

Item No. 1
Halifax Regional Council
November 26, 2013

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

Original Signed by Director

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Jennifer Church, Managing Director Government Relations & External
Affairs

DATE: November 13, 2013

SUBJECT: African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office Update

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

February 23, 2010 Regional Council:

1. Approved the terms of settlement re: the Africville Genealogy Society et al vs City of Halifax as outlined in the Discussion and Budget Implications section of the Private and Confidential report dated February 19, 2010.
2. Released the Private and Confidential report to the public upon ratification by Halifax Regional Council and subsequent to a public announcement.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Article 34 (1) Chief Administrative Officer is the head of the administrative branch of the government of the Municipality and is responsible to the Council for the proper administration of the affairs of the Municipality, in accordance with the by-laws of the Municipality and the policies adopted by the Council. Article 35 (d) (iv) establish departments of the municipal administration.

BACKGROUND

In February 2010, the Africville Genealogy Society and HRM reached an agreement to settle outstanding litigation and move forward with provisions to compensate for the loss of the Africville community, and the implications of this loss for future generations.

The negotiated settlement includes the transfer of land to allow for construction of a replica of the original community church; allocation of \$3 million in financial support for capital construction and endowment; renaming of Seaview Park to Africville; development of an employment contract for maintenance of the park; establishment of an African Nova Scotian Affairs function within municipal government; and a formal acknowledgement by HRM of loss.

Since the agreement was signed:

February 24, 2010 - Mayor Peter Kelly apologized to former Africville residents and their families on behalf of Halifax Regional Municipality.

November 26, 2010 - HRM transferred \$2.5 million to the new African Heritage Trust towards the rebuilding of the Seaview Church.

January 14, 2011 - The formal deed for 2.5 acres of land at Seaview Park was transferred to the Africville Heritage Trust Board.

July 29, 2011 - Seaview Park was renamed Africville and the replica of the Seaview African United Baptist Church was opened as an interpretive centre.

September 2012 - An African Nova Scotian Affairs Office Manager was hired to provide advice to HRM on the establishment of the new African Nova Scotian Affairs function.

DISCUSSION

As noted above, one component of the agreement approved by Council was the “establishment of an African Nova Scotian Affairs Office or function within municipal government”. A key goal in establishing this function is to enable the municipality to better engage with the African HRM community.

HRM’s commitment has led to the creation of the African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office (ANSAIO) within its corporate structure. The primary mandate of this office is to develop a recommended approach to ensuring that African Nova Scotian issues are addressed within the municipal corporate structure and operations. In September 2012, an Office Manager was hired on a term appointment to provide advice to HRM on the establishment of the new function. Subsequently, a part-time Community Developer and a full-time Intern have been added to support the project. Since September 2012, the Integration Office has:

- Completed internal consultation with HRM staff;
- Completed external consultations with African Nova Scotian communities;

- Developed an external and internal web presence;
- Participated in various activities to support the municipality in achieving its goal of more effectively engaging with the African HRM community.

A more detailed summary of ANSAIO's activities to date follows.

Summary of HRM African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office key activities

HRM Employee and African Nova Scotian Communities' Consultations

Internal to HRM, the Integration Office has consulted with HRM Business Units and identified a number of common themes and issues to pursue. Externally, the office established an African Nova Scotia Reference Group/Advisory Committee, to support consultations within African Nova Scotian communities throughout HRM. As a result, five consultation sessions have been held with African Nova Scotian communities, using an engagement process designed to facilitate optimum information gathering. Attendance at these sessions ranged from 10 to 28 participants, and results will be shared with the communities at an open house in December 2013.

In addition to the consultation sessions, a survey has been developed and distributed to 35 cities and organizations across the country. The results of this survey will help to identify best practices and areas for follow-up from other jurisdictions.

The intent of the consultation process is to determine what is going well, identify challenges, and get advice as to the structure and role of the Integration Office. Results will be used to develop recommendations on policy, processes and structure that are required to support moving forward with an effective African Nova Scotian affairs function in HRM.

African Heritage Month Coordination/Participation

During African Heritage Month (February 2013), ANSAIO worked with the municipality's Racially Visible Employee Caucus (RVEC) to host an event which marked the 10 year anniversary of the RVEC. Recognition plaques were presented by the CAO to the founding members of the RVEC during a celebration that welcomed employees of African descent, HRM managers, and union leadership. In addition, the Office partnered with the provincial Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs to support the promotion of activities taking place during African Heritage Month.

Internal Collaboration / Policy Advice

The presence of the new African Nova Scotian Affairs function in HRM has allowed staff to bring a new perspective to several ongoing HRM initiatives. A few examples of ANSAIO's work in this regard include:

- Work with Planning and Infrastructure on a Watershed Project in the Preston Area;
- Collaboration with Community and Recreation Services on a Cherry Brook facility;
- Consultation on an agreement with the Halifax Black Fire Fighters;
- Work with Human Resources to finalize the HRM Self-identification survey;
- Input to the RP+5 initial stage review regarding the need to balance the unique needs of rural African Nova Scotian communities in HRM;

- Work with Corporate Communications to develop a web presence for the African Nova Scotian Affairs function;
- Work with HRM Affinity Groups such as the Racially Visible Employee Caucus and the Halifax Black Fire Fighters Association to advance formal and informal learning opportunities relating to cultural awareness;
- Hosted a session for HRM staff with Professor Ted Rutland, Assistant Professor of Geography, Planning, and Environment at Concordia University on the topic of Urban Development and African Nova Scotian communities. The presentation provided staff with a historical context and current potential impact of development on local African Nova Scotian communities;
- Consultation with Metro Transit to enhance community engagement and the inclusion of African Nova Scotian perspectives in planning and delivery.

Intergovernmental Relations and Strategic Partnerships

In addition to active engagement internally, some examples of which are noted above, the Integration Office has played a role in working with community partners and other levels of government to advance the position of HRM in relation to African Nova Scotian Affairs. Examples of engagement in this area include:

- Collaboration with the Africville Heritage Trust to support tours of the Africville Museum for HRM senior managers and facilitate connections with appropriate Business Units (i.e. the recent legacy tree planting event);
- Partnership with the Greater Halifax Partnership to deliver training for African Nova Scotian communities to enhance access to facilitators of African descent who can contribute to community consultations;
- Meeting with the presidents of St. Mary's and Mount St Vincent to discuss collaboration opportunities and potential joint activities among universities, HRM and African Nova Scotian communities;
- Work with the provincial Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs to share information on files related to land development and collaborate data collection as it relates to methodologies of community engagement;
- Hosted a meeting among the Black Business Initiative, Transportation and Public Works, Planning and Infrastructure, Human Resources and Government Relations and External Affairs to provide a forum exploring potential collaborations and mutual information sharing
- Collaboration with the Health Association of African Canadians and Mount St Vincent on research into health promotion for youth in identified African Nova Scotian communities.

Next Steps

As a result of the consultation, internal collaborative work, and partnerships with external partners referenced above, the Integration Office has amassed the information required to move forward with designing an effective African Nova Scotian Affairs function with HRM. The next step is to finalize a report that will provide options for consideration by the administration of the best means to deliver HRM's commitment to strengthen the delivery of municipal services to

residents and communities of African descent within the municipality. Any recommended outcomes will be shared with Council through the 2014/2015 budget and business plan process.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications directly related to the content of this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As noted in the Discussion section, HRM employees and African Nova Scotian communities throughout HRM have been widely consulted. The African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office consulted directly with individual business units, and staff who attended have been given survey forms prior to the close of each consultation session. Employees who did not attend the sessions but who expressed interest in providing input were encouraged to do so.

Five African Nova Scotian community consultation sessions were held in various locations throughout HRM. An engagement process which drew upon World Café and Open Space formats was used to facilitate engagement. A variety of communication approaches were used to announce the meetings: information in church bulletins, email, PSAs, poster distribution to key locations, phone trees and word of mouth.

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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