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Item No. 12.2

Halifax Regional Council
January 27, 2009

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Labrecque", written over a horizontal line.

Michael Labrecque, Director Transportation & Public Works

DATE: January 26, 2009

SUBJECT: Possible Overnight Parking in HRM Owned Parking Lots

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Item 12.1 raised at the December 16, 2008 meeting of Halifax Regional Council - Implications of Winter Parking Ban.

BACKGROUND

Motion passed requesting a staff report on the possibility of providing residential off-street parking from 1:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. during the Winter Parking Ban for those residents without driveways/parking areas in District 11, 12, and 14. The following locations were noted as possible areas for the residential parking:

1. Bloomfield Centre
2. Parking Lot "J" at the Centennial Pool
3. The former St. Patrick's High School
4. The Halifax Forum
5. Any other area that may provide off-street parking for residents during the winter parking ban.

Councillor Sloane requested the report include answers to the following and that an FAQ sheet be linked to the HRM website and sent to Eastlink and the weekly papers:

1. Who has the HRM contract for towing and where are they located?
2. What paperwork must a resident have with them in order to have their vehicle released?

Councillor Watts requested that staff engage the public over the next few months through public consultation process to discuss the impact of the winter parking ban and possible solutions.

DISCUSSION

The Overnight Winter Parking Ban was reinstated in 2003 by the Traffic Authority after a three year trial period without it because of a lack of compliance by citizens who were continuing to park their vehicles on the street during, and immediately following, a storm resulting in significant problems providing effective snow and ice operations.

Property	Management Agency	Contact	Comment
Bloomfield Center	HRM - Community Development	Claudette Levy 490-4629	Pilot Program being initiated February - April
Area J Centennial Pool	Centennial Pool Association	Doug Rafuse, Facility Management Community Development	Association offers monthly permit parking and paid evening special events parking as required
St. Patrick's School	Halifax Regional School Board	Charles Clattenburg HRSB Operations	No program in place

Halifax Forum	Forum Board	Al Driscoll, GM Halifax Forum	Program exists
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Staff has reviewed the concept/availability of off-street parking at HRM buildings, specifically the properties identified by Councillor Blumenthal, and there are some practical limitations from an operations perspective that should be noted. It is possible to allow overnight parking; however, there is the potential for added costs associated with inability to clear the lots in an efficient and timely manner.

The majority of our lots are at capacity during the day by users and permit parkers and the lots are primarily cleared overnight. In essence, staff need the parking lots empty at night for the same reasons and benefits associated with having the vehicles off the streets during a winter storm event.

Against that general background, staff from TPW and Community Development, operators of Bloomfield Center, are recommending a pilot initiative at Bloomfield introducing off-street parking. Bloomfield Centre will be offered, beginning in early February, as an overnight permit lot on a trial basis. Parking will be available, through inquiry at the Center, from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. The proposed rate will be set at half of the daily rate as set by the Center. Hours and availability are subject to center program demands.

At the end of the overnight parking ban, centre staff will do an operational review to determine if it is feasible to continue or discontinue the program altogether.

Appendix A is attached in response to Councillor Sloane's request for an FAQ sheet to be linked to the HRM website. It includes more detail with regard to the following questions:

1. **Question:** "Who has the HRM contract for towing and where are they located?"

Answer: Ace Towing, 687 Prospect Road, has the contract for Peninsula and Mainland South area; Ruggles Towing, 12 Lorne Drive has the contract for Dartmouth area; A-1 Towing, 29 Skyridge Avenue has the contract for Mainland North and Bedford area. There are no contracted towing companies for RCMP enforced areas.

2. **Question:** "What paperwork must a resident have with them in order to have their vehicle released?"

Answer: An impound release form obtained first from Police and valid driver's license, vehicle registration and proof of insurance.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are likely to be extra costs incurred if the contractor has to make additional trips back to the same lot to clear snow that could not be cleared due to vehicles being parking in the lots overnight. There would also be extra administrative time incurred to issue parking passes, collect fees and police the lot. However, these costs could be offset by the revenue collected from the overnight parkers.

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.

ATTACHMENT

Appendix A - FAQ

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 : Peter Stickings, Manager Real Property TPW 490-7129
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Claudette Levy, Area Coordinator, CD 4904560

ATTACHMENT A

Why is the overnight winter parking ban necessary?

Clearing of snow from streets cannot be effectively completed when vehicles remain parked on them. For the past number of years attempts have been made to be flexible by implementing the winter parking ban only as a last resort when there was significant snow accumulation without any anticipation of improved weather conditions. Irrespective of the implementation of the ban, Section 139 of the Motor Vehicle Act provides that parked vehicles obstructing snow removal or winter maintenance operations may be removed at the owner's cost, regardless of time or date. Unfortunately our experience (and as evidenced by the recent snow event), vehicles were often left illegally parked on many streets both during the storm and the subsequent cleanup period. With an overnight winter parking ban in effect, residents are forced to find off-street parking during the snow season; with no overnight winter parking ban, there is a significant amount of intentional non-compliance by those willing to risk the slim chance of being towed during a storm instead of securing an off-street parking space. Enforcement of the overnight winter parking ban throughout its duration allows for a planned, uniform level of snow clearing/removal operations in the hours of lowest traffic volume, while delivering an appropriately strong message of deterrence to those habitually parking on-street. Without an overnight winter parking ban, the night-time window of opportunity for snow operations is lost.

Why not enforce only during snowstorms?

It is sometimes difficult for Police to be available for parking enforcement given the other concurrent demands during a snowstorm; and the availability of tow trucks for removal of parked vehicles is reduced during storms because they are needed simultaneously for collisions, removal of stalled vehicles, etc. and their response time is compromised by road conditions.

Why not allow alternate side parking?

There have been many suggestions put forward over the years as alternatives to the Overnight Winter Parking Ban, including an alternate side parking system. A few of the reasons for not implementing such a policy are listed below:

- For small to moderate snow/ice events, a single overnight shift with parking prohibited usually provides adequate response. With an alternate side of the street policy in place, a double shift would have to be called regardless of the size of the snow event. For many events, this would automatically double the cost of the response.
- Winter conditions in HRM often result in snowfall being followed by rain or quick melting. To prevent the formation of black ice, snow must be cleared to the gutter on both sides of the street so that water will drain.
- If snow melts then freezes hard on one side of the street while awaiting to be cleared on the second night, plows will ride up over the hard ice or will plow up large blocks of ice which will then fill driveway openings. As residents are not often able to remove these large blocks of ice, special response may be required.

Does the winter parking ban affect my residential parking exemption?

Residential and Visitor Parking Exemptions allow vehicles to be exempted from the following parking restrictions on a specific street:

One hour or two hour timed parking

No parking for a particular 30 minute period in the morning and/or afternoon

No parking for a particular 1 hour period in the morning and/or afternoon

When in effect, the overnight winter parking ban restricts vehicles from being parked on any street between the hours of 1:00 am and 7:00 am and this applies to everyone regardless of weather conditions, even those who may have a Residential Parking Exemption.

During the day a Residential Parking Exemption would allow you to continue to park in these locations regardless of whether the overnight winter parking ban is in effect or not, but you would still be required to remove your vehicle from the street in the event of a storm or risk being ticketed and/or towed regardless of the exemption or time of day.

So basically, as long as you aren't parked on-street between the hours of 1:00 am and 7:00 am, or during/after a storm, your Residential Parking Exemption would still be valid.

How do I obtain a release for an impounded vehicle?

Registered owners (RO) of impounded vehicles must FIRST obtain an impound release prior to going to the tow service storage facility. Releases for areas under the jurisdiction of the Halifax Regional Police can be obtained only at the HRP Headquarters located at 1975 Gottingen Street, Halifax. Releases for areas under the jurisdiction of the RCMP would be made from the nearest RCMP Detachment. Only the Registered Owner of a vehicle can obtain the impound release by providing photo ID confirming identity to the front desk attendant. If the RO is not available (for example, out of town), he or she may mail or courier a NOTARIZED letter designating another person to pick up the vehicle. Only the original of the notarized letter is acceptable, not copies or faxes. In the letter, the RO must be very specific as to who will be picking up the vehicle, along with a detailed description of the vehicle itself (make, model, license plate number, etc.). With the impound release in hand, the RO or designate may then go to the appropriate towing service facility and pay the applicable tow and storage fees directly.

In order to drive the vehicle off the lot, the RO or designate must present a valid driver's license, valid registration and proof of insurance. Uninsured and unregistered vehicles cannot be driven out of the impound lot, but they may be towed to private property at the owner's expense.

At the present time RCMP do not have any contracted towing service.

The current contract tow services for HRP jurisdiction areas are:

Halifax Peninsula and Mainland South Area: Ace Towing, 687 Prospect Road, (Goodwood)

Dartmouth Area: Ruggles Towing, 12 Lorne Drive (Westphal)

Mainland North, Bedford Area: A-1 Towing, 29 Skyridge Ave, (Lower Sackville)