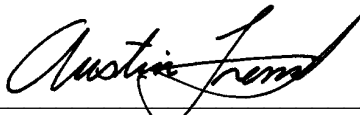




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Item No. 4
Halifax Regional Council
May 18, 2010

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
Austin French, Acting Director of Community Development

DATE: May 3, 2010

SUBJECT: Petition - Proposed Convention Centre and Centre Harbour View from
Citadel Hill

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

April 6, 2010 (item 9.2.1) - Petition to Regional Council requesting that Regional Council not provide public funds or lands to allow a private developer to block the view of the centre harbour and George's Island from the roadway on Citadel Hill.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

The new Downtown Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use by-law was adopted by Regional Council in June 2009. This Plan upholds all of the protected Citadel Hill viewplanes and rampart views that existed in the previous Halifax Peninsula Land Use By-law.

Rank, Inc., the private sector proponent for a new World Trade and Convention Centre, proposes a 14 storey building on the former Midtown Tavern block and an 18 storey building on the Halifax Herald block. The proposed convention centre fully conforms with the viewplanes, with the Citadel Ramparts view protections, and with all other building height and mass restrictions contained in the new Downtown Plan. Regional Council deliberately entrenched the proposed massing and height of the proposed convention centre within the new Downtown Halifax Land Use By-law and did so only after public consultation and a public hearing. The view of the centre harbour and George's Island from the roadway on Citadel Hill is not and has never been a protected view under the land use by-law.

Since March of 2008, HRM and the Province have been engaged in a process to prepare and evaluate a business case for and to solicit proposals from the private sector on the possible development of a new convention centre in downtown Halifax. An earlier stage in the process resulted in Rank Inc. being selected through a competitive Expressions of Interest process as a preferred private sector partner for the project. By way of a May 5, 2009 resolution, Regional Council directed staff to continue work with the Province in exploring the due diligence and partnership opportunities for the project and that no decisions involving financial implications for HRM be made without further Council direction.

The process, which is being led by the Province's Department of Infrastructure and Renewal, has reached a stage where the Province has invited Rank to submit a detailed design and costing proposal for the convention centre. The deadline for Rank's submission is July 19, 2010, after which the project details will be evaluated by federal, provincial and municipal partners for possible funding support. No decisions have been made to date on whether or not any public monies will be expended on the project.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the proposed 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

None.

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

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