

Item No. 10.3.1
Halifax Regional Council
April 23, 2013

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original signed
Councillor Dalrymple, Chair, Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee

DATE: April 8, 2013

SUBJECT: Waste Strategy Public Consultation Process

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

ORIGIN

- Regional Council, February 5, 2013 – Item 12.2.1
Motion: Direct the CAO to report to the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee the recommendation for the design of a public consultation exercise
- Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee, April 4, 2013 – Item 5.1

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

HRM Charter, Part XIII, Solid Waste Resource Management

RECOMMENDATION

The Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee recommends that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Approve the public engagement plan as outlined in the discussion section of staff report of February 26, 2013 including direct consultation with the local community in the form of town hall meetings;
2. That the scope of the public consultation process include the historical context of the Community Stakeholder Committee (CSC) process that led to the development of

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the waste management strategy, the CSC siting criteria for the Otter Lake facility, including the purpose of the Front End Processing Facility and Waste Stabilization Facility, and commitments to the local as well as the recommendations of the Stantec Report; and

3. That, to support the public consultation process, the In Camera Report of February 5, 2013 be released, with the exception of any legal advice provided in the report.

BACKGROUND

On February 5, 2013 Regional Council, having received the *Solid Waste Resource Strategy Review Report* from Stantec Consulting Limited, directed staff to report back to the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee with a public consultation plan.

The discussion was deferred at the March 7, 2013 meeting of the Environment & Sustainability Committee to enable more time for review and input by the Community Monitoring Committee.

At the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee meeting of April 4, 2013 a staff report dated February 26, 2013, outlining the proposed public engagement strategy, was before the Standing Committee.

DISCUSSION

Following written submission and presentation of the Community Monitoring Committee and clarification regarding the proposed public engagement process provided by the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO), these three motions were put forward:

1. That the ESSC endorse the public consultation plan and recommend that Halifax Regional Council approve the engagement plan as outlined in the discussion section of the February 26, 2013 staff report including direct consultation with the local community in the form of town hall meetings;
2. That the ESSC recommend to Regional Council that the scope of the public consultation process include the historical context of the Community Stakeholder Committee (CSC) process that led to the development of the waste management strategy, the CSC siting criteria for the Otter Lake facility, including the purpose of the Front End Processing Facility and Waste Stabilization Facility, and commitments to the local community and the recommendations of the Stantec Report of January 2013; and
3. That the ESSC recommend to Halifax Regional Council that, to support the public consultation process, that the In Camera Report of February 5, 2013 be released with the exception of any legal advice provided in the report.

In their deliberations, the Standing Committee was mindful of the direction provided on February 5, 2013 by Halifax Regional Council, namely:

That Halifax Regional Council:

1. Release the Stantec Waste Resource Strategy report of January 2013
2. Direct Staff to initiate public consultation on the Stantec Report options and recommendations beginning with the Community Monitoring Committee and in particular recommendations A1 and A3 that:
 - a. The Front End Process (FEP) and Waste Stabilization Facility (WSF) be closed
 - b. The life of the Otter Lake Landfill be extended through vertical expansion
3. Direct Staff that as part of the public consultation process to initiate discussions with the operator of the Otter Lake Landfill concerning the implications of the Stantec Report options and recommendations
4. Direct the CAO to report to the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee with a recommendation for the design of a public consultation exercise.

Motion Put and Passed

It was the position of the majority of the members of the Standing Committee that the proposed motions would provide:

- Necessary clarity to the nature of the public engagement process to be undertaken
- The context for the public engagement process to be undertaken

And, that the release of the Private and Confidential report of February 5, 2013 would provide further information for the public as background and serve to inform the consultation process.

The Standing Committee further requested staff to provide regular updates on the public engagement process to Halifax Regional Council, to which the DCAO agreed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications are outlined in the staff report dated February 26, 2013.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Meetings of the Standing Committee, including that of April 4, 2013 at which the matter was discussed, are held in public.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

None were identified.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Staff Report dated February 26, 2013
2. Correspondence from the Community Monitoring Committee dated April 4, 2013

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: Ted Aubut, Legislative Assistant, 490-6519

Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee
March 7, 2013

TO: Chair and Members of Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: February 26, 2013

SUBJECT: Waste Strategy Public Consultation Process

ORIGIN

- Regional Council Session February 5, 2013 , Item 12.2.1 Solid Waste Strategy Review
- Motion: Direct the CAO to report to the Environmental and Sustainability Standing Committee (ESSC) the recommendation for the design of a public consultation exercise.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

HRM Charter, Part XIII, Solid-Waste Resource Management

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that ESSC endorse the plan and recommend that Regional Council approve the engagement plan as outlined in the discussion section of this report.

BACKGROUND

On February 5, 2013, Halifax Regional Council approved the distribution of the Stantec Consulting Ltd. Solid Waste Resource Strategy Review Report, January 2013. The report identified options and recommendations to evolve HRM's Integrated Solid Waste Resource Management system to reflect the source separation successes achieved to date, the evolving nature of HRM's waste streams and technological advances of the waste industry since the strategy was implemented in 1997.

Regional Council's adoption in principle of the Community Stakeholders Committee (CSC) "Integrated Solid Waste Resource Strategy," 1995, followed an extensive public process. Community consultation continues to be an important component of the ongoing strategy review by collecting critical feedback for Regional Council to consider in the evolution of the Solid Waste Strategy.

Regional Council's commitment to public consultation is found in HRM's Community Engagement (CE) Strategy, approved in December 2008, which recognizes the need for a process, tools and tactics designed to seek input from stakeholders following HRM's Principles of Community Engagement.

1. Citizen participation is recognized as an asset. It is valued and encouraged;
2. The purpose and the process are clear to all participants;
3. Everyone potentially affected by the process has an opportunity to become involved;
4. Barriers to access are recognized and overcome to ensure diverse, inclusive and balanced participation;
5. The process is respectful, fair, effective and transparent;
6. Communication is clear, timely and effective;
7. Public involvement is adequately resourced;
8. Participants are informed of outcomes of community engagement;
9. The public has an opportunity to provide feedback at the various stages of the process; and,
10. Community engagement will be evaluated and improved.

On February 5, 2013, Regional Council also directed staff to report back to the Environmental Sustainability Standing Committee (ESSC) with the plan for public consultation on the Stantec Report options and recommendations, starting immediately with the Community Monitoring Committee (CMC) and the operator of the Otter Lake landfill and progressing through broad public engagement with HRM citizens and stakeholders.

DISCUSSION

A critical next step in determining options on how to evolve the integrated solid waste resource system is the requirement for a decision around the status of the Otter Lake landfill site. The Stantec report outlines a number of recommendations for changing the operating model and

extending the life of the site. Council has directed staff to undertake consultation on these options and recommendations, with an initial focus on providing the necessary information to help Regional Council determine the future for Otter Lake and the facilities operating model. Stantec has indicated that operating model changes could enhance the environmental, operational and economic efficiency of HRM's integrated waste resource management system while maintaining or enhancing the objectives set out in the CSC 1995 strategy. This fundamental decision is critical because the other system component options and recommendations are intrinsically linked to a decision on the future of the Otter Lake site.

Therefore, the primary purpose of this public engagement consultation is to provide Regional Council with the necessary community and stakeholder feedback to determine the future intentions for the Otter Lake site.

This consultation will be conducted in three components:

1. Consultation with the CMC to gather existing opinions on the options as outlined in the report in order to identify conflicts or issues through feedback to Regional Council;
2. Gather informed and considered options from industry stakeholders in terms of the implications and opportunities represented by the options and recommendations outlined in the report; and,
3. Creating opportunities for the public and other stakeholders to talk to each other and to HRM about the options and recommendations as outlined in the report.

This multi-faceted engagement process is intended to enable Regional Council to make a direct decision on the future intentions for the Otter Lake site.

The general framework for the Community Engagement program will be sub-divided into three parts.

Integrated Solid Waste Resource Management System Consultation Process			
Stakeholder Group	Consultation Purpose	Consultation Process	Desired Outcomes
Community Monitoring Committee	1. Engage CMC in a workshop to jointly review key technical aspects of the report, and gather specific CMC feedback on report recommendations to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close the Front End 	Third-party moderated discussions between CMC, HRM and Stantec personnel to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather feedback for Regional Council's consideration when it decides the future 	Initial feedback is compiled/analyzed and incorporated into the recommendation report to ESSC and Regional Council in July-August 2013.

	<p>Processor and Waste Stabilization Facility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the life of the Otter Lake landfill site through vertical cell expansion • Modify the NS landfill liner specification • Create a centralized waste resource campus 	<p>intentions for the Otter Lake site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss opportunities for joint engagement activities with the local communities and stakeholders 	
Public	<p>Engage all citizens to gather feedback on the Stantec report and on ways to increase reuse/reduce behaviours and identify new measures to make enhancing diversion simpler and more efficient.</p>	<p>Host third-party facilitated community open house sessions in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local community with joint participation from CMC • Regional locations that offer reasonable opportunity for interested residents to participate 	<p>Feedback on the report and on potential outcomes of evolving the solid waste system is compiled/ analyzed and incorporated into the recommendation report to ESSC and Regional Council in July-August 2013</p>
Online Forum	<p>Engage a wide spectrum of HRM citizens to gather feedback on the report and to seed virtual discussions about what citizens are willing to do to achieve the</p>	<p>Launch online engagement tool (e.g. Bang the Table) that incorporates moderated forums, surveys, story gathering and Q&A tools to share information within the</p>	<p>A summary of community engagement activities and responses to all public input is completed and shared with ESSC/Regional Council and the public as part of the recommendation report</p>

	<p>necessary diversion of organics and recyclables currently going into the landfill.</p>	<p>Stantec report; solicit and share participants' views on the long term future of the overall waste management system in HRM including the potential for a campus.</p>	<p>in July-August 2013. HRM's commitment to evolving the solid waste resource system is affirmed, and a plan to increase education and participation in diversion strategies is approved and implemented.</p>
<p>Waste Industry Stakeholders</p>	<p>Engage contracted and industry partners to gather feedback on the Stantec report and to identify challenges and opportunities between the current dissipated facility systems versus a waste campus environment. Explore issues related to proposed infrastructure development model in relation to capacity and regulatory compliance requirements and the potential development of independent ICI processing capacity.</p>	<p>Host an industry brain storming and idea exchange session to gather feedback on the report and develop more detailed analysis requirements and implications of evolving the system to meet program objectives.</p>	<p>Feedback is compiled/analyzed and incorporated into the recommendation report to ESSC and Regional Council in July-August 2013 outlining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any changes in existing operations or new initiatives needed to increase diversion • Implications of the required future state of composting facilities to meet future provincial regulations • Preliminary business case data on the options related to development of future infrastructure to meet near to mid-term capacity requirements • Factors for

			considering either status quo or a centralized campus model for the future state of the Otter Lake site
ICI stakeholders	Engage ICI sectors in order to gather feedback on the Stantec report and to identify opportunities to improve diversion and enhance program guidelines compliance.	Host a targeted forum for ICI sectors to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather feedback on the report • Identify what issues are preventing enhanced ICI source separation • Achieve increases to diversion of organics and recyclables. 	Feedback is compiled/analyzed and incorporated into the recommendation report to ESCC and Regional Council in July-August 2013. Diversion remains the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for the solid waste program. The report outlines options and recommendations on maintaining strategy outcome objectives through updated program initiatives targeted at specific sector constraints.

Ongoing interactive engagement opportunities are proposed on a go forward basis in the form of a community “conversation” designed to inform and engage discussion of program options as identified in the Stantec report, as well as other suggestions that may come forward during community sessions. Community engagement can also be used to affirm or possibly refine the original Solid Waste Strategy Principles upon which the current system is based.

Sessions will be facilitated by staff and contracted consultants. Consultant services are to include personnel to assist in the design and implementation of communication mechanisms, and facilitate and manage the interactive engagement sessions.

Facilitators will be responsible for planning engagement events including logistics, materials, promotion, presentation and reporting on feedback. Consultant support will assist in analyzing public and stakeholder input, collating and developing written results and summaries of the engagement process and measuring results. Consultant support services will be secured through directed consulting service contracts.

HRM staff will be involved in the engagement program to develop promotional and communication tools, manage media and public relations, and develop content for the program website, Twitter, online surveys, and Facebook mechanisms. Based on environmental mapping, staff will also compile stakeholder lists, existing system data and relevant reports to be shared with the public as part of the engagement conversation.

The 8-12 week period of public consultation will include targeted, café style open house meetings as well as facilitated stakeholder focus group sessions. Broad and sustained online community engagement activities will support consultation goals by using diverse ways to share, listen and learn from many residents and communities across HRM. Participants will engage moderated forums, interactive Q&A's, surveys and quick polls to identify and share interests and concerns.

The public consultation process will be comprehensive and inclusive, and will feature focus group sessions with key community and industry stakeholder groups including:

- CMC
- Otter Lake landfill operators
- Other associations (the Investment Property Owners Association of Nova Scotia (IPOANS), Canadian Restaurant and Food Services Association (CFRA), Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia)
- Waste/Resource facility operators
- Commercial and contracted waste haulers

A stakeholder list will be formulated from the data used in recent HRM CE activities including RP+5 and Regional Planning. Print, broadcast and online promotion of all engagement events and initiatives will be placed in mainstream and community-based media outlets well in advance of scheduled dates.

A summary of community engagement activities and responses to all public input will be completed and shared with the public as part of the recommendation report to ESSC/Regional Council in July-August 2013.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Consultant Services will be funded through Solid Waste Resources budget account R333-6303 (Communication and Education, Consulting Fees). Venue bookings, supporting print, visual, advertising, and communication materials will be funded through Solid Waste Resources budget account R333-6916 (Communication and Education, Public Education).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This report outlines the community engagement process being advanced for the Solid Waste Resource Management System Review.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Environmental implications of evolution of the Solid Waste Management Strategy are being considered as part of the conversation in the public engagement process.

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

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: Gord Helm, Manager, Solid Waste Resources, 490-6606

Report Approved by: Original Signed
Ken Reashor, P.Eng., Director, Transportation and Public Works, 490-4855

Original Signed

Financial Approval by: Greg Keefe, Director of Finance and Information Technology/CFO, 490-6308

TO: Chair and Members of Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY:

Jack Mitchell, Chair, Otter Lake Community Monitoring Committee

DATE: April 4, 2013

SUBJECT: Waste Strategy Public Consultation Process

Origin:

- ESSC Recommendation Report – Waste Strategy Public Consultation Process
- Deferral of discussion on March 7, 2012 to allow for comment from the Community Monitoring Committee

Recommendation

We have one recommendation for ESSC:

1. Recommend that HRM Council request staff to:
 - a. Have Stantec re-evaluate the Otter Lake FEP and WSF facilities with respect to their actual purpose, which is to ensure that only stable, inert and residual materials are buried at Otter Lake, as defined in the Agreement between HRM and the Halifax Waste/Resource Society;
 - b. Evaluate and report back to ESSC on the implications of breaking the Agreement between HRM and the Halifax Waste/Resource Society, which represents the community at large and is a founding creator, along with HRM, of the CMC;
 - c. Develop a full-cost accounting model to ensure that consultations can consider the true net financial benefits to recommended changes at Otter Lake to the waste management system;
 - d. Amend the consultation plan such that it includes elements of direct consultation with local communities around the Otter Lake landfill facility in a direct, open and meaningful manner that allows them to provide input as a collective community.

Background

Halifax Regional Council has released the Stantec Consulting Limited **Solid Waste Resource Strategy Review Report** and has directed staff to report to the Environmental Sustainability Standing Committee (ESSC) with the plan for public consultation on the Stantec Report options and recommendations, starting immediately

with the Community Monitoring Committee (CMC) and the operator of the Otter Lake landfill and progressing through broad public engagement with HRM citizens and stakeholders.

In the mid-1990's a top-down approach by the Metropolitan Authority to develop a waste management solution failed miserably with the proposed incinerator solution being rejected at the environmental assessment stage. With the Highway 101 landfill in Sackville nearing its end-of-life, the municipalities of Halifax, Dartmouth, Bedford and Halifax County were back to square one in developing a solution. With the incineration option taken off the table, the two remaining disposal options were to export the waste to a willing host or to find a landfill within the boundaries of Halifax County. With no communities interested in receiving the waste, Halifax County assumed responsibility for waste disposal and for developing an integrated waste management solution designed by the community.

In only 13 months, a large group of approximately 100 community volunteers from Hubbards to Ecum Secum, known as the Community Stakeholders Committee (CSC), held over 50 meetings across HRM to develop the integrated waste management solution that resolved the crisis. The resultant strategy reached by community consensus comprises a comprehensive diversion regime including expanded recycling, and curbside collection and processing of source-separated organics, and a disposal solution designed to be a good neighbour to the host community by ensuring a high-level of environmental and community protection. This public consultation effort was arguably the most extensive ever held in Nova Scotia in the history of solid waste planning under local government.

The CSC envisioned a landfill that was the antithesis of the Highway 101 landfill in Sackville. It would not have seagulls, odours, leachate problems, and unsightly litter. It would not be a threat to groundwater, surface water nor air quality. It would not require compensation to be paid to the host community. The siting of the landfill was based on a landfill that contained only stable waste. This was a key factor in allowing the landfill to be developed in a space that was relatively close to urban communities, thus saving over the long term, significant transportation and environmental costs.

When Otter Lake was presented as the disposal site, it was on the condition that all elements of the integrated waste management system are present. Halifax Regional Council agreed and built them, and made a commitment to the people of Beechville, Lakeside, Timberlea and Prospect that the protection envisioned by the CSC would be an integral part of the Otter Lake facility. This commitment was formalized in a written agreement between Halifax Regional Municipality and the Halifax Waste/Resource Society.

For 15 years, there has never been a notion that HRM would backtrack on its promise to the local communities that hosted the landfill. That ended in February, with the Stantec report recommending that the environmental and community protections at the Otter Lake landfill be removed to save money.

Discussion

The staff recommendation report submitted to ESSC contains the following description of the purpose of the consultation:

“A critical next step in determining options on how to evolve the integrated solid waste resource system is the requirement for a decision around the status of the Otter Lake landfill site. The Stantec report outlines a number of recommendations for changing the operating model and extending the life of the site. Council has directed staff to undertake consultation on these options and recommendations, with an initial focus on providing the necessary information to help Regional Council determine the future for Otter Lake and the facilities operating model.”

ESSC has received a proposed consultation plan from staff that is flawed as it pertains to discussions about changes at Otter Lake. It is flawed because:

1. Its purpose is to consult with the public on recommended actions that were developed through analysis that conducted performance measurements using an inappropriate yardstick;
2. There is insufficient financial information to proceed to consultation on the Otter Lake elements;
3. It recommends consulting with the public on such things as how to encourage better source separation, rather than the impact of the recommendations at Otter Lake;
4. It does not adequately address consultation with the stakeholders which would be most affected by the Otter Lake recommendations if they were adopted;
5. It recommends consultation techniques, such as world cafés, online discussion forums and focus groups, that preclude the host community from having an opportunity to provide its input to the process directly and as a community;
6. It makes no mention of the agreement between Halifax Regional Municipality and the Halifax Waste/Resource Society to only allow, through processing on site, stabilized, inert waste to be disposed in the landfill.

The following explains each of these flaws, and makes recommendations for effective, straightforward consultation with the affected communities.

The Recommendations to Close the FEP and WSF are Based on Improper Analysis

Halifax Regional Municipality is in receipt of a report from Stantec Consulting Limited that makes recommendations based on flawed evaluations of facilities by using the wrong performance metrics.

The Stantec Report recommends closing the Front-End-Processing Facility (FEP) because it does not divert enough recyclable material to make it economical. It also

recommends closing the Waste Stabilization Facility (WSF) because it does not make valuable, commercial compost. Based on these flawed assessments, they deem the two facilities to have no useful purpose.

The problem with those prominent recommendations in the Stantec report is that diversion of waste was never the primary purpose of the FEP and WSF. The primary purpose of the FEP and WSF is to ensure that the material that is buried at Otter Lake is stable. Yes, recyclable material that makes its way in garbage containers to the Otter Lake landfill are picked off the conveyor belts and sent for recycling. That is done because it makes sense to recover them when they are readily available and accessible as they pass by staff on conveyor belts. But the diversion that occurs at the facilities is secondary to the main purpose: to ensure environmental and community protection.

The FEP was conceived, designed, and built to examine the waste stream and divert organic material to the WSF where it is forced to break down in an accelerated manner through an in-vessel composting system, before it is buried in the landfill. These twin facilities (FEP and WSF) exist to ensure that raw organics do not go into the landfill, as they did in Sackville, where they would otherwise slowly decay and produce methane gas and leachate for decades, as they do in Sackville to this day, 17 years after it was closed. These two facilities exist to ensure that the waste going into the landfill meets the requirement of being only inert material, stable material and residual wastes.

This is a very important clarification. The recommendations to close the FEP and WSF were made based on a measurement of the wrong performance indicator. It is akin to recommending the brakes and airbags on a car should be removed because an assessment has indicated they are making no contribution to the top-end speed of the vehicle and are an unnecessary cost. The recommendations to close the facilities are just as invalid.

This is fundamentally important because the staff plan on public consultation is to solicit input on these flawed recommendations, made from a flawed assessment, as if they were valid, which they are not. To consult on these recommendations is disingenuous at best.

It is recommended that, before consultation begins, HRM conduct a proper assessment of the performance of the FEP and WSF against performance indicators for their intended primary purpose of providing environmental and community protection. With the results of that proper assessment, the integrity of the public consultation will be much improved. Without it, the consultation will be focused on why HRM used a different, and inappropriate, yardstick to reach its conclusions.

There is Insufficient Financial Information to Proceed to Consultation

True, open consultation requires complete information, and this is not available at this time. While the Stantec Report speaks in detail about potential savings at Otter Lake, there are virtually no details when discussing the costs or potential benefits of some of the other recommendations. For instance, there is a reference that increased frequency of recycling collection could increase recycling capture rates, but there is no information on how much that would cost nor how much recycling capture rates might increase in HRM. It is essential that the detailed information is available at the time of consultation in order for people to provide informed input. After all, it is an integrated waste management system, as the Stantec report and staff point out.

For this reason, the CMC recommends that HRM undertake a full-cost accounting of the waste management system options that are being proposed before consulting with the public on proposed changes at Otter Lake.

The Consultations Do Not Address The Effects of The Recommendations on The Local Community

The recommendations for consultation with the public has as its stated purpose:

“Engage all citizens to gather feedback on the Stantec report and on ways to increase reuse/reduce behaviours and identify new measures to make enhancing diversion simpler and more efficient.”

The CMC supports any efforts to increase reuse/reduce behaviours and making diversion simpler, and believes that the consultation on these elements of the Stantec report can proceed without delay.

However, this has nothing to do with the recommendations made by Stantec to close the FEP and WSF, to reduce the landfill liners, to extend the life of the landfill by 23 years by increasing height and establishing more waste management facilities at the site. The public should also be consulted on proposed changes at Otter Lake, but that cannot be properly done until a proper assessment of the facility is made using the proper performance indicators.

The Consultations Do Not Address The Stakeholders Most Affected by the Recommendations

The only recommended consultation actions in this plan that are specific to the local community are to have a mediated consultation with the Community Monitoring Committee. It is essential to understand and respect that the CMC is not the local community. The CMC was created by HRM to provide oversight of the Otter Lake landfill facility and to communicate with the local communities, which it does. However, consulting with the CMC does not equate to consulting with the local communities. HRM must consult directly with the local communities of Beechville, Lakeside, Timberlea and Prospect on any recommended changes at Otter Lake.

The consultation plan is long on details on how it will get input from such "stakeholders" as the general public, waste professionals and the Industrial, Commercial and Institutional sector, but little detail on how it will get direct input from the people most affected by the recommended changes, those that live in the affected communities.

The Consultation Techniques Proposed Are Inappropriate to the Task

The proposed consultation plan employs such techniques as:

- World cafés, where people sit around in small groups and create plans and wish lists;
- Online forums, where people never even see each other, much less have direct interaction;
- Focus groups, where small samples of 8 or 10 people are invited to a facilitated conversation;
- Idea exchange/brainstorming sessions; and,
- Open houses, where people are invited to look at displays and speak one-on-one with project staff.

These techniques are often employed to avoid direct interaction with communities as a whole, and are considered by consultation practitioners as tools to divide and conquer and avoid the discomfort of having to deal with large, organized groups of stakeholders. They can be effective when planning a library, but are not the proper tools for dealing with recommendations that have the potential to have large impacts on the community such as the Stantec recommendations for Otter Lake. None of these techniques will allow the local, collective community voice to be heard. In fact, it appears that the consultation plan may have been designed to ensure that does not happen, and that will be transparent to the local community.

Proper consultation with the people of Beechville, Lakeside, Timberlea and Prospect must include town hall meetings where HRM staff and consultants will present their findings, defend their recommendations, answer questions and directly hear the collective input of the most affected stakeholders.

Similarly, the proposed consultations are for an 8-12 week period, with a report coming to Council in July/August. The timelines are unreasonable and the consultations will most likely extend into the summer, when people are distracted and many are away on summer vacation. Best practices of meaningful, effective consultation avoid summer vacation periods to allow as many people as possible to participate. The people of Beechville, Lakeside, Timberlea and Otter Lake deserve every opportunity to have their say with respect to these proposed changes.

The Consultation Plan Does Not Address the Commitment to the Local Community to Only Bury Acceptable Wastes

The Consultation Plan, and indeed the Stantec report, is silent on the commitment by Halifax Regional Municipality that only:

- Inert Materials;
- Stable Materials; and,
- Residual Waste

will be buried at the Otter Lake landfill. This commitment was made in the agreement between HRM and the Halifax Waste/Resource Society, specifically in Section 2.03. That agreement is attached.

Ignoring this agreement will not make it go away. The agreement is valid and in force, and any action by HRM to remove the facilities that ensure this material is stable and inert would be in contravention of the agreement. This agreement must be a topic of discussion in consultation with the local community. To not deal with this agreement in a straightforward manner would be making a mistake very similar to that made in the sale of St. Pat's Alexander. In fact it would be worse, because this is much more than an internal policy document, it is a written, executed agreement with the local community.

Conclusion

In summary, the CMC believes that, when it comes to the local communities around the Otter Lake landfill, the recommendations of the consultation plan presented to ESSC is inadequate. As it stands, it consults the wrong groups on the wrong topics using the wrong techniques.

CMC urges ESSC to follow our recommendations in order to ensure that the local communities of Beechville, Lakeside, Timberlea and Prospect are:

1. Provided with a proper assessment of the Otter Lake facilities, particularly the FEP and WSF, against the proper performance indicators;
2. Given the opportunity, as a community, to hear presentations on the findings and recommendations about Otter Lake and to have their questions answered in an open, transparent and inclusive forum;
3. Engaged in a discussion about the written agreement between HRM and the Halifax Waste/Resource Society regarding the disposal of acceptable materials at the Otter Lake landfill.

CMC is willing to meet with staff and work to develop a way forward to fix the flaws in the Stantec report with respect to Otter Lake, and to develop an open, transparent

and inclusive consultation process around all of the issues surrounding the facility, including HRM's agreement with the Halifax Waste/Resource Society.