

**Item No. 10.5.1**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**March 5, 2013**

**TO:** Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original Signed  
Mayor, Mike Savage

**DATE:** February 26, 2013

**SUBJECT:** Mayor and Council Review of Task Force on Violence and Public Safety

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**ORIGIN**

In 2009, Council approved a public safety action plan based on 64 associated recommendations in response to the Mayor's Task Force on Violence and Public Safety. On December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012 Council signaled public safety as a continued strategic priority area.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter – Act of 2008, Part 1 Section 3 Role of the Mayor

(3) The Mayor may:

- (a) monitor the administration and government of the Municipality; and
- (b) communicate such information and recommend such measures to the Council as will improve the finances, administration and government of the Municipality.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council endorse a review of the original Mayor's Task on Violence and Public Safety report and accompanying "current state" assessment of violence and public safety in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

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**BACKGROUND**

As a result of increasing concerns about violent crime in Halifax Regional Municipality, former Mayor Peter Kelly initiated the Mayor's Roundtable on Violence in November 2006. In the spring of 2008, Council received a report entitled, "Violence and Public Safety in the Halifax Regional Municipality: A Report to the Mayor as a Result of the Roundtable." This original report aimed to "identify, and discuss in context, the patterns of violence and public safety concerns in HRM and to provide an in-depth analysis of the correlates of these patterns, and to suggest future directions that could improve the situation". The report included 64 recommendations, including perhaps most notably the creation of a Public Safety Officer to lead implementation efforts. A public safety action plan based on the recommendations was approved by Council in early 2009.

The genesis of the report was public concern about specific incidents and more general concerns about issues such as swarming, gang violence and youth crime. Dr. Clairmont and his team consulted widely with citizens and organizations across HRM and beyond, and conducted extensive research.

Report conclusions and recommendations focused primarily on thoughtful approaches to social and cultural change to create a safer community. Although they were not all specific to law enforcement, primary responsibility for implementation rested with Halifax Regional Police, mainly through the newly established Public Safety Officer. Working with community organizations and other business units of HRM, as well as other levels of government, Public Safety Officer Superintendent Don Spicer was able to make significant progress in responding to the recommendations. Since Superintendent Don Spicer's retirement in November 2012, Sergeant. R. Scott MacDonald has been leading continued work in this area.

By the end of 2012, substantial action has been taken on nearly all the recommendations from the original report. Some of those where no action has been taken are beyond the authority of the region or province.

**DISCUSSION**

Public safety is a priority for the newly elected Mayor and Council in Halifax Regional Municipality. While the key premises of the original roundtable remain relevant, the terrain of violence in HRM continues to change with time. It is important that Mayor and Council, and citizens, understand the current landscape and necessary actions toward increased public safety in HRM today. Continuing to strengthen and create partnerships with others who are engaged in or mandated to deliver services which are addressing root causes of crime remains both a clear desire of Council and a smart investment by the municipality.

Through ongoing discussions with Chief Blais of Halifax Regional Police, Council colleagues, the past and current public safety officers, and other partners in the community, it has become

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clear that a review of the original report would be valuable. Subsequent discussions with Dr. Clairmont have indicated his interest in revisiting the original report. It is recommended that Council engage Dr. Clairmont with the following mandate:

*To review implementation of the recommendations of the Round Table Report of 2008, and provide a "snapshot" assessment of current levels and manifestations of violent crime in Halifax Regional Municipality as well as corresponding public safety initiatives.*

Specifically, Dr. Clairmont will be asked to deliver a report by June 2013, including:

- analysis of local and national data on violence and public safety;
- an environmental scan on violence and public safety nationally;
- a review the work done since 2008 with observations about progress and areas that still need attention. Particular attention will be paid to the core recommendations and their relevance today.
- identification of any new issues that need attention;
- outcomes of informal focus groups with people previously consulted to understand where they feel progress has been made or where they see obstacles remaining;
- suggestions on how to proceed including identification of possible strategies and associated partnerships that might improve current landscape.

The report resulting from this review will be used by Council as the basis of consultation and decisions on further action to address violence and enhance public safety in our community:

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Contracting:** Under Administrative Order #35 – Procurement Policy, the services of Dr. Clairmont can be sole sourced using Clause 8 (11) A(a)

To ensure compatibility with existing products, to recognize exclusive rights, such as exclusive licences, copyright and patent rights, or to maintain specialized products that must be maintained by the manufacturer or its representative.

**Costs:** While the contract is still being finalized, cost is estimated at \$21,275.00. \$12,500.00 (plus HST) for consulting fees and \$6000.00 funding for the equivalent of one 30 hours per week research assistant for 11 weeks. Capacity to fund this project exists in the Mayor's Office operating budget.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Council may use the information in Dr. Clairmont's report as the basis of discussion to generate a strategy for further action in partnership with community.

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**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications identified.

**ATTACHMENTS**

N/A

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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.

Report Prepared by: Cheryl Stewart, Office of the Mayor, 490-2377

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