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Halifax Regional Council
March 28, 2006

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
Wayne Anstey, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: March 15th 2006

SUBJECT: Final Draft Cultural Plan - Supplementary Report

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

ORIGIN

February 28th - HRM Cultural Advisory Committee recommends to Committee of the Whole that the final draft Cultural Plan dated February 7th 2006 be approved by Regional Council

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that :

1. Regional Council approve the final draft Cultural Plan dated March 21st, 2006 as per the revisions contained in this supplementary report and attachment.

BACKGROUND

On February 28th, 2006 the Cultural Advisory (CAC) presented an overview of the final draft Cultural Plan dated February 7th, 2006 to Committee of the Whole for discussion and subsequent approval by Regional Council. The Committee's recommendation for approval followed ten months of community, cultural, private, and public sector consultation to develop a Cultural Plan for HRM; the first of its kind in this Municipality.

Staff from HRM's Recreation Tourism & Culture Department, the lead Department on the Plan's development and future implementation, supported the recommendation of the Cultural Advisory Committee to approve the Plan.

Following discussion and debate, Council directed staff to return to Regional Council with a Supplementary Report addressing various issues. Staff have since met with the CAC to discuss Council's concerns and to recommend appropriate revisions to the Cultural Plan. The issues raised by Council and subsequent comments received from the public have been carefully considered in the recommended revisions contained within this report. A careful attempt has been made to balance the issues and opportunities in a manner that coincides with the key intent and spirit of the Cultural Plan.

DISCUSSION

Three main issues regarding the February 7th draft of the Cultural Plan were raised by Council at Committee of the Whole on February 28th. These issues are addressed in the following discussion and in the final draft Cultural Plan dated March 21st, 2006

1. Policy 4.14 Re: Supplementary Funding

The subject Policy reads as follows:

Policy 4.14: HRM will work with the Halifax School Board to develop a strategy to incorporate arts programs into the public education curriculum

Council's concerns related to the first action under the policy statement which references supplementary funding as follows:

REMOVE:

Action: *develop and sustain funding policies for HRMs supplementary educational funding contribution to support arts programs in HRMs public school curriculum, grades primary to twelve.*

Currently the amount of supplementary funding dedicated for arts in the schools is not equitable across HRM, therefore, Council is concerned that in order to secure sustained funding, as specified

in the above action, further investigation and collaboration with the Halifax School Board is needed. An inequitable distribution of arts programs in schools is not the intent of the Plan, therefore, staff are in agreement that further investigation into the appropriate model for securing arts programs in the schools should take place.

Staff are recommending that the above action be removed from the Cultural Plan and that the second action currently listed under the policy statement is sufficient to carry out the policy intent as follows:

RETAIN:

Action: *identify current resources in schools and work with Halifax Regional School Board to develop a sustained funding strategy for arts programs.*

Staff are of the opinion that the above action maintains the inherent intent of the policy, to enhance arts programs in public schools, and gives Council the added discretion to investigate appropriate measures (including supplementary funding) for moving forward with the objective.

2. Long-term funding to implement the Plan

Council expressed concern that the Cultural Plan does not include a more detailed financing strategy and the funding mechanisms that will be used to pay for it.

The implementation strategy in the Plan is developed with the intent that the Cultural Plan is a living document that will be reviewed and evaluated regularly and financed as such through a strategic annual business planning and budgeting process.

The Plan includes a detailed list of actions to be implemented in the short-term (2006-2008) as per Section 5.2 of the Plan. Staff will not be asking for any new sources of funding for 2006 but will be re-examining existing funding sources and projects for efficiencies and improvements.

For the medium and long-term implementation of the Plan (2009-2015), broader *objectives* (as opposed to specific actions) are identified under Section 5.1 of the Plan. Again, the required strategy to secure long-term funding is emphasized under policy 5.11 which specifies that detailed action plans and ongoing priorities for these later phases will be brought back to Council for approval through the annual business planning and budget process.

With respect to new funding mechanisms, the Plan identifies a number of funding tools that will be investigated further in the immediate short-term (2006-07) and brought back to Council for consideration and approval. The need to develop more stable and alternate funding sources to implement the Plan is specified under Policy 5.5 and identified as a priority action for 2006-07. Several policies throughout the Plan emphasize the need for workable partnerships to leverage resources to implement the Plan over the long-term.

These partnerships include public, private and community collaborations including community management and programming of appropriate HRM-owned facilities.

Short-term implementation will also focus on re-examining the way in which our current program funding is delivered, developing efficiencies, and on developing an evaluation process to measure the long-term results of that funding.

Policy 5.4 is developed with the intent that long-term funding will be established by strengthening and leveraging current funding sources like the HRM special events and heritage reserves, by more strategically applying capital and operating resources and by better coordinating capital projects within HRM and among partners to leverage outcomes. An example is Policy 2.2 which identifies the opportunity to build cultural space into HRM's new recreation and community centres. The Plan also includes capital project decision-making criteria outlined in Section 5.3, which will be developed further into a process that will guide staff and Council in prioritizing capital investment projects. Criteria measuring cultural service delivery, strategic planning fit, community and urban design and financial viability will help Council make investment decisions around cultural project proposals.

Policy 5.5 is developed with the understanding that **HRM is only one partner in funding Cultural Development** and that a multi-sector funding approach will be needed. To this end, **Policy 5.5 specifies potential funding tools which will be investigated further and brought back to Council for consideration in the immediate short-term.** Tools to be investigated will include: a percentage of deed transfer tax, a percentage of development costs, private sector sponsorship program, development agreement negotiations, and more aggressive and focussed access to dedicated provincial and federal funding programs. Many of these tools have been successfully applied to fund Culture in municipalities across the country including Moncton, Quebec City, Vancouver, Regina, Kitchener and Waterloo. Staff and the CAC are mindful of the need for HRM to remain competitive in this regard.

3. Use of permissive language: "will" vs. "may" in policy statements

Council's concern is that the use of "will" in the policy statements could politically and legally tie Council to commitments that may not be possible depending on the financial capacity to deliver. **The discretion of Council to act or not act on a particular policy or action due to ongoing financial and organizational capacity needs to be understood as part of the Plan's approval.**

With respect to Policy language, staff are recommending that the use of "will" in HRM's cultural policy statements remain to reflect Council's commitment to Cultural development over the long-term and to ensure that Culture remains on the political agenda.

Staff recommend that by adding the following policy statement, it will be further clarified that the Cultural Plan, as an administrative policy of Council, is dependent on the municipality's financial capacity to implement:

ADD:

Policy 5.3: Council recognizes that the implementation of the Cultural Plan is dependent upon the resources available to the Municipality at any given time. Furthermore, the degree to which the various projects and actions in the Plan can be financed will be determined by Council through the business planning and budgetary process.

Policy 5.3 reinforces that HRM Council is not obligated to carry out any or all of the projects or policies in the Cultural Plan or any of its administrative policies if the financial or organizational capacity to do so is not available.

It is also the intent of Policy 5.3 to reinforce that ongoing project priorities under the Cultural Plan must also fit within HRMs' overall corporate priorities and policies.

Additional revisions:

The CAC has made some additional revisions to the draft Plan based on specific comments raised by Council and through community feedback. These revisions include:

i. Incubating Creative Talent

In order to emphasize the importance of arts incubation, the following Policy Statement has been added under Goal #6, "Arts Development":

ADD:

Policy 4.7 HRM will work with partners to help emerging artists incubate and develop their artistic and creative talent

Actions:

- ◆ *explore opportunities to support artist run centres that support a variety of art forms including rental and tax incentives, and management and service agreements for HRM-owned facilities and programming*
- ◆ *explore partnership opportunities for working with Nova Scotia College of Art & Design (NSCAD) and other design institutions*

By adding this policy statement the intent of the Plan does not change but rather Council's support for HRM's emerging artists and the arts sector is emphasized with particular emphasis on the emerging arts community.

ii Emphasis on sporting events

In order to ensure that the Plan supports all sport important to HRM's cultural identity, reference to *specific* sporting events in the actions under Policy 3.24 have been removed as follows:

REWORD:

Action: *Provide continued support for sport and sporting events that are important to HRMs cultural identity*

iii Emphasis on HRMs cultural assets and achievements

The background content in the Plan under Section 2.2 Cultural Assets has been revised and revamped to better highlight the many cultural assets and achievements of HRM.

iv Readability of the Document

Some comments have been received from stakeholders expressing a concern that the document, in its draft form, is not user-friendly and needs major editing and finetuning. The CAC recognizes that the document is not in its polished form and that some re-writing of the preamble and background pieces will improve the Plan.

Like Council, some stakeholders have expressed the need to highlight existing cultural assets in the document to strengthen the understanding that HRM must build on what it has throughout its cultural development.

The CAC and staff have responded to these concerns as follows:

- a. Section 2.2 of the Plan, Cultural Assets, highlights what must be done with respect to enhancing HRM's cultural identity
- b. The preamble sections throughout the document have been tightened up, reformatted, and in some cases removed in order to improve the readability of the Plan.
- c. Section 3.1, Building the Cultural Mandate, has been added in order to better highlight the role of HRM in enhancing, developing, and promoting culture
- d. Following Council's approval of the Plan, the document will be formally edited and formatted to improve on readability and presentation.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

No *new* operating resources are being proposed in the 2006-07 budget year. The immediate short-term (2006-07) will focus on "getting our house in order" by re-examining funding programs and sources and building a decision-making framework for cultural investment. Implementation of the remainder of the short-term (2008) and the medium and long-term implementation phases

(2009-2015) will be identified through annual action planning and advanced through Council's business planning and budget process. At the end of Phase I (2008) and Phase II (2011) a comprehensive evaluation and reporting of the Plan's progress will take place.

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.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Council could refer the final draft Cultural Plan back to the Cultural Advisory Committee for further discussion and revision, however the CAC does not recommend this option

ATTACHMENTS

1. Final draft Cultural Plan, March 21st, 2006

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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