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**Item No. 4**

**Halifax Regional Council  
February 24, 2009**

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Dunphy". The signature is written over a horizontal line that extends to the right, under the "SUBMITTED BY:" label.

Paul Dunphy, Director, Community Development

**DATE:** January 21, 2009

**SUBJECT:** Good Neighbours Great Neighbourhoods

**INFORMATION REPORT**

**ORIGIN**

This report originates from staff.

## **BACKGROUND**

In fall 2007, during an Open House in the Councillors' Lounge, Council was given a preview of HRM's Good Neighbours Great Neighbourhoods (GNGN) civic pride initiative and how it could support their efforts working with constituents at the grass-roots level. Council helped publicly launch the initiative at a media event on May 14, 2008.

Good Neighbours Great Neighbourhoods is a long-term social marketing initiative that seeks to promote voluntary participation in civic and community life. Social marketing is an integrated part of our promotional strategies at HRM. GNGN now serves as an "umbrella" brand, tying together the many social marketing initiatives and programs HRM undertakes to create great neighbourhoods - initiatives and programs that have as their common desired outcome a change in behaviour. For example, both the anti-litter program and the Pollution Control (P2) program are designed to change the behaviour of indifference toward our environment, while the Community Visioning program and the HRMbyDesign program are working towards greater citizen participation.

The concept behind the approach is great neighbourhoods don't just happen on their own. Rather, it takes the efforts of individual citizens and organizations to participate, work together, and contribute to make their neighbourhoods great places to live. The approach aims to encourage citizen participation by recognizing positive contributions, providing tools and resources that make it easier to participate, and creating a greater awareness of the opportunities to participate. The approach also connects the brand with a variety of community building initiatives as a way of promoting positive social change.

An inter-departmental steering committee was established in the fall of 2007 to help implement the Good Neighbours Great Neighbourhoods initiative. The primary focus of the initiative during the first year was to inform the public about the initiative while building brand awareness, and to integrate the branding with projects that promote community building, collaboration between local government and citizens, and civic pride.

This report provides an update to Regional Council on the actions and successes since the launch of the Good Neighbours Great Neighbourhoods civic pride initiative. The report also includes some of the planned actions.

## **DISCUSSION**

There are several areas of focus for implementation of the Good Neighbours Great Neighbourhoods initiative. They include promotions, tools, events, activities, and other marketing efforts.

## **Building Brand Awareness**

Once we build brand awareness and value, residents will clearly identify the GNGN logo with a sense of civic pride and as a visual cue that there is an opportunity to do their part in contributing to the betterment of their neighbourhoods. Use of the logo in the promotion, advertising and communications of current initiatives has served to tie these initiatives together so that residents see the “big picture”. Rather than presenting HRM initiatives as “one-off events” or isolated activities, the brand is a very visible way to show the interconnectedness of our various initiatives which make HRM a better place to live, work and play.

For example, to support efforts to encourage citizen participation in helping to make our neighbourhoods safer and cleaner, both Transportation and Public Works (TPW) Regional Operations and Solid Waste integrated the GNGN brand and messaging into their recent television commercials. TPW’s commercials focussed on seeking public participation and cooperation by asking that they “work together” with snow removal operators in order to keep streets clear of snow, and by sharing with residents specific ways they could participate and stay safe. Solid Waste’s campaign raised residents awareness of the tools and resources HRM makes available to them (such as three-stream waste receptacles), focussed on the benefits residents would enjoy by making the effort not to litter, and illustrated the behaviour we wanted them to emulate e.g. throwing a plastic bottle into the receptacle marked “Recyclables”.

To reinforce the message that attending civic events is a way we celebrate pride in our Municipality - and that it is a great way for residents to participate in community life - the Community Relations and Cultural Affairs (CRCA) division integrated the brand into its promotional efforts for Natal Day and the Dartmouth Tree Lighting.

It was also a natural fit to evolve the existing annual citizen calendar into a communications piece that incorporated HRM’s Good Neighbours Great Neighbourhoods brand and messaging. Already a proven, valuable social marketing tool with an environmental component aimed at informing and engaging our residents, the 2009 calendar reflects the goodwill that HRM citizens, in partnership with the municipality, extend on a daily basis.

Moving forward we will continue to seek out opportunities to promote the brand.

## **Tools**

A key element of a well-planned social marketing campaign is the removal of barriers to behaviour change by providing tools and resources that make it easy for residents to adopt a desired behaviour, or stop an undesirable behaviour. There is a tendency for individuals to respond positively to actions that are highly beneficial and have few barriers.

The development, promotion and distribution of the Neighbourhood Toolkit is an important resource that supports individual social marketing campaigns carried out by our municipality. The Toolkit includes information intended to make it easier for citizen participation in community life, such as

information on starting a neighbourhood association, accessing HRM grants, conducting a community clean up, hosting a neighbourhood block party, starting a neighbourhood watch program, and involving youth in your neighbourhood.

In 2009, to align with Council's focus area of Community Planning, staff will add to the Toolkit information on welcoming newcomers, how to create a community ice rink, how to start a community garden, and how to create community art. The Neighbourhood Toolkit is distributed through libraries, customer service centres, recreation centres, and other partners.

A new web site, [www.myhrm.ca](http://www.myhrm.ca), gives citizens an opportunity to share good neighbour stories and thank one another for positive contributions. Moving forward we will promote opportunities to highlight neighbourhood successes and make the website more interactive. The web site will provide citizens with information on volunteer opportunities with local government and access to resources in the tool kit.

### **Other Activities**

It is important to collect a baseline of information in order to measure success of any initiative or action. To this end, brand awareness and sense of community indicators will be included as a part of future surveys.

Creating a database of neighbourhood associations will help in targeting efforts to promote Good Neighbours, and exploring partnerships with community stakeholders and external organizations will also be an important future action.

### **Internal Successes**

The Good Neighbours Great Neighbourhoods initiative has decreased the tendency for business units to operate in "silos". The creation of the Good Neighbours steering committee has resulted in increased sharing of information and resources amongst business units, leading to cost savings, pooling of resources and more consistent messages to the public. Internal processes are being strengthened to support processes that are promoted in the Toolkit.

To demonstrate that HRM values and wants to recognize and reward staff that exhibit the attributes of being a good neighbour, the CAO Award for Community Involvement has evolved into what is now called the "Good Neighbours Great Neighbourhoods Award".

And to further connect the concept that giving time, money and support to charitable organizations is a measure of how staff are good neighbours, the theme for the HRM's 2008 United Way Giving Campaign was "United Neighbourhoods". The logo for the campaign merged the familiar United Way logo with the GNGN logo. The good neighbour message was a common thread throughout the entire campaign, and the result was that HRM surpassed all past records for donations with a grand total of \$113,000.

The following table provides a summary of events, activities, marketing efforts, tools and promotions which integrated and/or supported the GNGN brand and messaging since its May 2008 launch.

<b>Good Neighbours Great Neighbourhoods Actions (since May 2008)</b>	
<p><u>Events:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBC's Birthday Celebration broadcast live (themed around good neighbour stories)</li> <li>• Safe Communities Symposium</li> <li>• Natal Day (logo was used on all promotional material)</li> <li>• International Pot luck and BBQ (offered through the Welcoming Communities Committee the brand was integrated to show great neighbourhoods welcome newcomers)</li> <li>• Black Rock and Dingle Beach Openings (a celebration of citizens support to keep our harbour clean)</li> <li>• Mayor's Tea Party</li> <li>• HRM Volunteer Conference</li> <li>• Dartmouth Tree Lighting</li> <li>• United Way (United Neighbourhoods Campaign)</li> <li>• Community Shred Event (offered through Solid Waste and several partners)</li> <li>• Municipal Communicators Conference (asked to present our GNGN social marketing campaign to our municipal colleagues)</li> <li>• HRM Free Concerts (advertisement)</li> <li>• Communities in Bloom (special mention this year for the "Good Neighbours-Great Neighbourhoods" program in National Competition)</li> </ul>	<p><u>Promotions/Marketing/Advertisements:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAO Article introducing the initiative to the business sector (Business Voice Magazine)</li> <li>• Naturally Green (article introducing it to the public and promoting myhrm.ca and the Toolkit)</li> <li>• Bookmarks (distributed through the library directing residents to myhrm.ca)</li> <li>• myhrm.ca awareness ads on buses</li> <li>• Volunteer Services (messaging reinforces volunteers as being good neighbours )</li> <li>• Lifestyles Magazine (advertorial)</li> <li>• Newcomers Guide to HRM</li> <li>• 2009 HRM Citizen Calendar</li> <li>• Transportation and Public Works (television commercial regarding snow removal)</li> <li>• Good Neighbour T-shirts</li> </ul> <p><u>Programs/Activities/Tools:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• portable ashtrays and gum holders (social marketing tool)</li> <li>• Smartrip.ca</li> <li>• Good Neighbour Tool Kit</li> <li>• Community Visioning</li> <li>• Seniors Snow Removal Program</li> <li>• Good Neighbour employee award</li> <li>• Councillor Orientation</li> </ul>

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

None

**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.

**ATTACHMENTS**

N/A

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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