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Item No. 10.1.8
Halifax Regional Council
January 26, 2010

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan English".

Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wayne Anstey".

Wayne Anstey, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer - Operations

DATE: January 11, 2010

SUBJECT: Long Term Arena Strategy

ORIGIN

- Council initiated a two-phase strategy to address the Region's arena deficiencies (i.e. arena shortage and their ageing condition). Phase 1, the short term strategy, addressed an immediate critical shortage of ice surfaces and resulted in approval of the new 4-pad arena on Hammonds Plains Road in Bedford which will open in the Fall of 2010.
- This report initiates Phase 2, which is the long term arena strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council approve the Terms of Reference attached to this report to establish a Steering Committee to develop a Long Term Arena Strategy.

BACKGROUND

During phase one of the arena strategy, there was a consensus that:

- rapid action was required to address the shortage of ice surfaces;
- new ice surfaces would benefit all users in the region regardless of where they were located; and
- options for refurbishing existing arenas or constructing new ones would not be affected by constructing the new arena.

Prior to phase 1 the region faced a critical shortage of ice surfaces and was at risk of this shortage becoming a crisis. This Fall, the region will move into a period of relative stability. There will be sufficient inventory to accommodate some growth in use while allowing Council time to develop a Long Term Arena Strategy and incorporate its decisions into future capital budget and funding strategies.

Current and Targeted Inventory

Prior to the closure of the Akerley Arena there were 22 arenas in the region. Its closure caused the displacement of adult hockey and the rescheduling and redistribution of youth hockey throughout the region. It also left the community at significant risk of additional disruption. Under a worst case scenario there was a risk that three additional arenas (Devonshire, Saint Mary's and Shearwater) might close, reducing the region's inventory to 18 ice surfaces for a season.

The Devonshire Arena was, and still is, at risk of imminent failure of its ice pad and ice making system. Saint Mary's University has since determined that it does not have sufficient funds to replace its arena in the short term. Shearwater Arena's mechanical system has been upgraded which should ensure several years of uninterrupted service.

- The recent opening of the Rocky Lake Dome, brings the region's inventory back to 22 ice surfaces, the number which existed prior to the Akerley closure.
- Upon opening the Hammonds Plains Arena this Fall, there will be 26 ice surfaces in the region.
- During the short term arena strategy, 25 ice surfaces were recommended as a target for the region. This target will be reviewed as part of the long term strategy.
- The imminent risk of season long closures of the Saint Mary's and Shearwater arenas have been reduced.

Outdoor Refrigerated Rinks

This Summer, in conjunction with planning for the 2011 Canada Winter Games, Council approved the concept of constructing outdoor refrigerated ice surfaces. During the Fall/Winter of 2010/11 the 2011 Canada Winter Games Long Track Speed Skating Oval on the Halifax Commons will be open to the public before and after the Games. A portion of the refrigeration equipment will then be redeployed in the fall of 2011 to create a permanent outdoor rink. The long term concept includes two types of rinks.

- One regional rink would be a destination rink encouraging winter tourism and functioning as a park or wading pool in the Spring/Summer and early Fall.
- This would be complemented by a regionally distributed network of neighbourhood rinks located adjacent to existing arenas or recreation centres. The rinks could be used as sport courts during the summer.

In contrast to indoor arenas, which focus on organized play and scheduling, the outdoor rinks will focus on informal and unscheduled recreational skating and shinny. The siting and prioritization of these outdoor refrigerated ice surfaces will be included within the scope of the long term arena strategy.

DISCUSSION

Issues

There are three primary issues with respect to the region's long term inventory of arenas. These are:

- Ensuring there are an adequate number of ice surfaces to meet peak hour demand for existing user groups and emerging user groups;
- The location and proximity of arenas to users; and
- The age and condition of arenas.

During development of the Short Term Arena Strategy, the Burke-Oliver Arena Capacity Study was updated with respect to population demographics and land use growth patterns under the Regional Plan. This work provided the basis for siting the 4-pad arena on Hammonds Plains Road. Additional updating of this document is still required, especially with respect to attributing accurate booking numbers to each organized user group (e.g. youth hockey associations) as well informal user groups (e.g. adult hockey).

No work has been done to date to address the third issue which is as critical as the first two. Sixty percent of the region's arenas are over 35 years old. As a result their condition has deteriorated and/or they do not meet contemporary field of play or amenity standards. The Long Term Strategy will therefore initiate a condition and recapitalization analysis of existing arenas. This information will assist Council in making informed decisions with respect to the cost of investing in existing arenas versus constructing new ones.

Interdependencies

As mentioned earlier, the sole focus of the Short Term Arena Strategy was to achieve an immediate increase in the number of ice surfaces. No decisions were made which affected Council's options to construct new arenas elsewhere in the region or with respect to the status of existing arenas. During the Long Term Arena Strategy more interdependent decision making will be required. There will be decisions with respect to recapitalization, closure and conversion of existing arenas. These decisions will also affect or be influenced by decisions as to whether new arenas will be constructed, where and in what configuration.

Steering Committee Mandate

Phase one was led by the Municipality without any specific public engagement process. The options and decisions involved in preparing the Long Term Strategy are not as simple, and as mentioned above, have more interdependencies. As a result, staff is proposing that Council strike a Steering Committee. The Committee, with staff support, will undertake community engagement, data gathering and analysis (e.g. building condition assessments, demographic and user trends, capital and operating costs etc.) and present options and a recommended strategy to Council. The recommendations will address issues such as the target number of ice surfaces in the region; recapitalization of existing arenas; expansions and construction of new arenas; closures; priorities; comparative capital/operating costs of various arena configurations/options; and phasing. In the case of any recommended closures the Committee will also provide recommendations with respect to whether these buildings and properties should be disposed of or redeployed for other recreational or public purposes. The review will also take into consideration plans being considered by the owners of the non-HRM owned arenas in the region and how these plans will impact the region's arena inventory. This Long Term Arena Strategy will take approximately nine months to complete.

Committee Composition

The recommended Steering Team makeup is designed to have broad representation but small enough to be effective. The Steering Team will consist of citizens from governing sport organizations, citizens with relevant professional or technical expertise, government officials and councillors.

In the case of the sport user groups, it has been proposed that the relevant Provincial Sport organizations sit on the Steering Committee rather than individuals from community-based sport associations or leagues. The Provincial Sport organizations have relevant expertise and a broad-based mandate that allows them to represent all users within their sport category without geographic bias. Hockey Nova Scotia, Ringette Nova Scotia and the provincial division of Skate Canada will represent their respective users. Having the participation and leadership of these groups will also ensure that each user group understands each other's needs and that the Long Term Arena Strategy addresses the cumulative needs of all sport groups. Input from individual user groups and community sport associations will be sought through public engagement. Short Track speed skating has not been included on the Steering Committee. The expansion of one ice surface at the St. Margaret's Arena to short track speed skating dimensions for the 2011 Canada Winter Games meets the needs of this emerging sport organization for the foreseeable future.

The Provincial Department of Health Promotion and Protection, Sport Nova Scotia and Recreation Nova Scotia bring very broad-based perspectives and expertise which not only include sport competition but also active living and recreational play. These are important factors to consider in general, but most particularly with respect to recreational skating and shinny opportunities at outdoor refrigerated ice venues. These organizations can also represent off-season recreational and sport opportunities at both indoor and outdoor venues. Sport tourism is a growing economic opportunity as is the tourism potential of outdoor refrigerated rinks. For this reason it has been proposed that Destination Halifax be included on the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will be rounded out with two citizens-at-large who bring specific technical expertise, such as architectural, engineering, financial or other relevant matters necessary to develop the long range strategic plan as well as two Councillors.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications at this stage of the process. Committee costs will be absorbed within existing budget envelopes.

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 can establish a Steering Committee consisting of citizens, government officials and councillors to lead public engagement on the Long Term Arena Strategy and provide recommendations and options with respect to the Long Term Arena Strategy. This is the recommended course of action. It is felt that this will produce the most accurate user information; ensure that all of the affected Sport Organizations understand each other's needs; and is the best process for addressing the sensitive interdependent decisions that will be required in the final strategy.
2. Council could decide not to establish a Steering Committee and direct staff to undertake public engagement on the Long Term Arena Strategy and provide recommendations and options directly to Council with respect to the Long Term Arena Strategy. This course of action is not recommended because it is felt that it is not suitable for the sensitive and interdependent recommendations that are required for the Long Term Arena Strategy.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 -Terms of Reference

Appendix 2 - List of Arenas and their Age in Halifax Regional Municipality

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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Report Approved by: Paul Dunphy, Director, Community Development

APPENDIX 1 Terms of Reference

Halifax Regional Municipality *Long Term Arena Strategy Steering Committee*

Background

Regional Council approved the Community Facility Master Plan (CFMP) in May of 2008. The CFMP covered the provision of a wide range of community, recreation, sport, event and cultural facilities, both indoor and outdoor, in HRM. In particular, it focussed on the provision of municipally owned facilities as well as the role of HRM in partnership with other agencies such as the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB), the military, universities and Capital Health. Included under the Sports Facilities Category were several recommendations for a short range strategy to deal with an immediate deficit of ice arenas as well as a long range strategy to guide future recapitalization, replacement, or conversion and reuse decisions of existing facilities. The delivery of the new 4-pad arena facility in Bedford West off the Hammonds Plains Road is the result of the short term strategy for the immediate arena shortage. The next step is to develop a longer range strategy to ensure an appropriate supply of skating surfaces well into the future.

Further reference can be made to the following recommendations in the Community Facility Master Plan:

- Recommendation #40 Arena Conversion Recommendations
- Recommendation #41 & 46 Expansion of Existing Arenas
- Recommendation #43 Recapitalization of Arenas
- Recommendation #47 Arena Replacement

Other more broad recommendations that deal with the whole HRM portfolio may also be reviewed for applicability.

Purpose of Steering Committee

The Steering Committee shall:

- provide direction to a staff resource team;
- lead a public engagement; and
- develop and make recommendations to Regional Council on a Long Term Arena Strategy

Role of Steering Committee

The Committee's primary role is to develop and recommend a long term strategy for the provision of municipally owned ice arenas in HRM. The Committee shall consider the role for the 2011 Canada Games Legacy regional destination outdoor refrigerated rink and a possible network of additional regionally distributed neighbourhood outdoor refrigerated skating rinks as part of the long term strategy. The Steering Committee will be supported by an HRM staff

resource team and will direct requests and direction to this support team as needed to develop recommendations.

More specifically, the Committee will:

- Review and refine a staff recommended project scope and time line;
- Develop with staff a public/stakeholder participation program in order to stimulate comment/consultation and gain further input;
- Hold public meetings as required;
- Review all available background information;
- Advise on the need and priorities for background and studies and research;
- Take into consideration usage and future plans of any non-municipally owned facilities and potential impacts;
- Determine which HRM owned facilities are best suited to be re-capitalized, which ones should be considered for conversions to other indoor recreation usage, and which ones would be better suited to be replaced, including siting options/recommendations;
- Take into consideration the 2011 Canada Games Legacy regional destination rink opportunity and recommend siting options/recommendations for this project;
- Consider a regionally distributed network of neighbourhood outdoor refrigerated rinks for a possible role in the long term arena strategy, including siting options/recommendations;
- Recommend a multi-year implementation plan for the long term strategy, indicating with priorities should be implemented in order;
- Develop with the aid of staff a high level multi-year capital budget plan using industry standard costs/sq ft estimates;
- Take into consideration as part of the financial implementation and operating model the role of user fee cost recovery, partnerships, fund-raising and other funding strategies; and
- Provide periodic progress reports and make the final presentation and recommendation of a long term strategy to Regional Council.

Membership

Halifax Regional Council members	(2)
NS Department of Health Promotion and Protection	(1)
Hockey Nova Scotia	(1)
Ringette Nova Scotia	(1)
Skate Canada	(1)
Sport Nova Scotia	(1)
Recreation Nova Scotia	(1)
Tourism (Destination Halifax)	(1)
Citizens-at-large	(2)
TOTAL	(11)

Selection of Membership

Selection criteria will include:

- Willingness and ability to commit to the necessary time up to a *one year* period;
- Commitment and interest in the recreation facility strategic planning, particularly ice arenas; and
- Skills and experience related to roles and responsibilities in facility management and service delivery.

Appointment

The term of appointment shall be until the project is completed.

Resources

- The Facility division of Community Development will provide staff resources to the Long Term Ice Arena Replacement Strategy Steering Committee including arranging meetings, agendas, note taking (summary and action items), distribution of materials and other administrative functions. Any budget requirements for this committee will be included within the budget of the project, subject to the normal review and approval process of the Business Unit.
- The Facility division of Community Development will work as an integrated group, represented on the Steering Committee by the Project Manager, to provide professional support, expertise, and deliverables as necessary to meet the time lines and scope of the project. This group will be expanded to include participation from TPW, IAM, Finance, Real Estate, and Legal Services as required.
- Documents available:
 - 2008 Community Facilities Master Plan;
 - HRM Regional Plan;
 - 2008 Update to HRM Arena Capacity Study;
 - Current HRM 5 Year Capital Plan;
 - Various Arena Strategy documents from other Canadian cities; and
 - Council reports and preliminary research on community outdoor refrigerated ice rinks and 2011 Canada Games Legacy rink.

APPENDIX 2 - List of Arenas in HRM

Owner / Operator	Arena	Age - Year Constructed
HRM / HRM	Bowles	1972
	Devonshire	1971
	Gray	1972
	Gerald J Lebrun	1972
HRM / Community Board	Halifax Forum	1927
	Halifax Forum Civic Arena	1995
	Centennial Arena	1967
	Spryfield Arena	1972
	Eastern Shore Community Centre	1973
	Cole Harbour Place Arena #1	1975
	Cole Harbour Place Arena #2	1988
	Halifax Metro Centre	1977
	Dartmouth Sportsplex	1982
	St Margaret's Centre Arena #1	1985
	St. Margaret's Centre Arena #2	2005
	Sackville Sports Stadium	1989
	HRM 4-Pad Arena Complex	Under Construction
Private	Shearwater Arena	1964
	St Mary's University Arena	1966
	Shannon Park Arena	1969
	Sackville Arena	1973
	Dalhousie Arena	1983
	Rocky Lake Dome	2009