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Item No. 5

**Halifax Regional Council
June 23, 2009**

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 

Phil Townsend, Acting Director, Infrastructure & Asset Management

DATE: June 12, 2009

SUBJECT: Yellow Floating Heart & Invasive Species

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

August 1, 2007 - Letter from Mayor Peter Kelly to Nova Scotia Ministers David Morse, Natural Resources, and Mark Parent, Environment and Labour

BACKGROUND

Over the past several years, a floating aquatic plant has been growing increasingly common in Little Albro Lake, Dartmouth, and has become a nuisance to local residents. The plant was identified in 2006 by researchers at Saint Mary's University (SMU) as Yellow Floating Heart (*Nymphoides peltata*), an invasive Asian species used as an ornamental pond plant. This species has become an invasive pest in several US states, and Ontario. It roots in bottom sediments and produces surface leaves and yellow flowers that are similar in appearance to native water lily species.

DISCUSSION

Subsequent to Yellow Floating Heart's positive identification, Council requested a staff report on June 12, 2007. In response to that report (July 31, 2007, Item 11.1.4), Council approved a motion directing staff to undertake public education efforts to alert residents to the problems posed by importation or spread of invasive aquatic plant species, to refer management of Yellow Floating Heart to the Province, and that the Mayor write to Provincial Ministers of Environment & Labour (NSEL) and Natural Resources (DNR) to indicate HRM's concerns.

Mayor Kelly submitted a letter to the Ministers on August 1, 2007, and received a written response from Minister Parent on August 28. Further to the Minister's letter, Provincial staff from NSEL & DNR conducted investigations on the status and origin of Yellow Floating Heart in Little Albro Lake, and directed further correspondence to HRM staff in May 2008 to report on their work and to offer the delivery of a presentation to Council and staff on the situation at Little Albro Lake and the broader issue of Invasive Alien Species.

In October 2008, Provincial staff and professors from SMU co-hosted a public workshop on Yellow Floating Heart and other aquatic invasive species for the benefit of the local community. It was well attended by residents of the Albro Lake area; a proposal for community-based environmental monitoring ("Albro Lake Watch"), to be coordinated by SMU's Community-based Environmental Monitoring Network, was informally adopted by those residents in attendance.

On June 23, 2009, provincial staff from DNR will deliver a brief presentation to Regional Council on their findings regarding Yellow Floating Heart and associated recommendations. This presentation will also address the nature of invasive alien species .

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications arising from this report.

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

- Mayor's Letter to Ministers of Natural Resources and Environment & Labour

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.

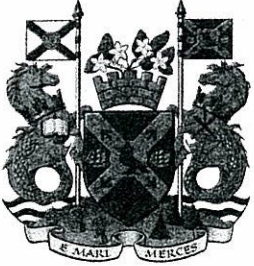
Report Prepared by : Cameron Deacoff, Environmental Performance Officer, 490-1926



Report Approved by:

Andy Fillmore, Manager, Sustainable Environment Management Office, 490-6495

**Halifax
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August 1, 2007

Honourable Mark Parent
Minister of Environment & Labour
Province of Nova Scotia
P. O. Box 697
Halifax, NS B3J 2T8

Honourable David Morse
Minister of Natural Resources
P. O. Box 698
Halifax, NS B3J 2T9

Dear Minister Parent and Minister Morse:

Over the past several years, a floating aquatic plant has been growing increasingly common in Little Albro Lake, Dartmouth, and has reached the point of being a nuisance to local residents. The plant was identified in 2006 by researchers at Saint Marys University (SMU) as Floating Yellow Heart (*Nymphoides peltata*), an invasive Asian species used as an ornamental pond plant. This species has become an invasive pest in several US states. It roots in bottom sediments, and produces surface leaves and yellow flowers which are similar in appearance to indigenous water lily species.

Waterbodies in Nova Scotia, including all lakes, are provincial property. Any intended control measures for an aquatic plant will depend upon the province to approve and initiate any actions. HRM staff have conferred with staff of the Departments of Environment and Labour, and Natural Resources on this issue. Department of Natural Resource staff have indicated that they are concerned that this species may become a more wide-spread problem in Nova Scotia. They also indicated that the province will develop policy on invasive species, as a matter of provincial jurisdiction.

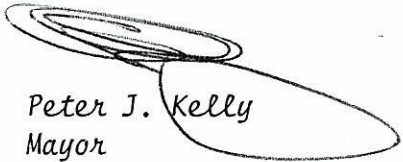
This plant is now a significant nuisance in Little Albro Lake, and has the potential to spread and become a widespread problem affecting many lakes in HRM and the province. On behalf of

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concerned HRM residents, I request that the province complete the policy on invasive species as quickly as possible. On behalf of HRM Council, I also ask that the province immediately identify suitable control options for Floating Yellow Heart in Little Albro lake, and undertake any possible actions this year to control and eliminate this invasive species from Little Albro Lake before it can become more prevalent.

I look forward to your positive response.

Respectfully, I remain



Peter J. Kelly
Mayor

cc Halifax Regional Council