Earth Hour” Event - 2009

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

This report originates with staff in cooperation with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

BACKGROUND

Since 2007, the WWF has been promoting the annual ‘Earth Hour’ event as a campaign in support of climate change awareness around the world. The program involves a globally coordinated effort to switch off all nonessential lighting for a one hour period.

HRM has been a corporate supporter of this initiative through the Sustainable Environment Management Office (SEMO) and planning for Earth Hour 2009 has begun. Earth Hour itself will take place in late March and a number of promotional / educational events will take place in the coming weeks. Further information will be provided to Council as the planning process continues and details are confirmed.

DISCUSSION

HRM Council has taken a pro-active leadership approach to developing and maintaining a healthy, sustainable community through the adoption of a number of sustainability related plans and strategies such as the Regional Plan and Community Energy Plan. Corporate participation in Earth Hour activities provides an excellent opportunity to take part in a global event and celebrate HRM's commitment to environmental sustainability.

The WWF will be coordinating the majority of efforts for promotion of this event and HRM will be supporting this initiative through such things as:

- promotion of the event through internal publications and electronic message boards;
- promotion of the event through external publications and HRM-Based web applications;
- providing the call centre with information to enable responses to Earth Hour related questions from the public;
- taking an active role and supporting WWF sponsored promotional events; and
- turning off the lights in HRM owned facilities to celebrate Earth Hour

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Municipal costs are expected to be minimal. Incidental promotional expenses and staff resources are accommodated in the operating envelope for the Sustainable Environment Management Office.

In addition, minor operating cost savings will be realized in response to a reduction in electricity usage during the event itself.

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/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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