


**Item No. 11.5.1 (i)**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**October 25, 2011**

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original Signed by   
Mike Labrecque, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Original Signed by   
Phil Townsend, Director, Planning and Infrastructure

**DATE:** October 6, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Halifax Memorial Library – Future Use Considerations

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**ORIGIN**

This report originates from the planned closing of the Halifax Memorial Library building in 2014, and consideration and recommendation from Heritage Advisory Committee to designate the building as a heritage building.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council defer consideration of the HAC recommendation report dated June 22, 2011, until staff can come back with a report outlining options around the future use of the Halifax Memorial Library property as per the work plan summarized in Attachment 1 of this report.

## **BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION**

The Halifax Memorial Library will close upon the opening of the new Central Library building in 2014. Attachment 1 of this report outlines the current property background, land ownership, use issues, and current Council policy direction for the Halifax Memorial Library property.

Staff is in the process of refining the municipal interests and options for the site to best support the municipal objectives for the site and area, and to determine the cost and benefit for each option. The intent is to report this information back to Council through the Community Planning and Economic Development Committee some time in December, 2011.

Staff is recommending that Regional Council defer and table the HAC recommendation with respect to the property's Heritage Designation until this staff undertaking is completed. Consideration of the HAC Heritage Designation recommendation will be a part of this exercise.

## **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications at this time.

## **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**

Attachment 1 – Halifax Memorial Library *Backgrounder* Document

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If the report is released to the public, a copy can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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Report Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phil Townsend, Director, Planning and Infrastructure

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# Halifax Memorial Library Site

“BACKGROUND”

Future Use Considerations

# Property Background

- “New” Library –Opens Jan 2014
- “Old” Memorial Library – Decommissioned by July 2014
- “War Memorial” aspect of Library to be moved to New Library in format to be detailed with Canadian Legion
- Park – small but important public space
- Strategic Property
- Want to deal with re-use now
  - avoid potential vacant building costs



# Land Ownership

- HRM owns the Memorial Library Site
  - Former Poor House Site – Burials – 1783
  - Transferred to Province – 1853
  - Transferred to City of Halifax – 1882-  
“To be used as public square and no other purpose” - (Reversion Clause)
  - Memorial Library – 1949 -Deed changed by legislation to allow public library to be built
  - Reversion clause (Provincial) now stipulates land can only be used for public library and/or park



# Use Issues

- Retention of Building?
  - Public or Private redevelopment?
  - Recommended heritage designation
- Retention of Open Space?... how much?
- Divestment of the property?
- Costs/Benefit of various scenarios and permutations?

# HRM Existing Policy Direction

- Queen and Spring Garden Lands Plan/HRM by Design
  - Part of Monument District
  - Important “Hinge” connecting downtown to Spring Garden
  - Recommends commercial reuse of the building and retention of public space in front
  - Requires Province to change Deed.



# Open Space Option

- Given reversion clause...
  - Return to former Public Open Space function
    - Demolish the Building
  - Potential increased need for Open Space
    - approx. 2000 residential units to be built immediately in the area
    - only property HRM has control over the land for this purpose.
  - Permitted use – no change
  - Need to rationalize the co





# Thinking

- Need to refine municipal interests and options
- Need to achieve municipal objectives first
- Need to determine HRM cost and benefits for potential options
- Need to work in some detail with Council...
  - Community Planning and Economic Development Committee



# Current Council Direction

- 1) Direct staff to explore in more detail municipal objectives and options related to the Halifax Memorial Library site
- 2) Staff report back to Council through the Standing Committee on Community Planning and Economic Development