


Item No. 4
Halifax Regional Council
March 30, 2010
Committee of the Whole

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 

Wayne Anstey, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: March 19, 2010

SUBJECT: **Proposed Conceptual Plan - Halifax North Common**

ORIGIN

- Councillor Watts' 2009/10 capital budget request to review proposed improvements to the North Common prior to implementation.
- _____ Regional Council's approval of the 2009/10 capital budget account CPX01190 for improvements to the North Common, including installation of permanent power for Special Events and Concerts.
- Peninsula Community Council Information Report-Halifax Common - Economic Generation Analysis of 2009 Concerts, March 3, 2010
- Use of the North Common and Memorandum of Understanding with Events Halifax Regarding Major Outdoor Concerts, Approved by Regional Council March 6, 2007

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Regional Council approve, in principle, the proposed conceptual plan as described in this report.

BACKGROUND

Context

The North Common is the most northern area of the Halifax Common, and is bounded by Robie, Cogswell, North Park, and Cunard Streets (see Attachment A.)

The Common has been used in a multitude of ways over the decades: livestock grazing, horse racing, circus and carnivals, auto racing, special events, military reviews, as open space for recreational team sport (eg., cricket, baseball, touch football, frisbee) and leisure (eg., picnics, dog walking, kite flying, walking.)

The area has also been used as a venue for major public gatherings such as visits by the Royal Family, a Papal visit, and major concerts by the Rolling Stones, Paul McCartney, and others. The North Common serves a great number of individual needs and is a multi-purpose, urban facility.

Halifax Common Plan 1994

The 1994 Halifax Common Plan guides staff in its approach to the Common. It has guided the restoration of the Public Gardens, negotiations for the VG parking lot, renovations to Victoria Park, design of Citadel High School, and design of Bell Road Streetscapes.

The proposed North Common plan was conceived from the 1994 Halifax Common Plan. More specific policies, design guidelines, and objectives specifically for the North Common can be found in Attachment H of this report.

The following objective statement and guiding principles emanate from the 1994 Plan:

“Provide for a mixture of recreation and leisure uses on the North and Central Commons with an emphasis on enhancing opportunities for passive or casual enjoyment, improving safety, and upgrading facilities.”

- o Incorporate more landscaping and trees on the North Common, retaining important views where appropriate.*
- o Continue use for organized sports but create a better balance by providing space for more passive, unorganized activities.*
- o Improve safety through redesign and relocation of activities and pathways.*
- o Recognize that the area serves partially as a neighbourhood park.*
- o Redesign and possibly relocate the Centennial fountain.*
- o Improve the physical link between the two areas.*
- o Prepare a detailed design for the North and Central Commons.*

Established Policies - Major Functions/Concert Use of Halifax North Common

Regional Council should be aware that there are two established policies (as well as several precedential examples), which support The Halifax Common as a place for major functions and concerts:

- A) The 1994 Halifax Common Plan; and
- B) The 2007 policy, passed unanimously by Regional Council, as per the recommendation report, Use of the North Common and Memorandum of Understanding with Events Halifax Regarding Major Outdoor Concerts.

1994 Halifax Common Plan

The Halifax Common Plan dedicates Section 7. to the issue of commercial uses (which would include major concerts) and further states that:

Within acceptable limits, allow privately sponsored temporary events with paid admission and exclusion of the general public, and encourage private funding of facilities and activities through joint ventures.

A key issue is the private use of public land. Private or quasi-private groups have used some public open space for temporary events and charged admission for attendance. This issue was discussed extensively in the public sessions. There was general agreement at the public meetings that these events could be beneficial to the city as a whole and they were acceptable within limits. This plan recommends privately sponsored events be allowed if approved by Council, and it is demonstrated that the event is for the benefit of the city and satisfies all goals, objectives, and policies in this plan. (p. vi)

2007 Major Outdoor Concerts Policy

Based on the experience of the Rolling Stones concert, Halifax Regional Council deemed the North Common appropriate as a host venue for future large-scale concerts. Subsequently, Regional Council approved a policy in 2007 that reconfirmed HRM's commitment to "support the North Common as an outdoor concert site for "major concerts". The policy establishes specific guidelines to ensure the concerts are well managed, with as minimal an impact and disruption, as possible. These include limiting the number of concerts per year, that only concerts *anticipated* to attract 30,000 attendees or greater would be considered, that protective measures are in place, that user groups are well informed of each year's concert schedule, that every attempt to accommodate these users is made, and that all concerts must be approved by the Deputy CAO.

Additionally, it should be noted that staff have recommended as part of the annual grant approval process, that the Common Concert program budget be proportionately reduced in anticipation of the projected cost savings from the installation of permanent power (\$50,000 is required for power services). Staff have also recommended, and proposed implementation for this coming concert season, a new rental charge to concert promoters, the details of which will be provided in a report to Regional Council later this spring.

Public Process

HRM staff first presented the proposed North Common conceptual plan to Peninsula Community Council on December 14, 2009, subsequent to a request by Councillor Jennifer Watts.

A public open house at City Hall, held on January 20, 2010, began with a static display of proposed conceptual plans, on which the attending public were asked to record comments by writing on the drawings. Participants could ask questions and discuss issues with staff who were available for discussion.

Next, HRM staff provided the public with a visual, on-screen presentation. The presentation reviewed the context of the North Common among other areas of the broader Halifax Common, and the planning efforts and developments that had taken place in recent years. An overview of policies from the 1994 Halifax Common Plan about North Common reinvestment and uses was provided. The proposed conceptual plans were then reviewed in detail.

The workshop concluded with a question-and-answer period (see Attachment F). In attendance were approximately 75 participants, composed of members of the public, peninsula Councillors, members of the media, and HRM staff.

In closing, participants were invited to present written submissions to HRM (see Attachment G). After the workshop, a web page about the proposed North Common master plan was posted to www.halifax.ca. The site offered an electronic copy of the proposed conceptual plan, as well as an E-mail link for public responses. Attachment G includes sixteen written submissions received over two months.

In addition, HRM staff had met with sports associations and sport field user groups about the proposed conceptual plan and the impact on sport field users. Staff continue to meet with groups to solve scheduling conflicts that may arise as a result of proposed construction and events in 2010 and 2011.

DISCUSSION

Intent

The North Common is a multi-use area, and has well-established policies which help guide and balance uses on the North Common. Capital improvements are needed on the North Common, so

a draft Conceptual Plan has been proposed in reflection of established policies and the direction of Council.

Highlights - Proposed Conceptual Plan

To guide the development of the proposed conceptual plan, HRM staff turned to the 1994 Halifax Common Plan, the 2007 Regional Council policy on major concerts, and to the public.

After HRM Staff developed a draft plan, it was presented before Peninsula Community Council, a public open house, and North Common sportfield user groups; the proposed plan accompanies this report as a presentation to Regional Council. Attachment B provides a summary plan of the proposed conceptual improvements, which are summarized in the following bullets:

1. More landscaping and trees; retaining important views where appropriate;
2. Continue use of North Common for organized sports, but balance with more passive, unorganized recreation;
3. Recognize that the area serves partially as a neighbourhood park;
4. Realign and improve pathways;
5. Enhance park safety;
6. Improve sports fields;
7. Redesign the Centennial Fountain;
8. Continue hosting special events, which benefit the municipality, as per established policy.

Public Comments by Theme

The following section provides a synopsis of public comments, by theme.

Many comments that were received questioned whether the North Common is the appropriate venue for major concerts, other comments reflected upon the proposed improvements offered by the conceptual plan presentations. Public opinion spanned a broad cross-section, some reflecting on broader plan elements, others proposing detailed design improvements, while others still offered considerations on how the North Common should be used, as summarized here:

1.0 Public Comments Regarding The Proposed Conceptual Plan

- 1.1 Perimeter Plazas
- 1.2 Safety By Design
- 1.3 Centennial Fountain
- 1.4 Amphitheatre / Events Plaza
- 1.5 Trees
- 1.6 Other Improvements

2.0 Public Comments Regarding Concerts on the North Common

- 2.1 Those Who Oppose Large Concerts
- 2.2 Those Who Support Large Concerts
- 2.3 Those in Favour of Small, Local Concerts

3.0 Public Comments Regarding North Common Uses

- 3.1 Recreational Sport
- 3.2 Passive and Leisure Activities
- 3.3 Active Transportation

Public input about the Proposed Conceptual Plan is as varied as the multiple uses the North Common is known for; public opinion is both supportive and opposing to proposed improvements; it is conflicting on certain points; and there are vocal opponents as well as silent supporters. The most vocal response in the attached letters and during the public open house has been in opposition to hosting major concerts on the North Common. Overall, public opinion is perhaps reflective of the various roles the North Common plays for the benefit of HRM residents and visitors.

Permanent Power - Existing Commitment

HRM staff are currently working to install permanent power to the North Common, intended for summer 2010. This capital initiative is consistent with Halifax Regional Municipality's commitment to provide power for the benefit of large and small special events. The cost of this power installation is estimated at \$650,000. The power will be capable of supplying a large concert and is adequate to drive the six chiller plants necessary for the Canada Games Long Track Speed Skating Oval for the 2011 Canada Winter Games. Owing to necessary lead times, Nova Scotia Power has already placed an order for the fabrication of a large transformer, which is required for this application. As well, a tender for the fabrication of other required electrical equipment is pending award.

Canada Games Oval

The Halifax Regional Municipality will host the Canada Winter Games in February, 2011. The host organizing committee, with HRM's cooperation, will use the east end (nearest Citadel Hill) of the North Common, as the site for the 400-metre long track speed skating oval (see Attachment C).

In addition to providing athletes and spectators a speed skating venue, the oval is also intended to provide HRM residents and visitors with an outdoor skating venue for the winter months prior to the Canada Games and several weeks after. After the Games, three of the six chiller units will be redistributed to other parts of HRM for use in indoor and outdoor skating facilities.

The oval site is dependent on the permanent power to be installed on the North Common in order to avoid operating multiple generators 24-hours-a-day, for approximately three months.

Between the concerts in the summer of 2010, the construction of the oval in autumn of 2010, and the subsequent reinstatement of the Common in spring and summer of 2011, two sport fields (diamond #5, and the adjacent soccer pitch) will not be available. These fields will be off-line for approximately 5 weeks in spring/summer of 2010 and the majority of the spring/summer 2011. The fields will be available by mid-August for late summer and fall seasons. This also means that the site will not be available for concerts. As such, this has posed challenges to sport organizations, primarily Conrose Minor Baseball and other groups who regularly use these fields from late May to early September.

HRM staff are working to find solutions for such groups for the 2010 and 2011 seasons. This may be deemed a significant impact to summer users, but the converse consideration is that there will be a much higher public use of the North Common in the winter months, when programmed outdoor uses are rather rare.

Summary

In summary, Regional Council is requested to weigh the following points:

The Halifax Common Plan not only calls for reinvestment to the North Common, it also permits functions like major concerts. In 2007, Regional Council approved a policy that permits major concerts on the North Common under certain conditions, and if this policy were reversed, it may foster an impression that HRM is unsupportive of events, which are acknowledged and recognized internationally as a key strategy for creative economies.

The proposed conceptual plans presented to Regional Council by way of this report and staff presentation provide for such reinvestment in a phased approach, pending budget availability and Regional Council's approval. Regional Council is requested to approve the conceptual plan as presented.

Permanent Power will also be installed on the North Common to support large concerts and special events in 2010 as the first phase of the proposed improvements, and as per HRM's existing commitment.

Should Council decide to advance the proposed concept plan, the continued support of major concerts will assist in ensuring this proposed event plaza is programmed and maintained during times when concerts are not taking place.

Although approximately 50-75 members of the public have raised concerns over continuing use of the North Common as a venue for large concerts (and therefore are against the installation of permanent power there), many of those have also supported non-concert-related aspects of the proposed conceptual improvements to the North Common. However, there are also those who do not agree with any of the proposed conceptual improvements, because of the costs and the elimination of some grassy open space. There are others who are supportive of not only the proposed conceptual plan improvements, but the major concerts as well. Despite the predominant opinion collected at the open house, which opposes major concerts on the North Common, the multi-use approach to the North Common is also reflected in the varied comments from the public.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The overall proposed conceptual plan is estimated at over \$3 million, phased over a number of years, pending budget availability from year-to-year. The first phase is intended to satisfy HRM's commitment to provide power for special events and concerts. This phase of the project is being designed for construction in the spring/summer of 2010, and is estimated at approximately \$650,000. Those funds were approved in the 2009/10 Capital Budget. Budgets for subsequent phases of improvements will be proposed to, and approved by, Regional Council in respective fiscal years during HRM's annual capital budget approval process. There will be some financial implications related to the Canada Games long track speed skating oval, which will be dealt-with in a separate 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

- A - Contextual Site Plans**
- B - Summary - Proposed Conceptual Plan**
- C - 2011 Canada Games Long Track Speed Skating Oval**
- D - Information Report to Peninsula Community Council
Halifax Common - Economic Generation Analysis of 2009 Concerts
March 3, 2010**
- E - Summary of Public Opinion**
- F - Notes - Public Open House, January 20, 2010**
- G - Written Public Submissions**
- H - Excerpts from 1994 Halifax Common Plan**

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 902-490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by : Rudy Vodicka, Coordinator, Implementation, Real Property Planning, 490-5582
Andrew Whittemore, Manager, Community Relations and Cultural Affairs, 490-1585



Report Approved by: Peter Bigelow, Manager, Real Property Planning, 490-6047



Financial Approval by: Cathie O'Toole, CGA, Director of Finance, 490-6308

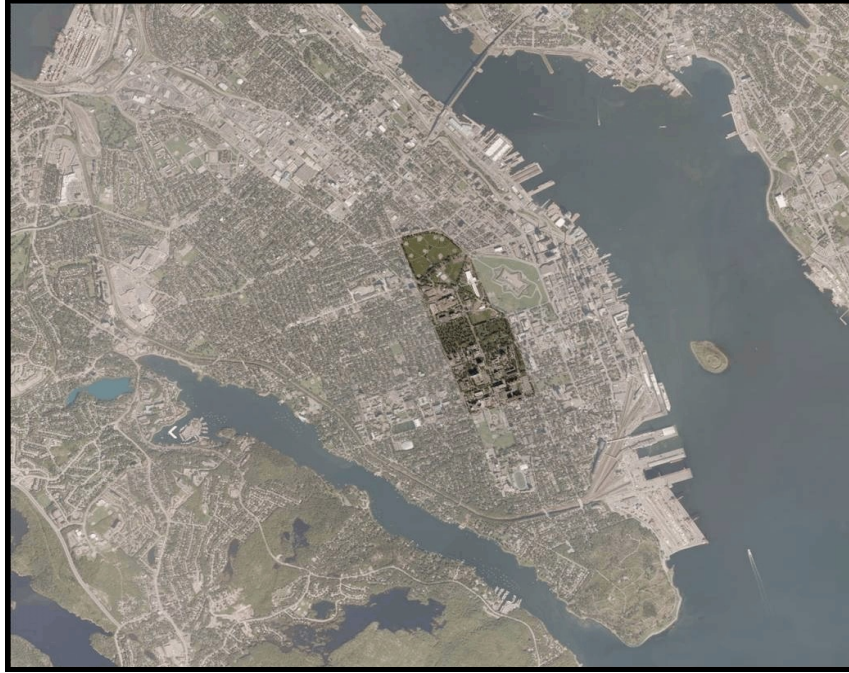


Report Approved by: Phillip Townsend, Director, Infrastructure & Asset Management, 490-7166

ATTACHMENT - A

Contextual Site Plans

The Halifax Common Within Halifax Peninsula



The North Common (top area) and Central Common (bottom area)



ATTACHMENT - B

Summary - Proposed Conceptual Plan

List of Key Features

Note: Each key feature below is numbered and corresponds to the conceptual plan on the following page.

Plazas and Passive Areas

1. Neighbourhood Park Entrance Plazas
2. Special Events Plaza
3. Fountain Plaza
4. Seating Areas

Pathways & Active Transportation Trails

5. Widen existing paths to 3.5m for multi-use
6. New paths to complete a continuous perimeter loop
7. New path leg to connect Cogswell/ North Park corner
8. Widen sidewalk along Cogswell to 3.5m

Special Events

9. Permanent power for major concerts New Building to house electrical, and small office/storage space
10. Grass pavers/ turf hardening

Park Lighting

- New Pathway Lights
- Gateway Lighting
- Special Lighting for Events and Fountain Plazas

Public Art Opportunities

- Kiosks and Signage at Neighbourhood Entrances
- Special Lighting and Gateway Lighting
- Banners on Light Poles
- Special Events Plaza Paving

Summary - Proposed Conceptual Plan

Plan of Key Features



ATTACHMENT - C

2011 Canada Games Long Track Speed Skating Oval

Approximate Location On North Common



ATTACHMENT - D

Information Report to Peninsula Community Council

Halifax Common - Economic Generation Analysis of 2009 Concerts

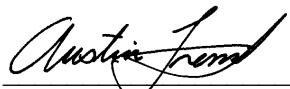
March 3, 2010



PO Box 1749
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**Peninsula Community Council
March 3, 2010**

TO: Chair and Members of Peninsula Community Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
Austin French, Acting Director, Community Development

DATE: January 29, 2010

SUBJECT: **Halifax Common - Economic Generation Analysis of 2009 Concerts**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

December 14, 2009 Peninsula Community Council requests an analysis of the economic generation created by the 2009 concerts on the North Common.

BACKGROUND

The Common is often referenced in association with major concerts, however, the concert site in question is actually known as the “North Common”. This large green space is surrounded by Robie, Cogswell, North Park and Cunard streets. It is only one part of the much larger Halifax Common.

A) The History of Concerts

September 23, 2006 HRM hosted the Rolling Stones Bigger Band Tour concert, which purportedly was the biggest touring production in North America that year and was certainly the largest of any ticketed outdoor concert ever staged in HRM. This concert marked the advent of a renewed interest in the Common for hosting large outdoor concerts.

On March 6, 2007 Regional Council reestablished support for using the North Common as a venue for major outdoor concerts. However, Council established specific criteria to guide decision. First, it must be anticipated that an audience of 30,000 or more for a concert can be achieved; that no greater than three Major Concerts may occur per year; and that a preference for concerts in September and October, when possible.

Upon approval of the major concert criteria for the Common, Council established policy conditions. **Policy 2** of HRM’s Civic Event Funding Policy Framework states that the Marketing Levy Special Event Reserve “will be the source from which HRM will fund events focussing on economic and tourism development”. Further, that HRM will support commercial special events which include events such as major outdoor concerts, professional sports and or the bid associated with such events.

Given the confidentiality and fast-paced nature of the concert business, Regional Council also provided the Mayor and DCAO of Operations authority to negotiate contracts for concerts within this framework.

B) The Common Concert Program

The Common Concert Program supports a maximum of 3 concerts per year. The program is not a granting program, so the promoter does not receive a direct grant in support of the concert. Rather the program is designed to allocate specific budgets to offset the cost of ‘municipal/extraneous’ services associated with concerts. The maximum budget allocated for each concert is \$150,000. The funds are maintained in a reserve until the concert concludes, and is then reassigned to respective business units and service providers accordingly.

DISCUSSION

During the Peninsula Community Council meeting held on December 14, 2009 a motion was made by Councillor Watts requesting a staff report on the economic analysis of concerts and impact on regular users of the Common due to field closures. HRM Civic Events does not regularly maintain this type of analysis. Consequently, HRM staff approached Events Halifax and the Promoter for this information.

Economic Impact:

In July 2009, HRM hosted two major concerts on the North Common. The first was the Paul McCartney concert held on July 11th, and the second was the KISS concert held on July 18th.

Events Halifax report concludes that 25% of the Paul McCartney concert audience came from outside HRM and 22% of the audience came from outside Nova Scotia. The analysis further suggests that 87% of the non-HRM residents came to the municipality for the primary reason of attending the concert.

In terms of expenditures, the analysis found that attendee expenditures exceeded \$6,800,000, and direct spending by the promoter locally to support the concert (ie. construction etc.) was over \$1,400,000. The total estimated direct expenditures from the Paul McCartney concert was \$8,200,000.

In discussions with Events Halifax staff, HRM staff extrapolated the Paul McCartney economic generation figures to the KISS concert and conservatively reached a total economic generation figure for both concerts in excess of \$10,000,000.

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.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications.

ATTACHMENTS

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/cc.html> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by : Mike Gillett, Senior Civic Event Coordinator , 490-4740

Report Approved by: 
Andrew Whittemore, Manager, Community Relations and Cultural Affairs, 490-1585

ATTACHMENT - E

Summary of Public Opinion

1.0 Public Comments Regarding The Proposed Conceptual Plan

1.1 Perimeter Plazas

- Do not build: promotes congregating, intimidating groups
- Use high quality materials
- Face benches inward not toward traffic
- Crosswalk @ Cunard St favourable

1.2 Safety Through Design

- Wider AT paths = police access
- Wider AT paths = help separate bikes/peds
- Keep views, don't overgrow
- Improve lighting

1.3 Central Fountain

- Remove
- Allow contact
- Drinking fountains: sports, dogs
- Recycle water

1.4 Amphitheatre / Events Plaza

- Needed for local events, music: free
- Public art opportunities
- Like seating walls
- Less hard surfaces
- More hard surface to protect against truck damage
- Move to Central Common: noise, less wind

1.5 Trees

- More is better
- Plant groves
- Do not plant more: safety, interferes w/ sports
- Plant evergreens

1.6 Other

- Don't allow all-day street parking
- More washrooms
- Introduce drinking water

2.0 Public Comments Regarding Concerts

2.1 Those Against Large Concerts:

Of those who oppose, most are local residents;
Preferred alternate venues: Exhibition Park, Airport Race Track;
Noise, fencing, mean North Common is not for all, always, because the event becomes private and fee-based;
Economic Analysis does not consider some local concerns;
Disruptive to league sports.

2.2 Those Who Support Large Concerts:

HRM's 2010 Public Opinion Survey: broad support was recorded for concerts on the Common from Citezen Survey;
Concerts attract a broader public, not just neighbourhood users;
Economic Analysis: economic generator;
Investment in larger, hardened areas, in fact serve to protect N/C.

2.3 Small, Local Concerts:

General support for local art, music, community events;
Concern for noise relative to immediate residents at east end of North Common;
Alternate Venue: Pavillion @ Central Common;
Permanent power is preferable as it avoids noise and pollution of generators.

3.0 Public Comments Regarding North Common Uses

3.1 Recreational Sport

Sport Assoc. support continued use of N/C
Deficiencies: path maintenance, turf maintenance, drinking water, washrooms, garbage cans
Like artificial ice
Remove ball fields
Keep N/C multi-use

3.2 Passive

Archeological Concerns during construction
Permit community vegetable gardens
Naturalized nodes: vary tree species, native plants, interpret
Public art displays, sculpture garden
Daylight Freshwater Brook
More enforcement: pick-up after dogs

3.3 Active Transportation

More paved paths, wider paths
Pave all lines of desire
Better, safer connectivity to on-street AT corridors

ATTACHMENT - F

Notes - Public Open House

January 20, 2010

Workshop Format Summary

The Halifax North Common Public Open House was held on January 20, 2010 at City Hall's Halifax Hall. The open house employed an initial open discussion format with staff based on the conceptual plans presented. Participants were encouraged to provide written comments in the margins of the plans. This part of the open house lasted for approximately one hour.

Subsequently, staff provided a multi-media (PowerPoint) presentation, which helped explain the rationale for the proposed plan improvements, and the projected plans were described in more detail by HRM's Project Manager / Landscape Architect, Carolle Koziak Roberts.

After the presentation, participants were invited to ask questions of staff, primarily of Peter Bigelow, Manager, Real Property Planning about the presentation and the proposed plans. This segment of the open house lasted approximately 2½ hours. The workshop yielded far less opinions about the proposed plan improvements, and rather most participants focussed on North Common as a venue for large concerts.

The following are staff's notes from the open house:

6:30 Open House

The public was invited to review static plan displays placed around the room on tables.
Staff answered questions in reference to the static displays.
Participants wrote comments in the plans' margins.

7:30 Staff Multi-Media (PowerPoint) Presentation

Introduction: history of the Halifax and North Common.
Review of policies of the 1994 Halifax Common Plan, and more specifically those relevant to the North Common.
Presentation of the proposed conceptual plan improvements.
Canada Games representatives then announced the site of the 400 metre long track speed skating oval to be at the east end of the North Common in 2011.

8:20 Notes: Question Period

Members of the public provided comments and asked questions of staff. Peter Bigelow, Manager of Real Property Planning, provided answers to some questions:

- Q Heartened about smaller concerts and performance opportunities proposed. HRM needs smaller cultural places.
- A Everything on the North Common should be multi-use. The dedicated power centre will have ample power for use by even small events.

- Q In reflection of the 1994 Common Plan, the area should be accessible, safe, community-related, host events, along with passive uses, and all not-for-profit. It was stressed that such should be grass-roots and community-related, which are not consistent with large concerts and the profit-related nature of them.
- A To clarify, the Common Plan does, in fact, support for-profit, fee-based, temporary special events or private functions that are deemed by Council to be of benefit to the city.
- Q A NS Archeological Society representative asked how will archeological concerns be addressed.
- A Staff are aware that Special Places Act is in force here, and a city-hired archeologist will be in-place during construction.
- Q Disapproves of large concerts, but likes opportunities for local special events, wider paths for safe cycling which encourages active transportation. Concerned between on-road and off-road paths and how the two will be connected; there is a problem with the intersections such as at Agricola-North Park transition.
- A Traffic improvements will be proposed at Agricola-North Park Streets as the Active Transportation spine passes along this alignment, and HRM will attempt to make the intersections more user-friendly and safe.
- Q Steve Hart, Fuller Terrace: if someone wishes to organize a concert and go to the site, is this possible?
- A Could be used as an informal site just as some sporting events happen at the North Common, but without booking, one wouldn't have access to power. Increasing demands from medium-sized events: Membertou Pow-Wow.
- Q Please describe how the special events space might function.
- A Chairs would be event organizer's responsibility, but power can be provided, and perhaps water, if available in future.
- Q Jane Wright (Jane's on the Common): excited about improvements and outdoor rinks, and although she knows this is not intended as a debate about large concerts, she indicated there are also significant economic losses that go along with them, and not just economic gains. Also, Jane has had to close for several days during concerts, affecting staff employment, citing one cause as being the unsightly chemical toilets in front of her establishment.
- A The toilets will not likely be placed in that location again since HRM will require concerts to rearrange their stage and supporting amenities.
- Q Anxious about paving, but what about introducing community gardens and other educational opportunities.
- A The Public Gardens is providing such opportunities. HRM also has Community Gardens program through Community Development (HRM). North Common cannot accommodate everything.
- Q Dr. Peter Duinker: more trees and diverse species area needed; should include smaller groves of shade trees. What are the reasons for not providing more such opportunities?
- A Preservation of views is one reason, not the large concerts. The multi-use approach to the North Common is not consistent with scattered groves among sport fields, which would present a risk to safety of users. That's why greater emphasis is being placed on peripheral tree planting, so a better balance is sought between passive and active uses.

- Q The special events plaza is small, so cannot understand that the proposed hardened areas are sufficient to preserve the grassed areas from 18-wheelers.
- A HRM learned some lessons from past concerts. Spectators don't pose risk, but set-up and tear-down do. That's why emphasis on specific areas where grass reinforcing is proposed. Grass reinforcing is used at Tanglewood, home of the Boston Pops Orchestra. Another place for hardening is the widening of the pathways to ensure trucks (HRM maintenance trucks, concert trucks, police & emergency vehicles) stay on the paths.
- Q Katie: feels plan is flawed: does not want benches facing street; community losses related to large concerts.
- Q Cat Gray: likes crosswalk on Cunard St. However, cannot sleep during major concert periods (during set-up and tear-down as well). Total budget for 2010 has everything to do with facilitating concerts. As a business owner in the area, had experienced very little business during concerts, and anticipates that she will have to cut shifts/hours of staff. Instead of concert preparations, HRM should spend that money on tree planting and sport field upgrades.
- A Money for power will be coming from Hotel Surcharge.
- Q Bev Miller, Co-chair of Friends of Halifax Common: the elephant in the room is the big concert. In April 2009, staff did prioritization of capital infrastructure projects: #7 was facilities for concerts. What about economic analysis of large concerts? So far nothing suggesting that economic benefits are positive.
- Q Peggy Cameron, Co-Chair of Friends of Halifax Common: distrust of city staff to respect 1994 Common Plan, and the plan has been ignored, case in point: All Saints Cathedral built condos, Brain Repair Centre construction should not have been permitted, parking lot in front of VG, sale of QEH to Capital Health, and so the Common has been whittled down to 1/4 of what it was. Concerts take out use of North Common for anywhere between 5 weeks and 6 months. If plaza is intended as multi-use plaza, then why put it next to Cogswell St, a busy, noisy ROW. Money spent on large concerts could otherwise be used for local cultural community needs. JazzFest budget is \$40,000, whereas hundreds of thousands are spent on McCartney and Kiss concerts. Could be spending on provincial art gallery, the public library, etc., which are permanent ways by which to draw-in people to the city. By placing the plaza here, it chokes the connection to downtown. Why are we not having community gardens here, for instance?
- A HRM increased its commitment to the JazzFest in 2009 several-fold to be its largest sponsor. Work around Bloomfield Centre as a cultural cluster is a major positive step for HRM. Many other cultural and arts groups are supported by Councillors. Finally, this conversation should be about proposed improvements to the North Common as called-for by the 1994 Halifax Common Plan. Regional Council would be the body to change the direction of major concerts from the policy it had already approved in 2007.
- Q Jim Reardon, Conrose Minor Baseball: concern about ball diamond #5 where bantams play, citing growth of participants to 170 kids in past few years. Last year's concerts were said to have no impact on #5, but refrigerated trucks and golf carts ripped-up the out-field. If staging is set-up in the area of the #5 outfield, then it will effectively cancel bantam league season.
- A Lay-down space wouldn't affect the ball field, but outfield would be affected. Bantam should be on dedicated field elsewhere in city where larger playing area and outfield fence/wall could be built, which cannot be done on the North Common. Staff will work with Conrose to find a suitable alternate field for 2010 and 2011, until such time as a dedicated field can be developed, however, if expectation is to stay on peninsula, then we're not sure there are any areas that conform to the distances and requirements of bantam-level baseball.

- Q Bantam coach: Conrose almost kicked-out of league due to inconsistency of games in 2009, due to the interruption caused by large concerts and subsequent field improvements. Why not place the bantam kids ahead of beer-drinking adults who drive to Canada Games diamond.
- Q Economic Impact Report: no impact reports produced over the past two years, so how can HRM decide to spend all that money on concert support. Why not spend money on improving ball diamonds and other sport fields.
- A Mixed use recreational areas on North Common reflect the concessions that need to be made. There will be an economic report filed with Peninsula Community Council, based on the McCartney concert.
- Q Concern that the Common is a place where you can walk to and cycle to for the benefit of kids. Would like to see big public meeting on the benefits and costs of major concerts. Point of Common is public access to public land. If we invest this much in the Common, what safeguards are we placing to limit highrise buildings around the Common?
- A HRM-By-Design provides form-based guidelines and policies for the peninsula, and will expand to consider neighbourhoods like this, this year. No current plan to protect from shade, however. The Halifax North Common Proposed Conceptual Plan is not intended to redress such risks, however.
- Q Pepperrell St resident: why not have Exhibition Park as major concert venue?
- A Exhibition Park is within Long Lake Provincial Park, and much of the land around is protected so cannot expand. The downtown location offers walking opportunities, whereas Exhibition Park would require parking, bussing, and automobiles (one cannot walk to Exhibition Park).
- Q Residents from a high-rise condo overlooking the North Common: he and neighbours offer very little opposition to concerts and he sees many more people at concerts than normally occurs with organized sport. Therefore, supportive of concerts and the proposed conceptual plan for improvements.
- Q Would like to have shady places to sit. The major concerts are a problem, and sees this open house as minor consultation. Wants to see more emphasis for Mi'kmaq at Point Pleasant Park (PPP).
- A HRM will get to PPP, but in 2009 had to switch emphasis on World Canoe Championships and improvements around Lake Banook, where interpretation of Mi'kmaq culture was included in the public park improvements.
- Q What are "strong edges" in landscape architectural terms?
- A The Common is open space, and edges are defined by trees, roads, boulevards, and so it is effectively a contrast between openness of the inside of the Common and the edges are the trees, roads, buildings, etc. around it that give it form.
- Q In favour of small cultural events and the space proposed. Major concerts are rather intrusive with the fencing around the Common. Permanent power is positive to eliminate the generators and noise associated with large concerts. Fork lifts tear-up the grass when putting up bleachers.
- A HRM will continue to work to ensure contractors respect their responsibility to respect the site plan and to stay off areas which are not fundamental to the concert set-up. 2009 was much better than previous years. 2010 will improve again with use of plywood and special carpet.
- Q June Street resident: 90 decibels at front porch, which is a health-and-safety concern. If I got tinnitus (hearing damage) from this, which would affect profession as a composer, I might have

grounds for a law suit against the city, because it's a factual medical risk to residents who do not have a choice to pay, listen, and then leave. Residents are a captive audience.

Q Permanent washrooms are usually locked. Need more bathrooms and better access.

A Expensive and outside our budget with this plan proposal. As part of the skating oval, we're trying to bring-in washroom infrastructure along North Park Street.

Q Scalable concerts should be staged out of the pavilion rather than at the Cogswell/Rainnie/North Park/Ahern/Trollope intersection.

ATTACHMENT - G

Written Public Submissions

Note: During the Public Open House and on HRM's website (see Real Property Planning), staff sought written public comments. The following submissions were collected from January 21 until March 21, 2010.

Attachment G

From: Jennifer Watts
To: Rudy Vodicka
CC: Dawn Sloane; Jerry Blumenthal; Sue Uteck
Date: January 23, 2010 10:24 pm
Subject: Fwd: The North Common

Rudy - here are some more comments about the North Common plan. This resident lives

Jennifer

Jennifer Watts
Councillor
District 14 Connaught-Quinpool

Phone: 497-4748
Fax: 490-2626
Email: jennifer.watts@halifax.ca

>>> Gordon Conrad 1/21/2010 8:17:08 pm >>>

MS. J, Watts:

Wish to advise you, that I enjoy receiving the HMR news letters

of District 14, however, I do not expect will be able attend meetings.

As I have be living in the area almost 60 years, it just means one thing, numerous changes.

This erecting of a permanent stage and also electrical building

will almost signify more encroachment in the Years to come.

The diagram in the newspaper indicates additional trees along with increased lighting which the latter would be an improvement.

Wont the additional number of trees as presented create additional potential shaded areas?

I believe some consideration should occur when change is completed that 2 hour parking signs maybe 6 cars for visitors to stop and go for walk. Presently this is impossible during the summer.

Regards

Gordon Conrad

From: Rudy Vodicka
To: Rudy Vodicka
Date: March 23, 2010 4:40 pm
Subject: Re: Fwd: Questions & Comments

>>> > 20/01/2010 8:42 pm >>>

[COMMENTS]: I would like to see spokes persons for the city not try to B S the public with their promotions of various city plans.
Example;

A person speaking about fixing up the commons with lights and wider walk ways so people could walk and run without difficulty.
We know why the wider walks, it's to get trucks on the grounds to set up for concerts etc. Why make up scenarios that are not the real reason. This just undermines your credibility for other pronouncements.

I would prefer that you not commercialize the commons by putting in permanent lights and other permanent objects. Once a piece is taken,for this purpose,it will set a precedent for more in the future.

[NAME]: elwood
[USER_EMAIL]:

MAR 22 2010

MUNICIPAL CLERK

From:
To: <clerks@halifax.ca>
Date: 19/03/2010 9:12 pm

CC: <p.cameron@ns.sympatico.ca>

Hi Clerks...sorry I didn't get this in sooner. Hopefully, it can be distributed soon as I think a report from Real Property in the 'improvements' will be coming soon. Beverly Miller

MUNICIPAL CLERK'S OFFICE

Distributed to: *Mr. Busby, M. Labrecque*
Mayor, Councillors, CAO, *J. Church,*
Solicitor *S. Mackinlay,*

P. Voderka, P. Townsend

DATE *March 22/10*

FRIENDS OF THE HALIFAX COMMON

To his Worship the Mayor and Members of Council:

Last December, when Real Property staff first presented the plans for an approximately \$3 million upgrade to the North Common to facilitate mega concerts, Peninsula Community Council unanimously passed a motion by Councillor Watts, with an addition by Councillor Uteck, asking for a cost benefit analysis on the concerts on the Common and also information on who makes the decisions regarding these concerts.

This report, which was received by Peninsula Community Council on March 03, 2010 was an embarrassment and an insult to the Councillors and the citizens who requested it.

The problem can be summed up in one sentence from the report (which professes to be the economic analysis), "HRM Civic Events does not regularly maintain this type of analysis. CONSEQUENTLY, HRM STAFF APPROACHED EVENTS HALIFAX AND THE PROMOTER FOR THIS INFORMATION". This is simply outrageous; asking the two parties which benefit most from the concerts for economic information.

As might be expected, staff got no information except a few numbers on the alleged economic impact of the Mc Cartney concert which were completely unsubstantiated: nothing, for example, about how many tickets were sold, nothing about how they determined where the concert goers were from, no itemization of the supposed direct spending by the promoter to set up the concert, and most importantly, no accounting of how much the McCartney tour was paid...money which left the city directly. There is a great lot of talk about the multiplier effect of all the money allegedly spent by concerts goers, but a proper economic analysis should also take into account the fact that every \$136 (and more) ticket which was sold locally for the McCartney concert, for example, was money then not spent in HRM or the Province.

Both the Spring Garden Area Business Association and Jane Wright, who owns Jane's on the Common have talked about the negative effects the concerts have on business. No where is this lost business accounted for as a cost of the concerts.

These concerts need a complete review before millions are spent to upgrade the Common for more of these extravaganzas. The combined HRM and Provincial subsidies for mega concerts in the past four years has been over \$1,000,000 dollars (\$300,000 Provincial and \$150,000 HRM for the KISS concert and \$150,000 from HRM and \$140,000 from the Province for the Rolling Stones, for example). I cannot think of another instance in which a private promoter would/could get that kind of public money and not be required to give an accounting to government and taxpayers.

This also raises the question of why HRM and the province are willing to sink hundreds of thousands of dollars into a McCartney concert while an event like the Atlantic Jazz Festival, which attracted approximately 60,000 people over the course of the nine day event in the summer of 2009, gets only \$40,000 from HRM.

Until Council receives a proper peer-reviewed accounting of the economic impact of each of the mega concerts in the past four years, the alleged economic benefits are just so much hot air and no money should be spent to get the North Common 'mega-concert-ready' so we can repeat the folly. HRM and the

Province are both strapped for cash; the emphasis should be on spending money that will stay in the community. The Halifax Common obviously could use an investment in making it more community friendly (benches, picnic tables, landscaping, etc.) and citizens seemed supportive of events featuring local artists and organizations. These are expenditures with a proven local economic impact and things like benches, for example, are a capital investment.

Incidentally, Councillor Uteck's inquiry as to who makes the decisions around concerts (who to have, etc.) was not answered either.

Yours sincerely,

Beverly Miller
Co-Chair

The Commons as a Convert Venue

Abuse, that's the word for it: an annual orgy of turf-ripping, fence-building, apartment-shaking, bicycle and walking disrupting - defiling a public space for half the summer - and for what purpose?

For supposed dollars? Hotels & eateries - speak to the businesses of Moncton and see what they say about this. Look at their location - do you get the idea?

Is it Council's purpose to enhance the city's reputation as a sponsor of Big Things - let it be known far and wide that our citizens approve that we should desecrate our public spaces! Tell people how we enjoy those fences! Ah, now this is something we should aspire to and be proud of, is it?:

Imagine such an event proposed for the Boston Common - there would be a revolution!

But here - all it takes is the arm-twisting and brow-beating of an impresario or two, and -voila! - here's your permit, sir, sorry to have made you wait so long.

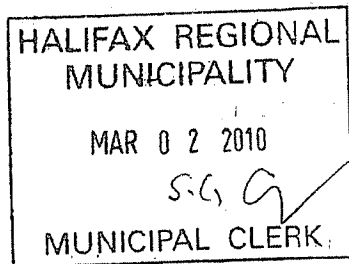
Council, the way you bend and bow before the moneyed men, and disregard your city's inheritance - this wide-open space that is such a gift to a city - well now, some councillors are NOT so lily-livered - and I expect them to fight tooth and nail NOT to proceed with all that fancy electrical wiring.

What you CAN do - how about an amphitheatre that holds maybe 500 seats, with a permanent stage, well-equipped, dug forty feet into the ground, for seasonal concerts and plays - it would use up the space of half a baseball field - go to Parc LaFontaine Park in Montreal and have a look! Combine this project with beautiful lighting, a central cafe, wider paths with benches - just imagine!

Regional councillors: do you have the right space for these events? Think of the benefits! Go for it! Help put the kibosh of the Commons Concerts!

Let's be fair: much of the work that Council does is commendable and that's what we pay you for. But sometimes - please excuse me while I go get a broom and sweep up the hair that just fallen all around me!

Yours in citizenship,
Peter Dunn



MUNICIPAL CLERK'S OFFICE

Distributed to: Mr. Ansley, M. Labrecque

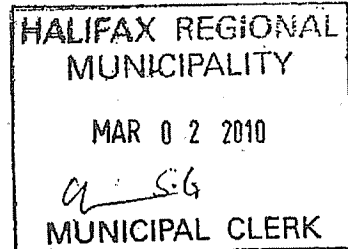
Mayor, Councillors, CAO, J. Church,

Solicitor, S. Mackinlay,

P. Townsend, R. Vodicica

DATE March 02, 2010

From: "Keith S. McPhail"
 To: <clerks@halifax.ca>
 Date: 02/03/2010 1:16 am
 Subject: Opposed to proposed 'improvements' to North Common



Dear Mayor and Council,

I do not find the proposed 'improvements' to the North Common as improvements at all. I believe the proposal to be counter to all modern development theories and practices that work to transform unusable concrete and 'brown' urban space to people-friendly space. Green spaces should not be built-over or paved, rather rediscovered, increased and re-greened.

Anyone, like me, who uses the Common as green space is aware that the use and difficulty in finding free green (grass covered) space on the Common has increased over the years. For example, a group of friends (including spouses, children and new friends) have played mixed-gender soccer on The Common over a number of years. The majority of us live in the urban core, and the Common is one of the few free spaces in the spring/summer/fall evenings and weekends that is available to us.

It has become so difficult to find space because of this pressure and the additional pressure of Commercial Concerts blocking off the space, that last summer we were forced to rent space on one evening of the week at a school field - luckily still on the peninsula. In addition to the burden of having to rent space, it turned out that fewer participants dropped by because the location was less central, and then we cancelled most evenings because of the weather, and had no alternative evening because it was a booked time slot. As a result, this group that is attempting to remain active, socially engaged citizens have essentially been disengaged in our own neighbourhood.

The proposed development of the Common radically opposed to encouraging and engaging an active population. In addition, our sport - soccer - is a highly engaging activity for new immigrants to mix with longer-term residents, and now this activity is being shut down too. This is a social group, not an organized club team. It, like other similar 'social' groups, are being forced out of one of the few central spaces available.

Similarly, the idea of making a concrete plaza for concerts seems poorly researched and not well researched in term of its operation. Sure, a huge commercial concert will have promoter backing, sponsorships, and maybe even government funding to pay for the power hook-up, and to pay to shut the streets down. Small, local bands will not have that capacity. Anyone that believes that a busy street corner is an ideal concert venue has never produced a cultural event.

Even if local bands could afford the costs above, how unseemly it would be to subject local residents to endless concerts. And what about commuter and shopping traffic? Shutting down some or all of a major artery will not be welcomed by motorists, and will cut off the downtown from shoppers. I challenge any member of council to consider the impact this kind of development would have on a park in their neighbourhood (anywhere in HRM), and then consider the impact on the

MUNICIPAL CLERK'S OFFICE

Distributed to: *W. Andy M. Labrecque*
 Mayor, Councillors, CAO, *J. Church*,
 Solicitor, *S. MacKinnon*, *P. Traverso*,
R. Vodicka

DATE *March 02, 2010*

citizens around the Common.

During the first concert I attended an event one mile north of the concert. I could not hear the speakers using a microphone on the stage at the small North Street Church venue. That is the noise impact of the concerts in the urban core, and I think that kind of impact is also unreasonable.

Finally (although I could go on about the lack of critical thinking about the planning on this initiative) I heard an HRM staff person say that they were going to rethink the paths on the Common; and pave where people want to walk. Hold on! It's a park space. The Common is not a commuter transit-way, not a model for efficient movement of bodies from A to B. A park is for leisure and meandering. And, following the logic of paving where people walk? well, then, simply pave over the whole space! I see the patterns of walker from my apartment all the time. They criss-cross in all directions. Many simply want to walk on grass, some are walking dogs; others are off the paths and on grass to play sports. This includes young people and older citizens too. The paths are plenty wide for pedestrians and bicyclists. I grew up in Ottawa where the bike and pedestrian paths in the greenbelt are narrower. If paved paths are widened and reoriented to save a few seconds for commuters, you will further diminish the multi-use of the Common. There is already enough concrete on the South Common, do not reduce anymore green space.

Please scrap this ill-advised development. Put yourselves in the shoes of citizens you have encouraged to use the space actively (not passively on select concert nights). Please do not develop this space to be less accessible to its current, frequent users.

Thank you for considering my plea.

Sincerely,

Keith McPhail

From: "Trident Booksellers and Cafe, Halifax"
To: <clerks@halifax.ca>
Date: 10/02/2010 2:58 pm
Subject: Transforming the Halifax Common

Dear Mayor and HRM Councillors,

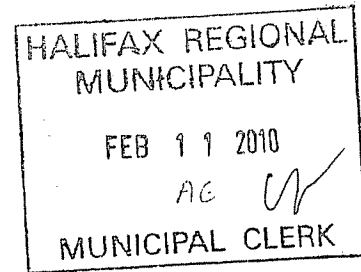
I object to the conversion of the Halifax Common to a permanent outdoor venue for private music events such as that scheduled for August 6-7, 2010.

Instead, please do more to enrich the greenspace possibilities of the Halifax Common. Plant trees, shrubs, flowers. Attract birds. While continuing to allow baseball, cricket, soccer, football, lawnbowling, playgrounds, and skating, in all other areas encourage the growth of greenery and trees.

This is important and vital to the genuine health and well-being of HRM.

The Halifax Common should not be a private concert venue. It should be continuously and freely available for the enjoyment of all HRM citizens and visitors.

Sincerely,
Janet Shotwell

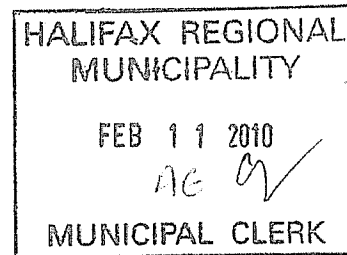


MUNICIPAL CLERK'S OFFICE

Distributed to: J Church, S. Mackenzie
Mayor, Councillors, CAO, W. Arnsky
Solicitor, M. Labrecque, R. Voderka,
P. Townsend

Feb 11 / 10
DATE

From: Molly De Shong
To: <clerks@halifax.ca>
Date: 10/02/2010 10:16 pm
Subject: Improvements to the Commons



Hello Mayor Kelly,
My name is Molly DeShong and I live in the Northend, in Halifax.
I wish to register my vote, loud and clear, that I am absolutely against the plan to 'improve' the Commons by adding infrastructure for concerts.

I am all FOR the occasional concert on the Commons. But not changing the grounds to accommodate the new mega-project being proposed. It is a wonderful, clean, much-used space that is used by so many, many people in summer.... walkers, ball players, kids of all kinds. This is not a place to be closed in or closed off for concert space.

Please, do not let this part of our city become another park for city-money making. There are other places more appropriate for such concerts in HRM.

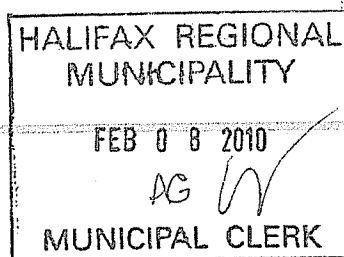
I am also concerned about the noise factor from too many concerts. Last year, my husband and I had to leave the city twice to get away from what was a constant stream of noise before and during those concerts. We are long-term residents of this neighborhood who deserve to be able to be in our homes at night, and not have to vacate multiple times during the summer months.

Perhaps the city will reimburse us for the lodging when we DO have to vacate?

Thank you, and please register my vote!
Sincerely,
Molly DeShong

MUNICIPAL CLERK'S OFFICE
Distributed to: J. Church, S. MacKintley
Mayor, Councillors, CAO, W. Amstey
Solicitor, M. Labrecque, R. Vachek,
P. Townsend
Feb 11 / 10
DATE

Clerks Office - Mayor Kelly @Council



From: "John H Reynolds"
 To:
 Date: 08/02/2010 11:39 AM
 Subject: Mayor Kelly @Council

The proposed plan for the Common land is monstrous. What we have left of this land should be carefully nurtured and planned, I do not want my money squandered on grandiose plans that have been hatched by people who who don't give a tinkers curse for our precious land in the centre of our city, I have read and heard enough in recent weeks about the misuse that this land will be put, yes, it needs to be upgraded, not for huge noisy concerts, I certainly would not want my young grandchildren to be part of that, the people who live in the area are not consulted, and they are most affected by development, I live nearby and love walking through the Common. Beauty does not cost more than ugly" Bruce Mau
 Nellie MacClung said "I do not want to pull through life like a thread that has no knot, I want to leave something behind when I go, some small legacy of truth, some word that will shine in a dark place" What legacy will you Mayor Kelly and Council leave? Elinor Egar Reynolds

MUNICIPAL CLERK'S OFFICE

Distributed to: W. Anstey, M. Labrecque
 Mayor, Councillors, CAO, J. Church
 Solicitor, S. Mackinlay, P. Townsend
 R. Vodka

Feb 8 / 10

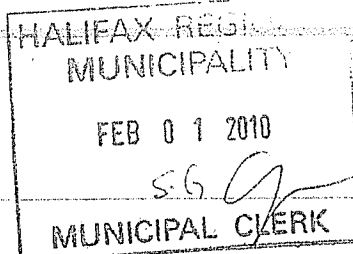
DATE

Clerks Office

From: katie mckay

To:

Date: 31/01/2010 7:49 PM



To the mayor and members of council,

I am writing to you to express my concern about the plan to host more concerts on the Common. I understand how they are a draw for tourism - and I agree that there should be a large permanent outdoor concert facility - but disagree, wholeheartedly that these concerts should take place on the Common.

This common land is for everyone - not just people who can afford a 125\$ ticket. A public space should not be used for for-profit events. The set-up & take-down for these events tie up the space, limiting access and draining the spontaneity from the events that take place there. The Common can be a vibrant public space - and it is during the time before the concerts - but the concerts completely undermine the intended use for this space.

I think it's necessary that Halifax think of ways to draw people to our city. I agree with you on that point - but please hear me out, as young person from Quebec, having moved here to go to school - and trying to stay here. It is a struggle!!! I am unemployed and all the people I know who have left ask me "Katie, why don't you leave? That place is stuck in the past"

We need to think about ways to RETAIN the people who are living here, rather than attracting people here temporarily. I don't want to be a tourist in Nova Scotia - a temporary university student who comes and then leaves - I want to be able to make a living here. I want to be able to feel comfortable walking around this city. I want our council to listen to the younger generation - and take heed from what cities across Canada are doing. We can put more emphasis on improving our pedestrian culture here. We can value our parks. We can make this city safer by improving this aspect of our city. More people on the street = more people in parks = more eyes = less violence.

Let me know how I can help,
Katie McKay

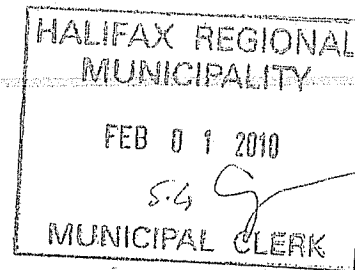
MUNICIPAL CLERK'S OFFICE

Distributed to: *M. Anstey, M. Labrecque*
Mayor, Councillors, CAO, *J. Church*
Solicitor *S. Mackinlay, R. Vodicka,*
P. Swartland

DATE *Feb 01, 2010*

Clerks Office - Halifax Commons

From: wendy macgregor
To:
Date: 31/01/2010 10:21 PM
Subject: Halifax Commons



Dear Members of Halifax City Council,
I am writing to express my extreme dismay at the intended building of a permanent stage area on the Halifax Commons. I feel very strongly that this area should be used to promote recreation and the health and long-term well-being of our community members. It should be a sporting, gathering and meeting place and an attraction for the tourists that visit our beautiful city. (In my experience, tourists always comment on attractive green space when it exists, but no one ever lingers to admire concert staging.)

A concert stage will be beneficial to a very small percentage of our community, on a few special occasions, and at the expense of preserving and expanding green space that can be used and enjoyed by citizens of all ages and interests on a daily basis. (When deciding what city to live in many people consider green space and recreation facilities, very few think about what concerts they will be able to see.)

I admit that concerts are enjoyable entertainment for some and they may bring money into the city in bursts, but they can be equally well enjoyed in stadiums and if permanent outdoor staging is required then it should be built outside of the city, not in the heart of our community.

Recreation is free, available to everyone, and it promotes good health and community spirit. We must preserve the Halifax Common. We need more community recreation areas, not more concerts.

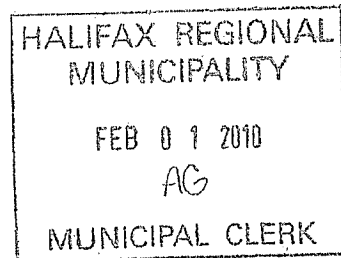
Yours Sincerely,
Wendy MacGregor

MUNICIPAL CLERK'S OFFICE

Distributed to: *Ed. Ansley M. Labrecque*
Mayor, Councillors, CAO, *J. Churchill*,
Solicitor *S. Mackinlay, R. Vodicka,*
P. Townsend

DATE *Feb 01, 2010*

From: Mark Lamovsek
To: <clerks@halifax.ca>
Date: 01/02/2010 12:29 pm
Subject: North Common Improvements - Comments and Concerns



To the mayor and members of council,

I am writing to express my concerns about the recently presented plan for 'Improvements to the North Common.'

I was at the meeting on 20 January, but still feel the need to write all of you, to voice my concerns. In fact, though I was at the meeting, though I spoke at the meeting, I still need to follow-up with a letter because my voice was definitely not heeded during the meeting at city hall.

And that brings me to my first concern. At the presentation nearly two weeks ago, I was shocked by the number of citizens in attendance. I was dismayed however, at Peter Bigelow's responses - rather than encourage a healthy discourse, he seemed to believe that the proposed plan was set in stone. If this is the case, then the PROCESS is LACKING. Democracy, especially at the municipal level, works only with transparency and accountability. I knew next to nothing of the plan until the meeting, at which point the plan was presented and the money (for the 2010 fiscal year) spent. How can this be?

Naturally, this irked many of the folks in attendance, especially because the majority of the moneys spent this year will go to permanent infrastructure for large events.

This highlights a couple of related concerns. The first is that, despite much dissent from peninsular Haligonians, plans for large, expensive concerts on the Common are going full steam ahead. Bookings have already been made for this summer, despite the lack of any economic data - how much did the events cost? how much was lost/gained? how many tourists were actually drawn to the city?

How can we as a city proceed without definite answers to these questions?

And while concerts on the Common are the most controversial part of the 'Improvements' plan, the budget for 2010 overwhelmingly favours infrastructure that is useful only to these large events.

This seems like a way to push forward an agenda that is incompatible with the values of the Common - land set aside for use by all, not only those who shell out \$125 for a ticket.

I'm a 'come-from-away.' I came from Ontario. I took a degree at Dalhousie. I am educated, young, bright and ambitious. Halifax needs people like me to stay, to thrive. A thriving city is more than just tourists and their dollars. A city needs to be walkable. A city needs greenspace. A city needs neighbourhood parks. A city needs young and old to congregate - and the Common serves that purpose. By fencing it off - even if only for a few weeks - during prime summer days, Halifax is losing an opportunity to create a vibrant and positive community space.

MUNICIPAL CLERK'S OFFICE

Distributed to: W. Anstey, M. Labrecque

Mayor, Councillors, CAO,

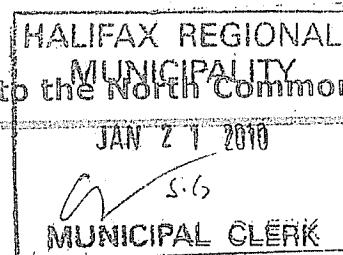
Solicitor, J. Church, S. Mackinlay,
P. Townsend, R. Vodicka

Feb 1 / 10

DATE

I'd love to help. I'd love to be involved. I'd love to hear more.
Mark Lamovsek

Clerks Office - Public Hearing on "Improvements to the North Common"



From: Adria Young
To:
Date: 20/01/2010 3:36 PM
Subject: Public Hearing on "Improvements to the North Common"
CC:

To Mayor Peter Kelly and the Councillors of the Halifax Regional Municipality,

I write to express my concern about HRM's plans for "Improvements to the North Common," which will be publicly addressed today, Wednesday, 20 January 2010, at the HRM Council in Halifax at 7:30pm. I feel that these plans are not the best use of public land, and represent only the interests of independent businesses and not the general public of the Halifax Regional Municipality, who are, in all senses, the collective inhabitants of this space.

There are several problems with reappropriating public-use space to accommodate seasonal outdoor concerts that are profitable to private business. Such promotional organizers, with the aid of the HRM event planners, encourage "big-name bands" to visit Halifax so that a wide profit can be turned for said promotional organizers and the artist(s) who perform.

This act encroaches on the use of public land because the general public is not asked for input when HRM seeks out entertainment, and thus the performers only appeal to a small percentage of the HRM population (a small percentage, in this case, is 40,000 people).

The upcoming "Country-Fest" for the summer of 2010 is one instance where it can be presumed that little thought was given to the culture, age groups, or interests of the HRM inhabitants before prostituting public space for private industry.

Some of the suggestions proposed by HRM are of some benefit to the use of the North Common as a whole, including better lighting and tree planting.

But, the proposed "Special Events Plaza" does not represent the best interest of people who routinely use the Commons, especially when multiple baseball tournaments, soccer games, and fundraising events (just to name a few of the activities that are enjoyed on the Commons) are often competing for the already-marginalized public space in the spring and summer months. The North Common is overcrowded by the surrounding high-rise condominiums, the over-congested ever-present traffic in the perimeter, and the constant use by groups and individuals. The proposed reduction of actual land-area of the North Common for a structure that will encourage profit for private industry is not a sustainable, practical, or sensitive plan for the people who love and use this space.

It is my suggestion that, if this plan were to move ahead in any way, a **non-binding plebiscite** be introduced for the inhabitants of the HRM to have some formal input on the designs and use of their open space, in addition to the public hearing that is planned for tonight. This should be a method used by Council in most situations, but is of severe importance in this instance.

Many people will be affected by this decision, and these plans can not be said to reflect any HRM citizen's opinion or wishes if the citizens of the HRM are not asked to contribute to this plan. Indeed, without formal, organized, and wide-reaching public input, it is fair to say that this plan does not reflect any interest of the citizens of the HRM.

As a land-owner in District 14, a post-secondary student, a Nova Scotian born citizen, and a person with invested interest in living and working in Halifax the rest of my days, I do not support this plan for the North Common and wish that Council would cancel this plan altogether, *or at the very least*, introduce a non-binding plebiscite for the citizens of HRM to show their actual interests, uses, and concerns for the North Commons.

Please do not take our space away. I do not care if it gives Kevin Costner somewhere to "sing" from. I would much rather have an open and always-available place to play, live, and enjoy. Exhibition Park is sorely underused, as is Dartmouth Crossing.

Thank you.

Adria Young

District 14, Connaught/Quinpool
Halifax Regional Municipality

Say Happy New Year with Messenger for Mobile. [See more.](#)

MUNICIPAL CLERK'S OFFICE

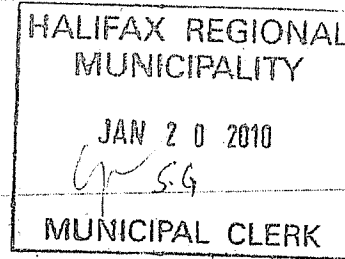
Distributed to: *Klayne Anstey,*
Mayor, Councillors, CAO, *Mike Labrecque,*
Solicitor, *Jennife Church, Shaune Mackinlay*

Pady Vochicka

DATE *Jan 21, 2010*

Clerks Office - Improvements to the North Common

From: "Judith Fingard"
To:
Date: 19/01/2010 11:33 PM
Subject: Improvements to the North Common



Please circulate my email to the Mayor, Councillors and Staff:

Dear fellow citizens and guardians of HRM's public good,

I am writing on 19 January 2010 because I may not be able to attend the public presentation tomorrow on the proposed improvements to the North Common. I will shortly be taking up residence in a building on the North Common and I write both in that capacity and as a citizen who has long been concerned about the use of public spaces.

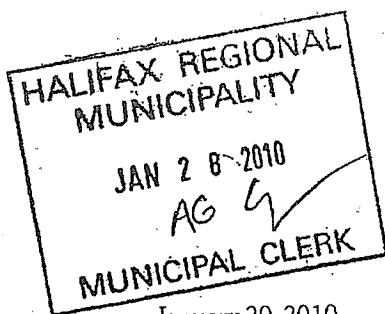
I approve of the efforts to beautify the Common and make it more comfortable and accessible. By this I mean that I support landscaping, planting of trees, placement of benches, provision of community garden space, water features that attract rather than exclude, and extensive improvement of the entries/exits to and from the space as it is surrounded by some of the worst roads for pedestrian safety on the peninsula. I am opposed to permanent structures on the Common and to selfish uses like loud rock concerts that render it messy, muddy and restricted for weeks on end. As a Common it should be the equivalent to the Public Gardens, not in terms of usage but with the same respect for its integrity as a facility supported by the taxpayer for the citizens.

Sincerely,
Judith Fingard

MUNICIPAL CLERK'S OFFICE

Distributed to: *W. Ansley,*
Mayor, Councillors, CAO, *M. Labrecque,*
Solicitor, *J. Church, S. Mackinlay,*
R. Vodicka

DATE *Jan 20, 2010*



MUNICIPAL CLERK'S OFFICE

Distributed to: W. Anstey, M. LaSrecque
Mayor, Councillors, CAO, J. Church
Solicitor, S. Mackinlay, R. Vodicka,
P. Townsend

Jayne Margaret Melrose

Jan 28 / 10

DATE

January 20, 2010

To the Mayor and Members of Council,

I am looking at the proposed plan for the North Common being put forth by city staff and would like to offer feedback.

I walk through the North Common twice a day, play ultimate there, meet friends and play there regularly. I occasionally walk dogs there, watch baseball games, and dream of what that space could be. I am a student of ecological landscape design who is actively engaged with the local urban gardening and food security movement. I have studied community design, environmental planning, and ecological democracy. I have also studied the Halifax Common, both from a historical perspective, as well as from a current use and proposed redesign perspective. I am 32 years and plan to call Halifax my home indefinitely. My interest in this place is long-term and passionate.

When I look at the Common, I see a landscape that could and should be so much more.

First off, the original concept of a Common is a communal landbase that supports the local citizenry. This is the purpose as laid out by King Henry in 1767: "for the use..." Through the Victorian era that followed, the perception of beauty was one of 'improved' land, of sculpted, civilized, and controlled landscape. Following the Industrial Revolution, the purpose of any open space was to provide fresh air, and a space for relaxing. The current aesthetic and function of the Halifax North Common is based on these old ideas, and I will argue that our current needs and priorities have changed, and a new 5 year plan for the Common should reflect that.

As a young person with her ear to the news and her large community, I believe that our priorities are now to prepare for a future that supports community resilience, both in the face of a changing economy and environment. The movement for local food and energy are gaining widespread depth and strength, as are the ideas of good city planning through creating livable places that do not necessitate a personal car for work, life, and play. Also, we know that the more ecological functions we can encourage through biodiversity, the better off we will all be, environmentally and economically.

Speaking for hundreds of people I know who live in north end and central Halifax, we need nature, pathways, community gardens, recreation areas, and community art and culture.

The criteria for a good North Common design should be:

- make the paths match the desire lines,
- make the fountain in a public node where people cluster and meet year round,
- diversification of the park uses,
- support biodiversity in general by increasing space and species of plantings
- plan for the daylighting of Freshwater Brook, even if only by signage now. (Daylighting is part of HRM policy, approved September 12, 2006: "HRM will encourage watercourse daylighting, as part of efforts to preserve or restore natural watercourses as a component of a stormwater management strategy.")

Also, somewhere on the Common should be a large urban agriculture demonstration garden. (I trust I do not need to present why this is so important; surely Councillors know the social, economic, and environmental value of community gardens and urban agriculture: community ties are built and strengthened, crime decreases, health increases, environmental literacy increases, social engagement increases) There should be no doubt that urban agriculture and community gardens should be supported and developed by the city immediately and actively. The Wanderers Ground is a perfect location for such a project and should be developed as part of a Common plan - not seen in isolation from the North Common.

Feedback on the North Common Plan, as presented to the public January 20, 2010.

Looking at this plan, I like attention paid to the pathways, though the desire lines that run from from Robie Street though the Common need to be paved or at least plowed: so many people use them! The sports fields should stay. Surely, some creative solution exists that supports the hundreds of people that walk through the Common on those desire lines (especially in the winter!!!), and the hundreds of people that use the Common for sports in a year. With some consultation and brainstorming, a solution that satisfies the needs of both groups can be found. Do it. (If you are having trouble, ask Dalhousie's School of Planning, or the Cities and Environment Unit for help.)

Also, any opportunity to use permeable surfaces should be made. Halifax wants to be seen as a 'Naturally Green' city, and every opportunity should be taken to provide an example of leadership by the city.

Also, I see benches in this plan around the perimeter of the North Common, but I really really think they should be scattered throughout the park, especially around the fountain. I think of seniors and mothers, and there should be benches every 100m or so.

Further, I would like to see that fountain become accessible, as in something that we can sit in, on, and around. It

would be great if it could be a skating area in winter and a waterplay area in summer. I would like to see clusters of creative seating there. We know that what makes spaces safe is when people inhabit them, and people feel a sense of territory.

As a nature-lover, I am constantly wishing for more native species in the garden beds. There could be dogwood trees, witchhazel, grasses, wildflowers, etc. These species, and so many others, could increase the birds and butterflies seen in the park, adding color, interest, and community engagement. We want Haligonians to *love* this place, to love our land, to know it better, to smile when we think about it. Increased biodiversity with interpretive signage is another step towards that.

Daylighting Freshwater Brook is a huge project, undoubtably daunting. But one day it will need to happen, and an ecological restoration project of that magnitude would put Halifax on the eco-tourism map: people would come from all over to see how we did it, and we will be so proud that we did. Such a project will take a lot of community consultation and collaborative design; we will need to have the youth, the neighbours, all park users, the Citadel, and the hospital onside; it seems overwhelming to us now, but once we do it, we won't believe we didn't do it earlier. The Council that began this process will be long celebrated. So let's start with some signage. Let's begin with acknowledging that a historically significant stream runs beneath, and that one day, with a lot of help, for the good of the native flora and fauna and the life-loving human community, we will bring it up to daylight again.

The Special Events Plaza is located in the wrong area of the Common to support local arts and culture: it is too close to a noisy intersection. While the design is nice, I think it is likely better located closer to Agricola or the fountain. Peter Bigelow said those elements were not for the big concerts, in which case, they should be moved.

The turf reinforcement and power supply source are an appropriate expenditure of money at this time. Frankly, I don't mind the concerts in the Common, especially if they are occasional and crazy spectacles. But they do not support local culture, nor our local living economy. I doubt that they actually support local downtown businesses: I look forward to seeing the cost-benefit analysis of it. Surely they support the hotels, and part of this money comes from the Hotel Tax, but to me it looks like the hotels are getting to say where that money goes, and suddenly the Hotel Tax becomes a subsidy as we pay out of the taxpayers pocket for these huge concerts. Is this not just another way of making public money private?

I completely disagree with spending public funds on infrastructure that supports large private corporations making a profit for the few. It is an outrage. It makes a lot of us young people hate (and I do not use that word lightly) local politics, feel helpless, and disgusted.

One final point on the process I have witnessed for the public engagement component of this design: it needs work. City staff need to develop their process around public engagement regarding the development of public spaces. You want the public onside. You want us to be engaged, proud, and caring. Our input is valuable, and free! Plus, it is your duty, your mandate! There are innumerable resources on how to plan with meaningful

public input. Please use them! There are a handful of organizations in town that are nationally renowned for facilitating meaningful public input. Other cities can do it, and get recognized for it. Come on HRM: you are shooting yourself in the feet.

The investment in developing a process to get and use meaningful public input will have massive payoffs in the end. Get together and do it. Please.

Thank you for your time and political involvement.

Please act with a long-term vision, and deep integrity.

Sincerely,

Jayne Margaret Melrose

Friends of the Halifax Common
January 19-29, 2010
HRM Infrastructure Plans for the North Common
Issues and Questions

The following points and issues compiled on January 19, are based on the very small amount of information available; mostly from a Power Point presentation given by Peter Bigelow to Peninsula Community Council on December 14, 2009 and available on the HRM website (<http://www.halifax.ca/Commcoun/pcc/documents/NorthCommon.pdf>) and from copies of motions passed at PCC on December 14 and provided to FHC by Councillors.

What We Know: The Budget for this project has been quoted as \$2.7 million

Questions/Issues: How much of this amount is for the events plaza, how much for the much needed general amenities to increase public use (landscaping, benches, picnic tables, safer (but permeable) pathways, bike paths, community gardens, etc.). It has been mentioned that these projects will be phased in. What is the timing of each component? What will be done first?

What We Know: The Power Point Presentation given to Peninsula Community Council on December 14, 2009 notes that the North Common should "continue to promote events of benefit to the downtown."

Questions/Issues: When did promoting events of benefit to the downtown become part of the mandate for the North Common? This is not in the Halifax Common Plan (available on the HRM website).

What constitutes a 'benefit' to downtown? A survey done by the Downtown Halifax Business Commission after the Rolling Stones concert in 2007 found that of the responding businesses 50% said that business was less than normal and 27% said it was about normal. Does this indicate any benefit?

The traffic proviso published in the summer of 2009 for the KISS/McCartney concerts stated, "HRM will be encouraging residents to use routes at a distance from the Common and to use public transit, if possible, on concert days." In other words...stay away from the southern peninsula (Quinpool Rd., Gottingen and Agricola Streets, Spring Garden Road and Downtown) if you don't have to be there. How was this an event of benefit to these merchants?

The Atlantic Jazz Festival runs for nine days every summer at Queen St. and Spring Garden Road. Last year it attracted some 65,000 concert goers (58,000 in 2008) and got \$40,000 funding from HRM. Why is their event, which would appear to be an event of benefit to downtown and actually closer to downtown than the North Common, funded to the tune of \$40,000 when KISS reportedly got \$150,000 from HRM (plus \$300,000 from the Province)?

Email from Bernard Smith, Executive Director, Spring Garden Area Business Association, January 19, 2010.

"What data we do have indicates that these events do not enhance business, certainly on the day of the event. Apart from some possible value to hotels and possibly the

restaurant businesses, big events seem to send our customer base into hiding. I think that the claims of impact on the local economy have been badly overstated."

Want We Know: Requests from Peninsula Community Council, December 14, 2009

Councillor Watts made a motion to request a cost/benefit analysis on the concerts and Councillor Uteck amended that motion to also request that staff provide information on who decides and how it is decided which concerts to sponsor. Neither of these reports is available.

Questions/Issues: How can staff appear to be promoting the North Common as a venue for 'events of benefit to downtown' without a cost/benefit analysis which would determine whether there have been any benefits to downtown from the mega concerts (or other events)? This is especially crucial since the mega concerts have encouraged the commercialization of the Common for private profit. While the request for a cost/benefit analysis requires time to complete, the request for information on who decides what concerts should be sponsored and why, should require a phone call and have been available for this meeting.

Research indicates that due to changes in the marketing of music, touring is now the primary income generator for many bands. This means an increase in the number of possible events which makes an answer to Councillor Uteck's question very important. Which events? How Many? Why? Who decides? How much public money in sponsorship?

The HRM contribution to these concerts seems to be in the form of services provided. Who decides what these services will be? To whom is the Provincial contribution paid? To HRM or directly to the promoters?

What We Know: Power Point slides available on the HRM website call for the North Common plans to continue to provide 'convenient parking' for events.

Questions/Issues: Where will this parking go? Does it involve more paving of the Common? What is convenient?

What We Know: Report to HRM Council, April 28, 2009, "Capital Projects Ranking" The report was a 'prioritized infrastructure list indicating HRM's readiness to participate in up coming funding programs...' Of the top 20 ranked projects, " Commons concert venue infrastructure" was inexplicably ranked #7 even though it was one of only three projects on the list of 20 which would not be shovel ready for 2+ years.

Questions/Issues: Why, only nine months later, is infrastructure for a concert venue now apparently 'shovel ready' and who made the decision. Why? What has changed in the last nine months?

What We Know: HRM Regional Plan calls for an additional 15,000+ people on the Peninsula 2004-2020 with no allowance for additional green/open space.

Questions/Issues: There is a well researched correlation between community health and green and open space for both passive and active recreation. If the new events plaza which will remove one playing field, is used for mega concerts it will severely curtail public use of the whole North Common for good chunks of the summer. Also, it has been estimated that there are now 500 people living in the apartments on Cunard St. and, of course, many more in the houses in the surrounding neighbourhoods whose lives are quite disrupted by the concerts. Is it realistic to expect a steady diet of concerts will encourage people to live near the Common/downtown?

The December 14 presentation notes that the North Common is also a neighbourhood facility. On balance, do concerts, which block off the Common for large chunks of time recognize the important of this space as a neighbourhood facility and support the aim of more people living in the downtown area?

What We Know: HRM Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Events Halifax re: "Major Outdoor Concerts", February 27, 2007.

The MOU stipulated that "Council will consider opening the North Common for major concerts projected to attract 40,000 or more." Also, that Council will 'Consider placing only two concerts a year on the North Common with the preferred season mid-September to the first week of October."

Questions/Issues: Official attendance (correspondence with Metro Centre) for the Rolling Stones Bigger Bang Tour was 39,975. Why then is Council apparently automatically permitting any big-name group access to the North Common regardless of projected attendance? (The Rolling Stones paid \$1 to use the Common for three weeks (The Coast, August 21-27, 2008). The concerts in 2009 obviously also violated the time agreed to in 2007 by allowing these events in mid-summer which is prime time for recreational use.

Other Issues/Questions:

While the Friends of the Halifax Common are not against concerts, since the open space on the Halifax Common is now only 1/3 of its original size and the number of the people in the neighbourhood increasing, Council should address the question of what is the best use of the public space on the Common. Should HRM, like Moncton, develop a permanent concert facility (if they really want one) outside the core at a site like Exhibition Park? This is a particularly vital question in light of the lack of data on the economic benefits of having concerts downtown.

Are mega entertainments the best use of money for cultural activities in Halifax? Would the money be better spent on supporting local talent and local institutions like the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia or the independent theatre community that has taken root in the Agricola/Gottingen neighbourhoods? (It is worth noting that the Metropolitan Museum of Art advertises that it is the #1 tourist attraction in New York City).

Is information available on how much the mega-performers are paid? Given the use of public monies should this not be publicly available?

Comments from Friends of the Halifax Common open meeting January 19, 2010

1. NO MORE BUILDINGS ON THE COMMON!!!
2. Siting plazas and seating at the edge of the North Common is poor. "Who wants to sit on a bench facing streams of traffic with the resulting noise and air pollution?"
3. Physical accessibility to the North Common is extremely poor. Bad for all people; worse for anyone who has a physical disability or is just plain slow (our population is aging). It is surrounded by busy streets and efforts to speed traffic like the changes to the Robie/Cunard intersection a few years ago have made it worse. If the plan to widen Bell Road between Robie and Summer by 38' (un-affectionately known around the FHC as the Bell Road Motorway) is realized things will be worse again.
4. A public hearing before Council should be held on these plans.
5. More asphalt is not acceptable. It does not drain and collects heat. Surfaces should be grit or where hard surfaces are absolutely necessary, permeable.
6. Recording of the minutes taken at the January 20 meeting should be complete (not capsules of what people said) and available to the public for revision and comment before they go to Council.
7. The mega events on the Common are entertainment, not cultural events. HRM needs to prioritize its arts and culture spending for local cultural groups rather than spending money on entertainers who immediately take it out of the city/province.

ATTACHMENT - H

Excerpts from the Halifax Common Plan (1994)

Note: Select objectives and policies are presented below, reflecting elements that are related to the North Common issues. To review the entire Halifax Common Plan, please visit:

http://www.halifax.ca/RealPropertyPlanning/RPP_Archive/

North and Central Commons (p. iv)

This is the area that most people think of as “the Common” and the largest and the most used part of the open space system. This area serves several functions including: organized sport; activity centre for children and youth; passive or casual recreation; special events; and, a major travel route for pedestrians, cars, busses and bicycles. Balancing these activities and physical improvements to the facilities are important issues.

This plan recommends the following:

- o Incorporate more landscaping and trees on the North Common, retaining important views where appropriate.*
- o Continue use for organized sports but create a better balance by providing space for more passive, unorganized activities.*
- o Improve safety through redesign and relocation of activities and pathways.*
- o Recognize that the area serves partially as a neighbourhood park.*
- o Redesign and possibly relocate the Centennial fountain.*
- o Improve the physical link between the two areas.*
- o Prepare a detailed design for the North and Central Commons.*

Private Commercial Use and Funding (p. vi)

A key issue is the private use of public land. Private or quasi-private groups have used some public open space for temporary events and charged admission for attendance. This issue was discussed extensively in the public sessions. There was general agreement at the public meetings that these events could be beneficial to the city as a whole and they were acceptable within limits. This plan recommends privately sponsored events be allowed if approved by Council, and it is demonstrated that the event is for the benefit of the city and satisfies all goals, objectives, and policies in this plan.

Implementation - Priorities (p. vi and p.41)

This document presents an overall plan for the Halifax Common. It includes general concepts for future use and design of specific areas and policies to guide development and use. The implementation is to be

phased as resources permit. The plan would be implemented in the normal budget approval process each year. There is no commitment to spending at this time.

Within the plan a number of projects have been identified as priorities. The following are the proposed priorities:

2. *Carry out a detailed design for the North and Central Common based on the concepts and policies in this plan with special attention to:*

*Water features
Passive areas on the North Common
Neighbourhood parks
Views, landscaping and trees on the North Common
Safety
Paths
Physically linking both areas
Access*

Objectives and Policies

Note: The following are excerpts of the Halifax Common Plan, which reflect those objectives & policies employed in the development of the proposed conceptual plan, 2010:

1.0 Public Place with Diverse Uses

- 1.1 *The city will continue to promote a diversity of activities in the Halifax Common which will include health care, education, sports, recreation, gardens, and cultural activities. (p.4)*
- 1.2 *The city will maintain the public nature of the Halifax Common, as envisioned in the original terms of the grant. (p.4)*
- 1.3 *City will facilitate public involvement in future planning. (p.4)*

2.0 Special character, history & beauty

- 2.3 *Boulevards will be preserved and new ones established where appropriate. Emphasis will be placed on maintaining and enhancing boulevards with vegetative landscaping. (p. 9)*
- 2.5 *Maintain and enhance the abundance and variety of trees on streets, boulevards, and in larger stands as an important living legacy. (p. 9)*
- 2.6 *The open views of the North Common as shown on Map 7 will continue to be an important component and should be preserved and enhanced where appropriate. (p. 9)*
- 2.13 *Streets, sidewalks and pathways will receive the following treatment:*
 - (a) *Streets, sidewalks and pathways will be made safe, pleasant, and well lit.*
 - (b) *Special treatment of sidewalks, lighting, benches, and signage in keeping with the character of the area should be provided.*
 - (c) *Cost effective alternatives to asphalt for pathways should be examined. (p. 10)*

3.0 Circulation system

- 3.3 *The city should encourage bicycle travel by the following measures:*
 - (a) *Continuing to permit and encourage bicycle travel on off-street pathways designed for that purpose. (p. 13)*
- 3.7 *Pedestrian linkages should be improved through the whole Halifax Common. (p. 13)*
- 3.8 *The city should encourage a strengthening of pedestrian linkages ... (p. 13)*

- 3.9 *There should be continued attention to ensure safe pedestrian crossings of streets, particularly to recreational areas. (p. 13)*

4.0 Relationship to Downtown Areas and Surrounding Neighbourhoods

- 4.1 *Every effort should be made to maximize the interrelationship between the Halifax Common and the rest of the Downtown and adjacent neighbourhoods. (p.14)*
- 4.2 *Special events which benefit the Downtown should continue to be held in the Halifax Common and on Citadel Hill. (p.14)*
- 4.3 *There should be well defined safe pedestrian routes to strengthen the relationship between the Halifax Common and the rest of the Downtown and adjacent neighbourhoods. In particular, emphasis should be on “green corridors,” directive and interpretive signage, and rest stations.*
The following routes should be a priority:
 - o Cunard Street & North Park Street;*
 - o Cogswell Street; (p.14)*
- 4.5 *Future design and facilities should reflect that the Halifax Common serves the surrounding neighbourhoods at the same time as it serves a wider city function. (p.15)*
- 4.5 *Some playing fields may be eliminated to make more room for passive areas. If sports fields are removed, they should, as appropriate, be replaced or compensated for by:*
 - (a) New facilities elsewhere in the city.*
 - (b) Lighting sports fields to extend playing time. (p.27)*
- 4.6 *Detailed landscape design will be done to prevent or discourage programmed activity in passive areas. (p.27)*
- 4.7 *Variety will be created in passive areas through such things as vegetative landscaping, benches, and water features. (p.27)*
- 4.8 *Where feasible, large open green areas for unstructured casual play should be provided. (p.27)*
- 4.12 *The fountain should be redesigned and possibly relocated to achieve a more human scale and interactive feature. (p.27)*
- 4.21 *A detailed design of a pathway system is required to ensure proper all-season use, compatibility and safety. Such a design should ensure a continuous pathway system and where possible reflect current walking patterns. (p.29)*
- 4.22 *The experience of walking through public open space should be enhanced by creating small landscaped nodes or places in which to stop and rest and gain protection from the elements, particularly on the North Common. (p.29)*
- 4.24 *A detailed redesign of the North and Central Commons based on the goals, concepts and policies in this plan should be carried out. (p.29)*

6.0 Cost Effectiveness

- 6.1 *The city will make every effort to provide a high quality of development and maintenance. Maintenance costs will be an important consideration in design and development. (p.36)*
- 6.2 *Flexible, multi-purpose use of areas should be emphasized. (p.36)*
- 6.4 *Safety will be emphasized in design to minimize liability and costs. (p.36)*
- 6.5 *Commercial benefit to the city will be an important consideration in deciding on uses. In keeping with this, there should be an emphasis on creating visitor attractions. (p.36)*

7.0 Private Commercial Use and Funding

- 7.1 *The city recognizes and supports the contribution made by privately sponsored cultural and recreational events on the Halifax Common. (p.39)*
- 7.2 *Private use of city-owned open space for temporary special events will be permitted*

through Council approval. In giving its permission, Council will be satisfied that the commercial and private event is for the benefit of the city and that it satisfies all goals, objectives, and policies in this plan. (p.39)