



Halifax Regional Council
January 8, 2002

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Geri Kaiser, Director, Shared Services

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "G. Kaiser", is written over a horizontal line.

DATE: January 8, 2002

SUBJECT: Creation of Winter Parking Information Hotline

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

A suggestion was made to Mayor Kelly by a private citizen for HRM to set up and maintain a Winter Parking Information Hotline.

BACKGROUND

The Winter of 2002 is the second year that HRM operated without a by-law restricting winter parking from 1:00 am to 7:00 a.m from mid-November to mid-March. However, the Motor Vehicle Act section 139 continues to be in place and it restricts a vehicle from being left standing on a roadway where it might interfere with snow removal or winter maintenance. Vehicles that are alleged to be in violation of this regulation are subject to ticketing and/or towing. This restriction applies 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Due to the fact that these restrictions are subject to road conditions, some members of the public have asked for clarification as to when they must remove their vehicles from HRM streets. The Winter Parking Information Hotline is one method to enable HRM to assist the public in understanding and recognizing their responsibility under the Motor Vehicle Act in keeping streets safe and accessible during winter conditions.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the Winter Parking Information Hotline would be threefold:

1. to advise the public that a snowfall warning is in effect in HRM and that vehicles should not be left standing on a road where it might interfere with snow removal or winter maintenance
2. to advise that the HRM winter maintenance program is in operation and vehicles should not be left standing on a road where it might interfere with snow removal or winter maintenance
3. to advise that no snowfall warning has been issued and no scheduled winter maintenance will be taking place at this time. However, should weather or road conditions change, winter maintenance operations (e.g. salting) will occur and vehicles should not be left standing on a road where it might interfere with snow removal or winter maintenance.

The Winter Parking Information Hotline will be managed by the Corporate Call Centre. However, winter parking information will be provided by Supervisors in Streets and Roads, Public Works and Transportation, as it becomes available. Updates would be provided every four (4) to five(5) hours daily, between 7:30 am and 9:30 pm as required.

The telephone number for the Winter Parking Information Hotline will be 490-SNOW (7669) and will become operational on Monday, January 14, 2002. The message system will have 10-12 ports established to reduce the possibility of a bottleneck when calls peak. There will be three separate message boxes, which will enable a caller to specify the region they want information about, eg. Western, Eastern, and Central. When a caller chooses the appropriate region, he/she will hear a message regarding winter maintenance activities in that region, as well as hear the boundaries of that region. In addition, the system will provide staff with regular reports on the number of calls received.

The HRM Website will be used as a companion to the Winter Parking Information Hotline. All information available on the Information Hotline would also be available on the HRM Website at www.region.halifax.ns.ca by clicking on the "Winter Parking Hotline" icon. The Corporate Call Centre will also be responsible for updating the reports on the website on the same schedule as the Snow Line.

Both the Winter Parking Information Hotline and the HRM Website (Winter Parking) are not intended to replace the good judgement of citizens, who are responsible for removing their vehicles from the streets when winter conditions warrant. These information tools would be provided only as a means to assist residents in making those decisions, when necessary. The Motor Vehicle Act, section 139, places that responsibility clearly with the vehicle owner.

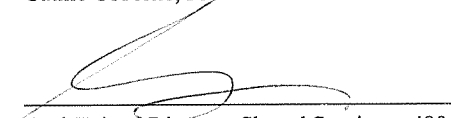
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

\$3,000-\$5,000 per year, which will be absorbed through the Public Works and Transportation Snow and Ice budget.

This would cover the cost of the telephone line and message boxes to support the system. Existing staff in the Call Centre would be used to maintain the Hotline.

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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