
HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
January 15, 2002

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:



David P. McKinnon, Chief of Police

DATE: January 8, 2002

SUBJECT: Peace Conference

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

At Regional Council on September 25, 2001, a motion was moved by Councilor Hines, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that Regional Police provide a written report regarding security measures that were put in place for the proposed Peace Conference. Motion put and passed unanimously.

BACKGROUND

The "Halifax Peace Conference" had been scheduled to be held from Sunday, October 14 to Tuesday, October 16, 2001. The idea for the Halifax Peace Conference resulted from meetings in Ottawa in early 2001 between a diplomatic representative for the Embassy of Israel to Canada, the Head of the Palestinian delegation to Canada, and a number of Canadian Members of Parliament. It was decided that Canada was uniquely placed to be helpful in bringing together representatives from both sides in an effort to improve lines of communications with the help of Canadian Members of Parliament.

On May 3rd, the Honorable Peter Mihiken, Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada, invited his Palestinian and Israeli counterparts to facilitate the participation of six members from each Parliament to come to Halifax to meet with Canadian Members of Parliament.

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In June the Halifax Regional Police were notified by the RCMP V.I.P. Security Section that the conference was being planned for October 2001. At that time it was felt that this would be classified as an "event", with the RCMP taking the lead role as far as personal protection of delegates and site security with HRP being responsible for general crowd control and public safety. There is a very good relationship between the V.I.P. Security Section and HRP which has been demonstrated most recently during the Swiss Air Memorial, Royal Visit of the Earl and Countess of Wessex, Tall Ships 2000, visit by the President of Iceland and frequent visits by the both the Prime Minister and the Governor General of Canada, to mention a few.

On August 23, 2001, HRP was advised by the V.I.P. Section that the Solicitor General's office in Ottawa had decided not to designate the Peace Conference as an Major Event and were considering it a private event. This meant that HRP would be responsible for not just traffic and crowd control but for all facets of the security. Also, HRP was advised that the V.I.P. Section would be available to assist in any way they could, as well as other RCMP Specialized units due to the sensitive nature of the event (post Sept 11).

The Central Divisional Commander, and the NCO i/c Metro Integrated Intelligence Unit (MIIU), both of whom had already been liaising with the RCMP, were tasked with preparing an Operational Plan for the event. Several conference calls were held with the main organizers of the event in an effort to firm up details of planned events during the conference and to obtain a complete list of those persons who would be attending so an accurate Threat Assessment could be completed.

It would be inappropriate for staff to discuss specific security plan features; however, with the preliminary information that was available, it appeared that any plan created could include the following types of details: Motorcade and Drives, Personal Escorts, Security of the Accommodation Venues (at least 2), Luggage Security ,General Site Security at such places as local churches, restaurants (2), Province House and Government House, along with possibly the Wharf at Historic Properties and a Harbor Cruise Vessel, Media Liaison and units of standby to deal with potential explosive threats (Explosive Disposal Unit), Demonstration Control (Public Order Unit), Investigation Team, Dive Team (RCMP), Medical Emergency Procedures (Hospitals/Ambulance/Fire), Communications, Threat Assessment Team (M.I.I.U./CISNS), Traffic Issues (Removal of Parking Meters/Installation of "No Stopping" signs, barricades etc.

On September 11, 2001, at 0830 hours, just prior to the terrorist attack in New York, a meeting was held with an Atlantic Canada Member of Parliament, the Executive Director, Halifax Peace Forum and an Associate with the Lester B. Pearson Peace Keeping Center at Cornwallis N.S. At that meeting details of the conference were discussed and they were advised that it was imperative that a complete list of delegates be provided. The topic of cost recovery was also discussed and we were advised that the organizers had not been provided with funding from the Federal Government and were counting on donations from large corporations, some of which they had already received.

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Immediately following the terrorist attack in New York concerns were raised as to whether or not the event should be held, on September 26 it was decided that the event would be moved to Ottawa. The event was finally postponed.

DISCUSSION

Generally speaking, whenever special events come to HRM the organizers of the events have taken some degree of responsibility for some of the policing costs associated with the event. This has been the case with everything from Rock Concerts, Trade Shows and shareholders meetings.

Generally the organizers of the events deal with these issues for a couple of reasons, first for the success of the event and the security of the attendants, and secondly because often there is a need to get some support from HRM or the use of some public facility.

However, in the past there have been situations where HRM and it's police service have had to provide specific policing needs because of events occurring in the area that, although not sponsored by any one individual, consumed police resources without a specific cost recovery plan or opportunity. In most of these situations the priorities for HRM and it's police service are the general safety and protection of all members of the community and the maintenance of peace and order in the region.

In the case of the specific event that prompted this report, one point of view may be that what was planned was nothing more than a meeting of 6-12 people at a hotel to discuss a politically sensitive issue and that the threat, if any, to the community would come from others that would wish to disrupt the meeting or harm those in attendance and, as such, local law enforcement should be able to deal with the situation without cost to those organizing the meeting.

The Halifax Regional Municipality and Nova Scotia have a long history of democratic government within Canada and a strong internationally known reputation for everything from it's universities, which bring people together and promote the discussion of important political and social issues, our strong history with world meetings such as G7, NATO Ministers Conference, and world class events such as the Tall Ships, the World Junior Hockey events, and as such should be aware that we may become a gathering place for a variety of people with issues.

The events of September 11 have caused governments at all levels to have a greater awareness of possible outcomes of some situations and the risks related to those situations. The balancing of the assessment of the risk to the resource capacity of the community at the local municipal level is another challenge now facing staff and Council. There is a potential for expenditures by Municipalities, either in the new security needs post September 11, or with the issue of criminal behavior by persons or groups with a terrorist intent.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

As a result of the cancellation of the peace conference there were no budget implications; however, had the conference been held, it is estimated that the cost for policing would have been approximately \$50,000.00 with no guarantee of any cost recovery.

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There are no budget implications.

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.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments.

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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