


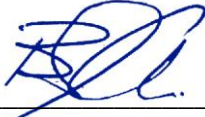
Item No. 11.1.5
Halifax Regional Council
August 14, 2012

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

Original signed by 

SUBMITTED BY:

Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer

Original signed by 

Brad Anguish, Acting Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: June 29, 2012

SUBJECT: Rockingham Community Centre Property – 199 Bedford Highway

ORIGIN

- April 19, 2011, Regional Council approval, in principle, of the potential market sale of a portion of the HRM owned property at 199 Bedford Highway to the owner of the abutting property, 205 Bedford Highway, and authorized staff to proceed with negotiations regarding the proposal as per the terms of the March 31, 2011, staff report; and
- Subsequent decline of the proposed terms of sale by the Purchaser.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Direct staff to undertake a detailed review of the programming needs and options with a view to developing a plan for possible sale of the facility and relocation of programs and services from the Rockingham Community Centre to alternate community facilities; and
2. Extend the Board's mandate at the Rockingham Community Centre through June 30, 2013 during the completion of the program review.

BACKGROUND

The HRM owned property located at 199 Bedford Highway is the former Rockingham fire station (circa 1956) which was converted into the Rockingham Community Centre (RCC) in the mid 1980's. The centre offers space for community programming for seniors, afterschool recreational programming, meeting space, and other recreational activities.

In 2010, staff received an unsolicited offer for the property at 199 Bedford Highway. On April 19, 2011, Regional Council approved, in principle, the potential market sale of a portion of the subject HRM owned property at 199 Bedford Highway to the abutting property owner, and authorized staff to proceed with negotiations regarding the proposal as per the terms of the March 31, 2011, staff report. One of the conditions of the sale was that the Purchaser would provide comparable sized space, to be leased by HRM for community based uses, at free base rent for 10 years. The Purchasers' plan was to demolish the existing buildings on both properties and construct a new four storey commercial/residential mixed building (1 storey ground floor commercial, 3 stories residential). The building would have a floor plan of approximately 10,000 square feet.

Staff worked with the purchaser and the Rockingham Community Centre Board with respect to the proposed conveyance, the temporary relocation of programs at the centre during construction, and the community requirements going forward. However, after reviewing the detailed financial components of the Council approved original terms and conditions, the Purchaser declined the agreement.

DISCUSSION

As part of the analysis of the proposed unsolicited offer, staff undertook an initial review of the state of the existing facility and the current programs and services provided. The results of this analysis has determined that while the original unsolicited offer is not viable, there is sufficient rationale for HRM to further investigate the possible relocation of the programs and services and the subsequent sale of the property. In order to determine the feasibility of such a decision, staff recommends that the initial review of the programs and services be expanded to include public consultation and possible partnerships.

The initial review of the programs and services was undertaken in the summer of 2010 until fall 2011 and indicates the following existing RCC programs:

RCC Program/Service	Details	Possible Alternatives
After School Physical Activity Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Includes option for lunch time care- RCC is within walking distance to school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Students are permitted to remain at school for lunch hour- Excel program through Halifax Regional School- Comparable programming & costs at other HRM facilities

Summer Day Camp	- Comparable to other summer day camps	- Comparable programming & costs at other HRM facilities - Excel program through Halifax Regional School provides similar program and costs
Youth Drop In	Cancelled at RCC due to low attendance	- Comparable program offered at other HRM facilities
Weekly Rentals	- Approximately 10-15 hours per week under full programming - Additionally, few users who rent the hall for one day per month	- Rooms are available for rent at other HRM facilities
Fitness Based Programs	- Seniors fitness classes with approximately 10 participants - Boot camp with approximately 15 participants	- Similar programming offered at other HRM facilities and private sector companies
Birthday Parties	- Room rental	- Comparable service provided at other HRM facilities and private sector companies
Youth Dances	- Room Rental	- Comparable service provided at other HRM facilities
Dog Obedience Classes	- Outside HRM mandate	- Can be accommodated at church halls or other facilities.
Church groups	- Outside HRM mandate	- Can be accommodated at church halls or other facilities.

Since the initial review of the programming, the Board of the RCC has initiated new programming. Therefore, it is recommended that staff assess the overall programming at the center to determine the sustainability of the new programs and relationship to other services in the area. The RCC will continue to receive funding during this review period from HRM's Community & Neighbourhood Facilities Contributions Fund, which is \$5,000 annually.

In addition to the initial programming review, a facility condition assessment was completed. It determined that the existing facility requires approximately \$135,000 in deferred short term maintenance. Also, due to the age of the facility, it is expected that significant capital expenditures will be required in future years to maintain the asset. There have been no capital expenditures in the past three years, pending a decision on the future use of the building. It should be noted that the original design of the building was that of a fire station, which was then converted to a community center. Therefore, enhanced service delivery is not possible without considerable capital expenditures on the facility.

Due to the significant maintenance and capital repairs needed for the building and the fact that the initial review indicates that the programming can be accommodated in other facilities, it is

recommended that Regional Council direct staff to complete a more detailed review of the options for relocation of the programming with a view to determining whether the facility be declared surplus and sold. With potential development in the area, the detailed review is to determine whether additional programming is required for the area and whether partnership opportunities exist.

As noted, existing programming at the RCC includes after school programs. Uncertainty surrounding the future of the RCC is impacting the community. Therefore, it is recommended that Regional Council provide a commitment to the Board that their mandate be extended until the end of the next school year while the review is being completed. Upon completion of the review, staff will return to Regional Council for decision on the future of the RCC.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications associated with this report. The review will be conducted entirely in-house using existing staffing resources.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Project and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Project and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There has been community engagement regarding the use of this property dating back to 2005 when the area Councillor held a public meeting to discuss the issue of the continued use of the building on May 30, 2005.

HRM staff has worked with the Board since that time. The current Board has been presented with the original Council approved the proposal and favorable feedback received. HRM staff and Board members met with facility user groups in the winter/spring 2011 to inform them of future uncertainty.

As part of the detailed review, consultation would be undertaken with the community, RCC and users

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

ALTERNATIVES

There are no recommended alternatives due to the age of the facility and initial reviews of programming activities.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

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

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