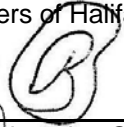


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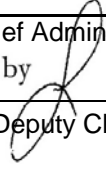
Item No. 11.1.3
Halifax Regional Council
October 6, 2015

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

Original signed by 

SUBMITTED BY:

Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer

Original Signed by 

Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: September 15, 2015

SUBJECT: Surplus Municipal Property at 18 Scotia Drive, Bedford

ORIGIN

April 28, 2015 Regional Council motion:

MOVED by Councillor Outhit, seconded by Councillor Whitman that Halifax Regional Council request staff to explore any requirements for retention of a portion of the surplus municipal property at 18 Scotia Drive, Bedford, PID# 00428961, for the purposes of public open space which a portion of the property currently provides and prepare a report for Council's consideration.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Section 79 (1) The Council may expend money required by the Municipality for: (k) recreational programs; (x) lands and buildings required for a municipal purpose; (ah) playgrounds, trails, including trails developed, operated or maintained pursuant to an agreement made under clause 82(c), bicycle paths, swimming pools, ice arenas and other recreational facilities;(ai) public grounds, squares, halls, museums, parks, tourist information centres and community centres.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council continue with the sale of surplus property at 18 Scotia Drive, Bedford (PID# 00428961), as shown on Attachment 2 of this report and as per Regional Council's approval at the July 29, 2014 meeting of Halifax Regional Council in accordance with Administrative Order 50.

BACKGROUND

The Waverley Road Elementary School Property was closed by the Halifax Regional School Board in 2012 and turned over to the Municipality in 2014. The site is 5 acres and contains a former school building and an elementary school level playground which was provided by the Municipality.

At the July 29, 2014 meeting of Halifax Regional Council, the school property was declared surplus to municipal needs in accordance with Administrative Order 50. It should be noted that the surplus property associated with Waverly Road School indicated in Council's approval refers to the southern portion of the property on the south side of the Bedford By-pass. The portion of the site north of the Bedford By-pass and associated with the Bedford Education Centre is not surplus to School Board and Municipal needs.

At the April 28, 2015 meeting of Regional Council, the area councillor asked that the property be re-examined to determine if a portion of it should be retained as a playground as it had not been clear that the playground behind the school would be sold as part of the surplus school property. Regional Council directed staff to carry out the necessary evaluation.

Community History and Profile

The Oakmount Hill neighbourhood is a well-established residential area of Bedford (See Attachment 1). The Waverley Road Elementary School was built in the 1950s at the time of initial establishment of the neighbourhood with the present day Bedford Education Centre following in 1960. In 1979, the Bedford By-pass truncated future neighbourhood growth to the north and separated the two schools. The neighbourhood is currently defined by the Bedford By-pass, Bedford Highway (Highway 1), Bicentennial Highway and the Canadian National Railway line. It is considered "moderate" on the walkability scale, but is somewhat car dependent for access to services. The neighbourhood consists of approximately 505 homes with a population of just over 1300 persons. While a few infill opportunities still exist, it is considered to be largely built-out. The community primarily consists of detached single family with a few semi-detached units. The population density is considered low with two pockets of medium density housing. Demographically, there are:

- 125 children aged 0 – 14 years
- 100 young adults between 15-19 years
- 842 adults between 20 and 60 years
- 235 adults 60+ years

Existing Public Open Space

There are municipal open space properties within the neighbourhood (See Attachment 1) including:

- Waverley School (5 acres) – Playground and Wooded Area
- Oakmount House Neighbourhood Park (1 acre) – Playground and Wooded Area
- Nicolas Meaghers Park (3.3 acres) – Basketball Court and Wooded Area

In addition, a community field is located at the adjacent Bedford Education Centre and regional sport fields are located at Range Park across the Bedford Highway at the bottom of Oakmount Drive. The Bedford Sackville Connector Greenway Regional Trail serves the neighbourhood and is accessed at Range Park or Bedford Mall.

DISCUSSION

The neighbourhood is currently well served with public open space. While the school was open, the existing playground served the student population with adjacent residents also able to benefit from the use of the playground. Without the school property residents are still well served in terms of proximity to neighbourhood public open space owing to Oakmount House and Nicholas Meaghers parks. Based on spatial analysis, almost all residents are able to access the playground at Oakmount House Park within reasonable walking distances. Generally, the furthest residence is 650 metres away with most persons living well within that distance. Nicolas Meaghers Park is currently not well developed but is of adequate size to accommodate any future park requirements. In addition, the former Waverley school property is at the northern end of the neighbourhood and therefore does not benefit all neighbourhood residents. The

central Oakmount House Park is a more strategic property in terms of access.

Further, the triangular property configuration of the Waverley school property does pose special challenges. The site is located at the end of a cul-de sac with limited exposure to public streets, no significant views, and a relatively low sense of place. Retention of a portion of the site housing the existing playground would require creation of new access to that site. As well, moving the existing playground to the front of the former school property either results in a very small playground or reduces the lands available for redevelopment to only a few odd shaped lots. A better option is to negotiate a park access to Nicolas Meaghers Park if there is any future development located on the property. This is a similar situation to the recent development of semi-detached residences immediately to the west.

Owing to the proximity of other parks within the neighbourhood, proximity to community and regional facilities, demographics and location of the property, retention of all or a portion of the Waverley School Property for open space is not warranted. Opportunities to gain a third access to Nicolas Meaghers Park from any private development of the surplus school site would be explored to improve the access to that park.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with staff's recommendation within this report. Any retention of a portion of the school lands would require subdivision of the lands and capital investment to create the park. Retention would also likely impact the potential return on sale of the balance of the property.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community meeting or engagement was held as part of staff's analysis.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications associated with the staff recommendation in this report.

ALTERNATIVES

Regional Council could direct staff to retain a portion of the property for open space and prepare a report that includes a site plan to articulate the area recommended for retention along with the detailed financial implications.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Map of Oakmount Hill Neighbourhood
Attachment 2 – Map of Surplus Property 18 Scotia Drive

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.php> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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Attachment 1 - Map of Oakmount Hill Neighbourhood

