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**Halifax Regional Council
Committee of the Whole
January 10, 2006**

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Carol Macomber
Carol Macomber, Acting Director, Recreation, Tourism & Culture

DATE: January 3, 2006

SUBJECT: Council Focus Area: Community Development

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN:

On October 11, Council approved a list of Council Focus Areas. Staff committed to return to Council with status report on each item and a suggested approach to further action on the item. Discussion was to include an analysis of current initiatives, issues, options for resolution, capacity and implications.

BACKGROUND

Council has recently indicated focus areas it wishes to address. These include (in no particular order):

Regional plan
Transit
Infrastructure
Traffic
Public safety
Tax Reform
By-law enforcement

Community relations
Youth
Community recreation
Community development
Economic development

Staff committed to preparing a document on each of these focus areas for Council discussion and direction at a Committee of the Whole meeting. Specifically, staff committed to describing its understanding of Council's concerns, what is currently being done in each of these areas, the issues impacting these areas, options for addressing these issues, and the implications of pursuing these options.

DISCUSSION

Issues related to community development are significant and varied, and there is not enough funding available to address all the concerns raised by Councillors, the public and staff. The discussion paper attached highlights the issues and options Council may wish to consider in addressing the issues. It is recognized that these issues will not be resolved quickly. Staff will work under Council's direction to address the issues as appropriate.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct budget implications as a result of the material discussed herein.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

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

ALTERNATIVES

There are no recommended alternatives

ATTACHMENTS

Council Focus Area: Community Development Background and Discussion Paper

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 :


Paul Johnston, Business Services Coordinator, 490-5623

Financial Review :

Barb Palmetter, Financial Consultant, 490-7221



COUNCIL FOCUS AREA

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Background and Discussion Paper

January 10, 2006

1. INTRODUCTION

There are approximately 190 communities throughout HRM. Each of these communities present a different set of circumstances in terms of the issues and opportunities facing its residents. There are geographical variations between urban, suburban and rural areas with respect to needs of citizens and approaches to service delivery.

A Community Development unit was created in 1999 as part of the Parks and Recreation Business Unit (now Recreation, Tourism and Culture). The unit was formed in response to a need to formalize the role of HRM staff in communities and work with communities to facilitate greater access to HRM staff and resources. The unit was originally staffed with four Community Developers and has since grown to seven geographically-based and project-specific positions. The investment in these staff has enabled HRM to initiate positive working relationships in some communities by building partnerships to work collaboratively on community and neighborhood issues.

HRM Community Development staff currently assist approximately 200 community groups and not-for-profit agencies annually by providing support through marketing and promotions assistance, financial management, board development, facility management, business and strategic planning, leadership, and volunteer training.

Many community projects are spearheaded and implemented by community residents who have formed themselves into groups. As part of a community development approach, HRM often assesses the viability of offering programs, services, or facilities through partnerships with these community groups. This approach is often labor intensive in the short term, but in the long term enhances community ownership, leverages financial and human resources, and ensures more efficient use of limited funds.

HRM must strengthen its role as a champion for community issues as they are vital economic drivers, integral to building “pride of place” for citizens, and essential to building partnerships and strengthening the municipality. In addition, community-based activities provide a focus for individuals and families of all types to become involved in their communities and to contribute to the quality of life in the place they choose to live.

Since amalgamation in 1996, several major region-wide projects have been initiated to ensure consistency across the former municipal units which now comprise HRM. Examples of these projects, many of which are now nearing completion, are Harbour Solutions, Regional Plan, Cultural Plan, Policing Strategy, Integrated Dispatch, and Economic Strategy. Many of these regional projects are ready to be implemented at the community level and to do so requires community-based approaches.

Citizens want to address the problems that face their neighbourhoods and are looking to the municipality for leadership. HRM is well positioned to provide this leadership at the community level but needs to redefine business practices so that the municipality can more effectively respond to the issues facing individual communities and neighbourhoods.

2. COUNCIL CONCERNS

In the context of community development, Council has raised issues related to:

- support to community groups
- community pride and ownership
- implementation of regional priorities at the community level
- understanding the needs of communities
- involving communities in decision-making

3. CURRENT INITIATIVES

Cultural Plan: Due for completion in early 2006, the HRM Cultural Plan will help guide the Region's future cultural development. The plan encompasses rural, suburban, and urban areas and will recognize culture as the foundation of HRM's social vitality and economic development. The Cultural Plan will cover a broad range of elements including arts, history and heritage, urban design, leisure and education, and cultural economic development. Community diversity will be ingrained in all aspects of the plan to reflect its fundamental importance at all levels of HRM's community and cultural development.

Regional Plan: In 2002, HRM initiated the development of a Regional Plan. The Regional Plan is a detailed, long-range, region-wide plan that will outline where, when and how future growth and development should take place in HRM. The consultation program for the plan has involved communities in planning, seeking their input on issues and solutions. With the plan now nearing completion and approval, the next step will be an extensive community visioning process to determine how the plan will be implemented at the community level throughout HRM.

Youth Engagement Strategy: An HRM-wide initiative led by RTC which used a community youth development framework to elicit feedback from more than 6,000 youth and develop plans for delivering "youth friendly" programs and services.

Community Response Team: The Community Response Team was created to bring about a proactive, solution-oriented approach to communities expressing concerns about safety. The team works closely with community groups to identify solutions to their problems, with strong cooperation from other HRM Business Units in bringing resources and

expertise to various community issues.

Volunteer Conference and Board Development Workshops: Held annually since 2001, the HRM Volunteer Conference is an opportunity to celebrate the valuable contributions that volunteers make in their communities. As a follow-up to the conference, a variety of Board Development workshops are conducted with community groups. It is estimated that the conferences and workshops have provided training, networking, and educational opportunities to over 100 volunteers across HRM.

Integrated Service Teams: There are some previous / existing examples of ad-hoc multi-Business Unit teams that have been struck on an ad hoc basis to deal with community or issue specific concerns. These examples include CANB, the Dartmouth North project, and the Capital District Task Force.

COUNCIL FOCUS AREA: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ISSUE	OPTIONS	IMPLICATIONS
<p>Need to implement and coordinate corporate initiatives at the community level</p> <p><u>INITIATIVES</u></p> <p>A) Regional Plan B) Cultural Plan C) Economic Strategy D) Immigration strategy</p>	<p>1. As part of implementation of major corporate projects and improving responsiveness to community issues, provide the necessary resources to design and conduct community visioning</p>	<p>1. New staff / existing staff time - e.g. an estimate of resources required to conduct a comprehensive community visioning process as part of Regional Plan implementation is \$390,000. Some or all of this function may be achieve by reassigning existing staff.</p>
<p>Need coordinated leadership in achieving community input and establishing partnerships</p> <p><u>INITIATIVES</u></p> <p>A) Regional Plan B) Cultural Plan</p>	<p>1. Encourage use of a community development model to undergo coordinated consultation with communities to identify global needs and priority areas</p> <p>2. Continue to identify and build partnerships (i.e. Recreation Nova Scotia, Metro Universities, YMCA, other service providers etc) to develop a concentrated focus on identified areas of service delivery</p>	<p>1. Increased need for training and professional development and/or refocus of current training. Staff to act as mentors to other staff or community stakeholders when implementing new models and approaches</p> <p>2. Staff time to identify and facilitate partnerships. May free up existing financial resources.</p>
<p>Fragmentation across Business Units in local service delivery</p> <p><u>INITIATIVES</u></p> <p>A) CANB</p>	<p>1. Establish interdepartmental teams to encourage networking on community development issues among all relevant HRM staff</p> <p>2. Using a community development model, coordinate and/or align service delivery, business practices and/or structure among appropriate HRM Business Units</p>	<p>1. May involve staff time on new initiatives, re-alignment of existing staff or business areas, and redirecting of resources</p> <p>2. May involve re-alignment of existing staff or business areas and redirecting of resources</p>

<p>Need integration of culture and heritage programs and services among Business Units and throughout HRM</p> <p><u>INITIATIVES</u></p> <p>A) Cultural Plan B) Heritage Strategy C) Review of RTC grants and contributions programs</p>	<p>1. Finalize and begin implementation of goals and objectives in the HRM Cultural Plan</p> <p>2. Review heritage investment, programs, and facilities throughout the municipality and recommend integrated approaches</p> <p>3. Recommend and implement new approaches to funding culture and heritage</p>	<p>1. Implications include financial investment, realignment of resources, and/or staff time depending on the preferred approach.</p> <p>2. May involve realignment of current delivery structure and/or budget</p> <p>3. May involve realignment of current delivery structure and/or budget</p>
<p>Focused effort to enhance community pride in specific areas throughout HRM</p> <p><u>INITIATIVES</u></p> <p>A) HRM Grants program B) Civic Events Funding C) Cultural Plan</p>	<p>1. Enhance HRM's ability to plan and support community events and event sites throughout HRM</p> <p>2. Review current HRM grants and contributions programs for events and recommend new funding criteria and/or programs</p> <p>3. Support and implement the goals and objectives in the Cultural Plan related to community events and programming</p>	<p>1. Budget allocation or re-assignment of existing budget to support events. Refocus of capital dollars to enhance event sites and/or community spaces would decrease other categories of the capital budget.</p> <p>2. Application processes, evaluation tools, and screening criteria will be developed. Re-allocation of existing funding for events and possible allocation of new money.</p> <p>3. Redistribution of existing budget, possible new allocation, and/or reassignment of staff.</p>

<p>Focussed effort to develop and retain capacity in community volunteers and encourage volunteerism</p> <p><u>INITIATIVES</u></p> <p>A) HRM Volunteer Conference</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to resource and invest in professional development and training opportunities for volunteers in HRM 2. Continue to resource and invest in volunteer recognition programs 3. Develop and improve support systems and operational aid for volunteer groups that operate community programs, services, and facilities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Current investment of resources for the annual volunteer conference and follow-up volunteer training and staff time for training could be increased with more focus on this area. 2. Current investment of \$12,000 for volunteer recognition ceremony could be increased with more focus on this area. 3. Addressing issues such as access to facilities, hours of operation, custodial needs, insurance issues, etc will involve staff time and resources.
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Focused effort to develop and retain capacity in community volunteers and encourage volunteerism

INITIATIVES

A) HRM Volunteer Conference

1. Continue to resource and invest in professional development and training opportunities for volunteers in HRM

2. Continue to resource and invest in volunteer recognition programs

3. Develop and improve support systems and operational aid for volunteer groups that operate community programs, services, and facilities

1. Current investment of resources for the annual volunteer conference and follow-up volunteer training and staff time for training could be increased with more focus on this area.

2. Current investment of \$12,000 for volunteer recognition ceremony could be increased with more focus on this area.

3. Addressing issues such as access to facilities, hours of operation, custodial needs, insurance issues, etc will involve staff time and resources.