

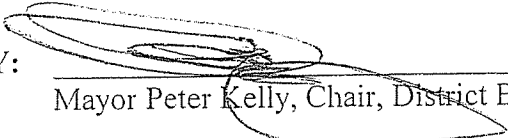


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Item No. 4
Halifax Regional Council
January 26, 2010

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:



Mayor Peter Kelly, Chair, District Boundary Review Committee

DATE: January 18, 2010

SUBJECT: Phase 1 Public Consultation - District Boundary Review

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

The motion of Council of August 4, 2009 adopting a two phase approach to the District Boundary Review process and establishing the District Boundary Review Committee of Council.

BACKGROUND

As Council is aware, HRM is required under the HRM Charter to conduct a major review of polling districts, including the number of districts, every eight (8) years. Following the review, Regional Council will submit an application to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSUARB) to confirm or alter the number and boundaries of polling districts and councillors. The NSUARB has directed that the review be conducted in two phases and that public participation be carried out in both of the phases of the review. HRM's submission to the NSUARB must be made by December 31, 2010.

In August 2009 Regional Council adopted a two phase Boundary Review process and struck a committee of Council to undertake the necessary review and consultations. The Committee is chaired by Mayor Kelly and is made up of one member appointed from each of the six (6) Community Council and a member of HRM's Executive Management Team.

Having reviewed a great deal of information, including previous boundary reviews and best practices, the committee has adopted the following approach to the Phase one of the Boundary Review on governance.

DISCUSSION

The first phase of the Boundary Review process is to consider the number of polling districts and size of Regional Council by studying matters of governance, such as the role of community councils and regional council, and the appropriate geographic size and population of districts.

Once Council has heard from the public and decided those issues, the committee will proceed with Phase 2, in which the boundaries will be adjusted or redrawn to reflect Council's decision in Phase 1. Phase 2 of the review process will proceed in the fall of 2010.

The committee has directed staff to prepare a presentation, to be made at each of seven (7) meetings held in conjunction with regularly scheduled Community Council meetings in late February and early March (ad & schedule attached). The presentation will also be posted on the HRM web site, along with background, minutes and other materials related to the boundary review process.

The committee agreed that the presentation needs to be independent, informative, and provide options. The presentation will ask for public feedback on a number of questions, including the geographic size and population of districts that will allow for appropriate representation, and the role and powers of community councils and how they best serve local and community concerns. The public will also be presented with a number of options for the size of regional council for their consideration in light of those issues.

The presentation will provide the public with an overview of the boundary review process, HRM's current governance structure (including the role of community councils), population growth patterns in HRM that might affect polling boundaries, and a number of high level options for increasing council, keeping council at its current size, or decreasing the size of council, along with possible impacts on the size and role of community councils and overall representation. Following the presentation, the floor will be open to the public to express their views. Advertisements for these public meetings on Boundary Review will begin to appear in community and regional publications in February.

The intent of the public meetings, along with answers to some of the questions from the HRM Citizen survey, is to enable the public to provide input to Council on this important matter. The public will be provided with additional ways to provide written submissions through the HRM web site.

It is expected that a report from the District Boundary Review Committee on Phase 1 - Governance will be before Council early in April. At that time, Council will be asked to make a decision on the appropriate number of councillors for HRM, based on considerations including the geographic size and population of districts that will allow for appropriate representation, and the roles and powers of community councils and how they best serve local concerns.

The NSUARB has commented that the Legislature's clear intent, as expressed in the legislation, is that it is the role of municipal council to make these decisions, subject to review by the NSUARB. These decisions will be informed by the responses received during the public consultation process.

Phase one of the public consultation on governance will be officially launched on February 16, 2010 at the regularly scheduled meeting of Regional Council with an invitation to the public to attend and participate.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications to the 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

Ad & schedule of the Public Meetings for Phase 1 of HRM's Boundary Review process

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/agenda.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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Your Council
Your Say

HRM's District Boundary Review

The District Boundary Review Committee of Council, chaired by Mayor Peter Kelly, is reviewing the polling districts and their boundaries in HRM prior to the 2012 Municipal Elections. The Committee wants to hear from you.

Public Meetings

Residents of HRM are invited and encouraged to attend any of the following scheduled public meetings. You will learn about the District Boundary Review process and the importance and value of your contribution.

Each meeting will begin with an overview presentation followed by public participation. Discussion points will include:

- The role of Councillor as your representative
- The decision-making powers and the size of both Regional and Community Councils
- How Council can best work for you as citizens of HRM

When & Where

All meetings will start at 6:30 p.m. and will be held in conjunction with the regularly scheduled Community Council meetings. You can attend any meeting.


Date	Community Council	Location
February 22, 2010	Western Region Community Council	Keshen Goodman Library 330 Lacewood Drive, Halifax
February 24, 2010	Marine Drive Valley & Canal Community Council	Sheet Harbour Lions Club 183 Pool Road, Sheet Harbour
February 25, 2010	North West Community Council	Sackville Heights Community Centre 45 Connolly Road, Sackville
March 1, 2010	Chebucto Community Council	Halifax West High School 283 Thomas Raddall Drive, Halifax
March 3, 2010	Peninsula Community Council	City Hall 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax
March 4, 2010	Harbour East Community Council	Halifax Regional School Board Building (<i>back entrance</i>) 90 Alderney Drive, Dartmouth
March 10, 2010	Marine Drive Valley & Canal Community Council	Lawrencetown Community Centre 3657 Hwy 207, Lawrencetown


Unable to Attend a Meeting?

If you are unable to attend any of the scheduled meetings, you can still provide your feedback.

Please visit us at www.halifax.ca/boundary/review to view the presentation and then contact us by:

 **Email:**
clerks@halifax.ca

 **Fax:**
490-4208

or
 **Writing to:**
Municipal Clerk, City Hall,
PO Box 1749, Halifax, NS