

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

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HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

November 19, 2013

PRESENT:

Mayor Mike Savage  
Deputy Mayor Reg Rankin  
Councillors: Barry Dalrymple  
David Hendsbee  
Bill Karsten  
Lorelei Nicoll  
Gloria McCluskey  
Darren Fisher  
Waye Mason  
Jennifer Watts  
Linda Mosher  
Russell Walker  
Stephen Adams  
Matt Whitman  
Steve Craig  
Tim Outhit

REGRETS:

Councillor: Brad Johns

STAFF:

Mr. Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer  
Mr. John Traves, Municipal Solicitor  
Ms. Cathy Mellett, Municipal Clerk  
Ms. Krista Vining, Legislative Assistant

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## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Savage called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

The CBC National News segment was presented, showcasing Hope Blooms' pitch to Dragons Den seeking funding to help expand their salad dressing operation.

Councillor Watts and Mason addressed the group from Hope Blooms, commenting on Regional Council's role in donating the land and the powerful example the young entrepreneurs show to other communities. Councillors Watts and Mason presented a plaque to Hope Blooms on behalf of Regional Council.

Students Craig Cane and Tiffany Calvin of Hope Blooms spoke on what the garden means to them and how growing the garden, and making and selling salad dressing has shaped them as individuals.

Councillor Hendsbee and Adams entered the meeting at this time.

Councillor Whitman recognized CBC Meteorologist Peter Coade. In October 2012, Mr. Coade marked 50 years as a weather forecaster, earning him a spot in the Guinness World Records book. Councillor Whitman presented a plaque to Mr. Coade on behalf of Regional Council. Mr. Coade attributed his success to the support of his family.

Mayor Savage recognized that members of Council were wearing blue ribbons in support of National Child Day.

## **2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – None**

## **3. RECOMMENDED PRIORITY OUTCOMES 2014-15**

The following was before Council:

- Staff report dated November 4, 2013
- Revised Presentation entitled: 2014/2015 Priority Outcome Planning dated November 19, 2013

On December 4, 2012 Regional Council provided direction to staff in the form of Priority Outcomes.

Mayor Savage stepped down as Chair at 1:18 p.m. and Deputy Mayor Rankin assumed the Chair.

Mr. Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer advised that the budget document outlines business information and 236 financial goals on a business unit basis. In order to ensure that the business planning goals are being met, a business plan review group was established and meets monthly to focus on goals that are not being achieved and how to overcome these challenges. The goals have been broken down into 82 priorities

in order to support the implementation and ensure they are being appropriately resourced. Separately, a Champions Table has been established, led by Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Mike Labrecque, and staffed by leads on each of those priorities to ensure they are being achieved:

- Healthy Communications – Chief Jean-Michel Blais, Halifax Regional Police
- Transportation – Eddie Robar, Director of Metro Transit
- Economic Development – Jane Fraser, Director of Planning and Infrastructure
- Governance and Communications – John Travers, Director of Legal Services

Staff is seeking confirmation of Council's Priority Outcomes in preparation for the 2014/2015 planning cycle.

Mr. Butts noted that 97% of the 82 goals set in 2013/2014 are on-track and staff is working to get the remaining 3% on-track by end of year. It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council approve the 2014/2015 Priority Outcomes as described in Attachment B of the November 4, 2013 staff report and direct staff to develop the 2014/2015 Budget and Business Plan in support of these priorities.

Mayor Savage resumed as Chair at 1:22 p.m. and Deputy Mayor Rankin took his seat.

Mr. Fred Morley, Greater Halifax Partnership provided an overview of the City Matters Survey results which polled approximately 600 people in HRM on: quality of life, municipal services, perception of downtown Halifax, health and safety, living in HRM, spending habits and lifestyle over the next year, and bullying and tolerance.

Chief Jean-Michel Blais, Halifax Regional Police provided an overview of the 2013/2014 Priority Outcomes for Healthy Communities, indicating a proposed recommendation for 2014/15 to include an outcome of which "HRM citizens and visitors are safe where they live, work and play" and that "HRM is a leader in Energy and Environment initiatives."

In response to a question raised by Councillor McCluskey, Chief Blais provided additional clarification around Halifax Regional Police Strategic Planning Initiative to develop a model of policing in HRM up to 2024; through consultation with various stakeholders, Halifax Regional Police employees and with residents via social media and an online survey.

Councillor McCluskey requested additional clarification on what is meant by HRM citizens having access to facilities and natural assets that enable a range of choices for structured and unstructured leisure and recreation activities. Mr. Brad Anguish, Director of Community and Recreation Services provided examples of the different HRM programs such as the "After the Bell" pilot program and "Souls Strong", as well as other programs offered through Recreation Services.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Outhit, Ms. Jane Fraser, Director of Planning and Infrastructure provided additional information around the LED Streetlight

conversion process; including the Request for Proposal process, and transfer of ownership over the coming years.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Dalrymple, Mr. Richard MacLellan, Manager of Energy and Environment, confirmed that HRM provides support to the Regional Watersheds Advisory Board and if the Board wanted to request through the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee to review their terms of reference as adopted by Regional Council, that work could be undertaken.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Dalrymple on the status of District Energy, Mr. MacLellan indicated that he was not aware of any current projects, but reference would be made in the Community Energy Plan project. Mr. Greg Keefe, Director of Finance and ICT, Chief Financial Officer, added that Regional Council passed a motion directing staff to work with the partners on the District Energy project. This project has since ended and staff is awaiting written confirmation from the partners before a report is brought forward to Regional Council.

Councillor Hendsbee expressed concern with Halifax Regional Police charging citizen volunteers to process criminal record checks.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Craig, Chief Blais provided an overview of the RCMP's engagement/involvement as a stakeholder in providing input into the Halifax Regional Police Strategic Planning Initiative.

In regard to increasing access to recreation programs, in particular the "try a bike" program, Councillor Mosher suggested staff look into purchasing different types of bicycles (i.e. recumbent bicycles) for persons with disabilities to try out in areas such as the Oval or Chain of Lakes Trail. Mr. Anguish advised that he would follow up with Councillor Mosher as this fits within HRM's accessibility program of providing barrier free activities.

Councillor Mosher asked if consideration could be given to having a heritage tree designation within HRM's Urban Forest Master Plan. Ms. Fraser could not speak to the specifics of a heritage tree by-law but would make a note of the Councillor's comments. Ms. Fraser highlighted that under the Regional Plan Review as part of the arts and culture chapter, staff is reviewing the protection of cultural landscapes.

In response to a request for clarification raised by Councillor Hendsbee respecting HRM's Request for Proposal and Tender process for service delivery of the LED Streetlighting Program, Mayor Savage advised that this matter had come to Regional Council and the Audit and Finance Standing Committee and updates would be provided to Council/Standing Committee as needed.

Mr. Eddie Robar, Director of Metro Transit, provided an overview of the 2013/2014 Priority Outcomes and the outcomes for Transportation in 2014/15, which include:

- Transit strategic plan that is integrated with other transportation and regional plan elements.
- Transit technology that enhances the rider experience and provides value added planning information.
- An asset and service plan that ensures long term sustainability.

He noted that staff has combined priority outcomes from 2013/14 for road networks, active transportation and single occupancy vehicle initiatives into one priority as follows:

- Integrated mobility allowing people and goods to move easily from place to place using a combination of multiple transportation models, such as auto, transit, walking and cycling, according to their own needs, inclusive of all segments of the public and integrated with regional plans.

Mr. Robar further clarified that Metro Transit has established a model for financial predictability and has been able to hit the targets set in 2013/14 and therefore, that item was not recommended as a priority for 2014/15.

Councillor Hendsbee provided comment on active transit matters for the rural area.

Councillor McCluskey questioned what method of repair is being made to sidewalks when slabs have lifted. Mr. David Hubley, Acting Director, Transportation and Public Works confirmed that staff is still using the injection method to raise the slab, as well as a grinding application.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Outhit, Mr. Robar indicated that the 4% increase in transit ridership is above the pre-strike projection numbers. He was unable to provide an exact figure but would review and report back to the Councillor.

Councillor Outhit referenced the City Matters Survey results in regard to the combined 76% of residents surveyed having interest in a mode of transportation other than buses (i.e. commuter rail or ferry service). He further questioned the status of the Commuter Rail Study and Lacewood Terminal. Mr. Robar confirmed that the Commuter Rail Study is underway, noting that staff is working with CN Rail. As well, the ground was broken this week at the Lacewood Terminal site. Mr. Robar clarified that he had only highlighted some of the sustainability pieces and infrastructure improvements during his presentation.

Ms. Jane Fraser, Director of Planning and Infrastructure provided an overview of the 2013/14 Priority Outcomes for Economic Development. It was noted that the recommended priority outcomes for 2014/15 are the same as 2013/14 for the Regional Centre, HRM's Economic Strategy, celebration of arts and cultural heritage, regulatory and service cultural supports enabling development and Rural Economic Development; however, in regard to HRM's Business Parks staff is recommending to *broaden the focus from HRM Business Parks to ensure there is an adequate land supply for commercial development in all of HRM.*

Councillor McCluskey questioned why 90 Alderney Drive was listed under Strategic Surplus Property Disposal, page 7 of the November 4, 2013 staff report. Ms. Fraser indicated that this was a Regional Council motion but was held in abeyance pending consolidation. A report is forthcoming to Regional Council which will seek direction on how Council wants to proceed with the former Dartmouth City Hall building. Mr. Anguish projected the report being before Regional Council in January or February 2014, noting that staff is working in coordination with the Municipal Clerk's Office.

In response to a question raised by Councillor McCluskey on staff's meaning of benchmarking development fees, Mr. Anguish advised that there has been discussion both in the development community and with HRM citizens about the appropriateness of fees; clarifying, that this is a different discussion from Regional Development charges under the Regional Plan. Staff asked the Greater Halifax Partnership to undertake a report on HRM's behalf and review the development fees and determine their impact on the industry and the appropriateness when compared to other municipalities to determine if fees are competitive. Councillor McCluskey asked if staff is looking at cities such as Moncton. Mr. Angus indicated that he would provide the Councillor with the list of benchmark cities HRM is using for the study.

Councillor Hendsbee noted a point of clarification to Ms. Fraser's presentation that it is the *Sheet Harbour Chamber of Commerce*, not the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce. He further asked if there has been any more dialog with the Province about their vestures of properties within HRM. Ms. Fraser advised that staff is working on a white paper for business parks and at present are not actively in discussions or pursuing land with the Province.

Councillor Mason questioned whether the final Economic Development Priority Outcome for 2014/15 should say supply for *industrial* development in all HRM rather than commercial development. Ms. Fraser clarified that this recommendation speaks to private land ownership and ensuing as developments are occurring that there is a good mix of retail/commercial/residential to attract business and have an economic presence. It was noted that staff would provide broader clarification around the wording for HRM Business Parks.

In response to question raised by Councillor Dalrymple respecting the Aerotech Business Park, Ms. Fraser clarified that regardless of the priority outcomes changes, staff will be focusing on ensuring the service plan is completed.

Mr. John Travers, Director of Legal Services provided an overview of the 2013/14 Priority Outcomes for Governance and Communication; highlighting recommended priority outcomes for 2014/15:

- HRM demonstrates good governance through effective Community Council and Committee structure and roles.
- HRM's Agencies, Boards, and Commissions (ABC) function under clear and accountable parameters.
- HRM balances competing communities of interest.

- Citizens are treated as partners in development of municipal policy.

Councillor Mosher spoke to the presentations given, asking staff not to use so many acronyms to ensure openness and being user-friendly to the public.

Councillor Karsten asked staff to provide specifications to the last priority outcome for 2014/15 Governance and Communication: *citizens are treated as partners in development of municipal policy*. It was noted that the motion would be put on the floor and during Council's break Councillor Karsten would seek clarification from the solicitor.

**MOVED by Deputy Mayor Rankin, seconded Councillor Nicoll, that Halifax Regional Council approve the 2014/2015 Priority Outcomes as described in Attachment B of the November 4, 2013 staff report and direct staff to develop the 2014/2015 Budget and Business Plan in support of these priorities.**

Council recessed at 3:03 p.m. and reconvened at 3:23 p.m.

Deputy Mayor Rankin spoke on the motion, suggesting Councillors could identify which projects they want in the business plans and provide direction to staff for consideration and inclusion when staff comes back to Council during budget deliberations. Deputy Mayor Rankin suggested HRM seek alignment with the Province on immigration. He further provided a few examples under economic development related to the Kearney Lake Blue Mountain Park and signage along Prospect Road, highlighting that there was no indication of these in the business plans.

Ms. Fraser confirmed that HRM is working with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and other levels of government in regard to immigration.

Councillor Karsten expressed concern that there is no matrix to review last year's strategic outcomes and although the report recognizes that 97% of the 2013/14 priority outcomes have been completed, there was no way for him to confirm their completion.

In response to Councillor Karsten, Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer clarified that when the strategic outcomes came before Regional Council on December 4, 2012, it was an opportunity following the election for Council to consider its priorities. At that time, staff provided Council with all the current priorities that existed that staff was working on and the product from that is the business plan approved by Regional Council which listed priority outcomes before Council today. These strategic outcomes build on those priorities for 2014/15. With respect to specific projects, some will surface in the Regional Plan and some will surface as part of the business planning conversations Council has with the business units in terms of deliverables for each of the outcomes and will come from today's discussion.

**MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Craig, that under Section 5 of Governance and Communication, the sentence should read *Citizens are engaged in development of municipal policy*. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**



The motion before Council now reads:

**MOVED by Deputy Mayor Rankin, seconded Councillor Nicoll, that Halifax Regional Council approve the 2014/2015 Priority Outcomes as described in Attachment B of the November 4, 2013 staff report with the following amendment that Section 5 of Governance and Communication, the sentence should read *Citizens are engaged in development of municipal policy*, and direct staff to develop the 2014/2015 Budget and Business Plan in support of these priorities.**

Councillor Dalrymple spoke in support of focus being put on accessibility and environmental aspects being addressed as part of the priorities outcomes for HRM projects. He further noted that, under Health Communities, in particular recreation services, that consideration be given to keeping a focus on being able to deliver when opportunities arise (i.e. obtain beach/lake frontage). Councillor Dalrymple expressed concern with the priority outcome for rural economic development, indicating that Middle Musquodoboit was promised at amalgamation that they would receive service delivery and access to buildings for recreation. He encouraged staff to move forward on exploring potential models of shared service delivery rather than waiting for the Provincial Rural Service Review. He went on to ask that in the upcoming budget discussion, having flexibility in the budget for opportunities that may arise (i.e. expansion of MetroX).

Councillor Watts asked whether discussions have been held with Premier MacNeil respecting a \$2 million contribution from the Province to support transit and how this contribution would unfold in HRM's transit plan. In response to a question raised by Councillor Watts, Mr. Robar confirmed that the auto stop messaging will be part of the Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) System being installed in Metro Transit buses over the next 18-24 months.

In regard to the parking strategy report coming forward to Council in December 2013, Councillor Watts indicated that parking is a critical issue in the North-end of Halifax and the need for HRM to identify implications on how to support parking needs, especially with the installations of bike lanes, and the importance of having public input.

In response to Councillor Watts' question, Mayor Savage advised that he has had discussions with Premier MacNeil and the Minister of Municipal Affairs respecting a Provincial contribution for transit but no formal meeting has been held to outline this on paper but will be addressed as Regional Council heads into budget deliberation. Mr. Robar indicated that HRM's intergovernmental affairs department has been in contact with the Province to define what this program will look like and how subsidies could be applied.

Councillor Fisher asked whether online booking for HRM owned arenas has been extended to other arenas and sports facilities. In regard to increasing access to school

gyms for recreational activities and free play, Councillor Fisher spoke to custodial costs and gyms being vacant afterhours, and whether HRM has the ability to negotiate the availability of gyms for youth after hours. As well, he requested an email update on streetscape improvements to Main Street. Councillor Fisher indicated that he would like to be a part of the discussions of the Community Response Officer (CRO) Program review. He spoke in favour of focusing on traffic safety and addressing speeding as an issue.

**MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Nicoll, that under Section 4 of Transportation, change the wording after public to *in support of the objectives of the Regional Plan*. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

The motion before Council now reads:

**MOVED by Deputy Mayor Rankin, seconded Councillor Nicoll, that Halifax Regional Council approve the 2014/2015 Priority Outcomes as described in Attachment B of the November 4, 2013 staff report with the following amendments:**

- **Section 4 of Transportation, change the wording after public to *in support of the objectives of the Regional Plan*.**
- **Section 5 of Governance and Communication, the sentence should read *Citizens are engaged in development of municipal policy*.**

**and direct staff to develop the 2014/2015 Budget and Business Plan in support of these priorities.**

Councillor Mason expressed concern with state of good repair, commenting that the fences along the Halifax and Dartmouth Commons need to be repaired and/or replaced, and that a focus just not be on new facilities in the business plan. He further questioned whether additional staffing resources need to be in place to achieve the workload around all the secondary plans that need to be replaced (i.e. Centre Plan review). As well, in rural economic development Councillor Mason noted the need to have benchmarking studies in the rural agricultural areas and rural shore against other rural communities.

In response to a question raised by Councillor McCluskey, Mr. Anguish advised that the Long Term Arena Strategy report is projected to come to Regional Council in January/February 2014. Mayor Savage suggested staff follow up with the Greater Halifax Partnership in regard to the responses received from survey for inclusion in staff's report.

Councillor McCluskey went on to express concern that there are still a number of HRM citizens that do not have access to facilities for recreational use due to financial situation (i.e. unable to afford bus fare to get to facility).

Councillor Nicoll spoke on Healthy Communities and the underutilization of outdoor recreation facilities for structured and unstructured leisure activities. She commented that

the greater use of outdoor spaces the safer people feel and encouraged each recreational office to look at how to enable and create actives that bring that sense of community and safety. Councillor Nicoll referenced programs that receive funding by other levels of government and suggested HRM take the lead on developing a similar program(s) based on public feedback.

In regard to transportation priorities, Councillor Mosher requested an analysis on having more stringent guidelines in place with Heritage Gas, as HRM staff is now aware what projects are being undertaken by Heritage Gas and the ability to have walkable neighbourhoods by having Heritage Gas fund the capital when work is being undertaken. Councillor Mosher also echoed comments made earlier in the meeting by Councillor Outhit on alternative modes of transportation such as commuter rail and high speed ferries and the lack of synergies with new developments. She read from an email from a resident respecting traffic concerns.

Councillor Whitman spoke to some of the issues trying to be addressed along the Hammonds Plains Road and stated for the record that the Hammonds Plains Road is the number one issue for District 13 residents.

Councillor Adams asked staff to investigate and give consideration for inclusion in the 2014/15 budget for a recreation center in Herring Cove, as well as the recreation center proposed for the Sambro area.

Councillor Watts noted the need to develop a communication strategy around accessibility implementations being made in HRM. Councillor Watts further suggested that HRM fund the implementation of the Urban Forest Master Plan, as well as implementing the Community District Energy Plan currently being reviewed by the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee. As well, she suggested Municipal Operations staff implement a litter strategy in conjunction with HRM's promotion of higher densification in areas such as the Urban Core.

Councillor McCluskey asked whether discussions have been held with the Province in effort to review bar hours and decrease the level of patrol. Chief Blais advised that it is his intention to speak with the new Minister. He has had discussions with Ms. Gaynor Watson-Creed, Medical Officer of Health, Capital District Health Authority on this issue. In regard to increasing/decreasing patrols, Chief Blais noted that patrols are put into areas where needed based on their Comstat Overview. Mr. Butts clarified that when Regional Council approved the Municipal Alcohol Policy there were future actions identified, one being lobbying the Province with the assistance of the Chief of Police respecting bar hours of operation and to consult the public. A report will be coming forward to Council on how to proceed forward with public consultation on this matter.

Councillor Hendsbee expressed the importance of HRM fulfilling its commitments to MetroX and securing the properties and show confidence to the community. He spoke to the need for solid waste strategies (i.e. illegal dumping strategy, clean up strategy

and Eastern solid waste depo) for rural communities. Councillor Hendsbee further expressed the need to support rural community centers.

Councillor Karsten expressed concern with the lack of funding in the capital budget for Baker Drive Sports Field. He asked staff for an update on the Eastern Passage Commons Master Plan. Further, he questioned whether there is a preliminary strategy for the Shearwater Connector Road.

Councillor Nicoll highlighted a building in the Lake Loon/Cherry Brook area that she wanted addressed in the 2014/15 budget, as it is a safety issue in the community.

Councillor Watts commented on the need to have enforcement and education in the Urban Core around sharing the road between motorists/bicyclists/pedestrians. She expressed concern with efforts around communication/citizen engagement in relation to social media tools and web-based surveys, and that HRM is not allowing the opportunity for residents to come together and communicate (i.e. community meetings). Councillor Watts went on to highlight HRM's potential financial commitment outlined in the Bloomfield Master Plan, as approved by Regional Council in 2009.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

Cathy J. Mellett  
Municipal Clerk