

Halifax Regional Council
May 7, 2002

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
Karen MacTavish, Director, Parks and Recreation

DATE: April 16, 2002

SUBJECT: Victoria Park Legacy Project

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

On May 2, 2000, Regional Council approved a recommendation directing staff to work with the Metro Food Bank and other agencies in developing a legacy project in Victoria Park. Subsequently, Regional Council approved project - Capital District - Victoria Park (Account # CDB00393-\$200,000) in the 2002/03 Capital Budget.

BACKGROUND

Staff have worked with the Metro Food Bank and Spring Garden and Area Merchants Association to redesign the north end of Victoria Park on Spring Garden Road. The purpose of the project was threefold:

1. Commemorate the 15th anniversary of the Metro Food Bank and assist fund raising efforts of the Metro Food Bank Society.
2. Incorporate a performance plaza within the park for various events throughout the tourist and holiday seasons.
3. Refurbish the park and improve it's safety and aesthetic/functional qualities.

A joint committee was formed which included members from the Spring Garden and Area Business Association, Metro Food Bank Society, the North British Society and HRM Capital District Task Force members. The committee had been tasked with reviewing and refining the proposed concept plan, developing a capital cost estimate for construction and developing the means to raise funds necessary to complete the legacy project.

DISCUSSION

As with the original concept plan, the design includes a small plaza at the north end of the park. The plaza includes an on-grade performance area with a low ornamental metal fence as separation from the street. A major element of this project is the connection between the work of the Food Bank and the poems and writings of Robert Burns, whose statue will remain the main fixture at the North End of the park. The Robert Burns statue will be moved back from Spring Garden Road approximately 20 feet where it will be restored and lit through the generosity of the North British Society. A slab of granite inscribed with Robert Burn's "Selkirk Grace" will be laid flush at the base of the statue. A second flush granite slab in the performance area commemorates the work of the Food Bank. Four small granite bollards with a wheat/bread motif representing food as one of the basic elements of life are placed at the perimeter. A major part of the project will be the upgrading of existing electrical service and installation of new light standards around the plaza area. This upgrade is intended to improve park security. Another significant part of the design is the installation of a number of ornamental benches for pedestrian seating. The park will reflect a Victorian style in its benches, light standards and ornamental metal work. The design also includes new shrub and flower planting beds around the perimeter of the plaza.

The committee's strategy to leave a legacy for the Metro Food Bank and refurbish the park is based on the sale of concrete paving bricks to be installed within the plaza. These pavers are to be sold at \$50.00 and will have the donor's name inscribed on the brick. Estimated sales of 12,000 pavers @ \$50.00 each represents potential donations of \$600,000. The committee quickly realized the campaign to sell bricks would be much more effective if the renovations were completed now rather than waiting until an adequate number of bricks could be sold to completely finance the capital renovations to the park. This would allow donors to see how their gift to the Food Bank would be commemorated. As they are sold the plain bricks would be replaced with inscribed donor bricks.

The Spring Garden Merchants Association has graciously taken on spearheading the fundraising campaign. A joint bank account is to be set up under the name 'Victoria Park Legacy Project', with signatories from the Metro Food Bank, Spring Garden Business Commission, and two (2) HRM. representatives. Proceeds from the sale of the bricks will be deposited into this account and divided 50/50 between the Metro Food Bank and the capital costs of the park refurbishment. Once the capital costs are repaid all proceeds from brick sales will be directed towards the Metro Food Bank Fund.

The project is scheduled for construction in June of 2002.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

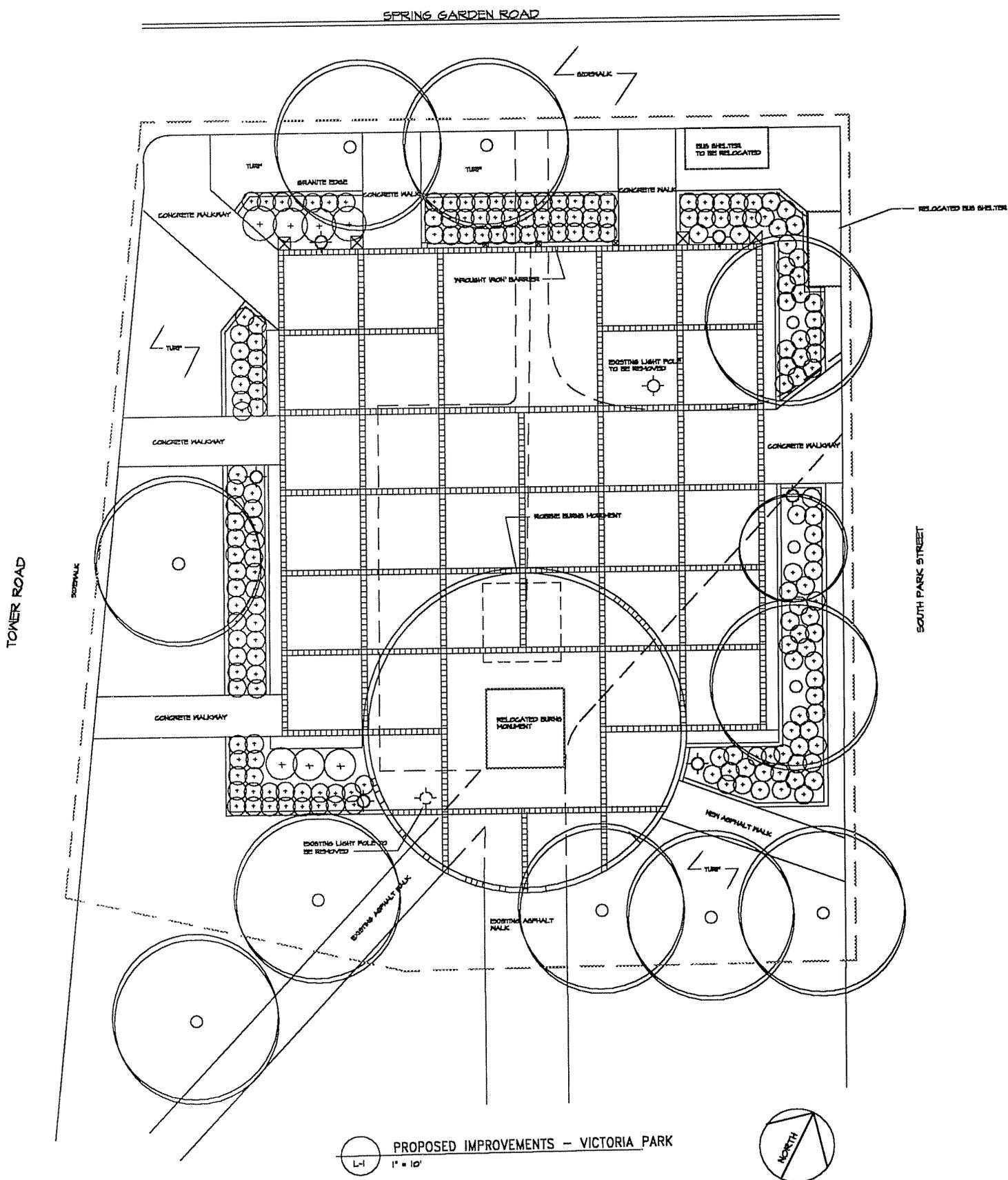
A shortfall in brick sales/donations would require HRM to assume responsibility for any capital costs not reimbursed. If this becomes the case staff would review potential alternative funding from operating, reserves, or debt and bring a recommendation to Council.

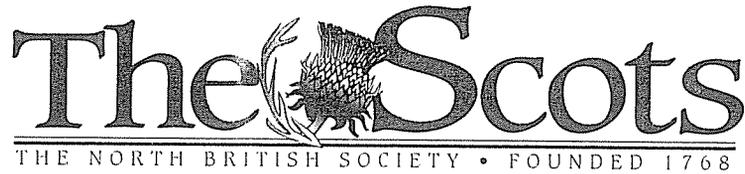
ATTACHMENTS

1. Concept design plan of Victoria Park
2. Letter from Doug McCallum of the British North Society

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.

Report Prepared by: Peter Bigelow, General Manager, Parks and Open Spaces





NBS: 1.28.1

March 11, 2002

Mr. Peter Bigelow
Manager Parks and Grounds
Halifax Regional Municipality
Alderney Gate, 2nd Floor
Dartmouth, NS B2Y 4A7

Dear Mr. Bigelow,

RE: Burns' Statue Area Improvements

At the Executive Committee Meeting of The Scots: The North British Society held March 1st, I had an opportunity to brief the executive on information provided to me during a series of meetings over the past few weeks regarding the Burns' Statue area improvements.

Our Society's executive committee is encouraged by the direction indicated in the conceptual plan. We offer the following points for consideration:

1. Our Society will undertake to fund the reconditioning and restoration of the Burns' Statue itself.
2. Our Society will be interested in adding additional lighting at our Society's cost to illuminate the Statue at night.
3. We assume that the movement of the Statue will be at the cost of the Halifax Regional Municipality, and include the services of a professional conservator to ensure that the Statue is not injured during the relocation process. We assume that the HRM will fund the relocation of the Statue and ensure that the Statue and its pedestal are installed on a firm foundation, and that any damage during the move is repaired and will be covered by the HRM.
4. We note with interest that the plan calls for four bollards to be located on site. We wonder if an additional two could be added? If so, our Society would then undertake at its cost to add interpretation information to allow visitors to better understand who Robert Burns was and appreciate the significance of his work.

A Society for the Celebration of Things Scottish

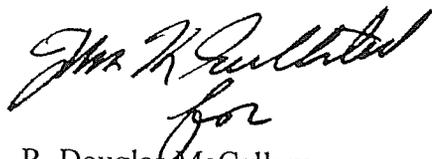
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5. We note that it is the intention to engrave on the concrete pavers in front of the Statue, the Selkirk Grace. We would expect that we would be included in the discussion relating to the design and appearance of the engraving, so as to ensure it is in keeping with the Statue.

In conclusion, I must add that we are enthusiastic and appreciate the ability to participate as a stakeholder in this project. Once completed, it will be a significant improvement to that area of our city and provide a better presentation for the Burns' Statue itself.

Yours sincerely,

The Scots: The North British Society

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Douglas McCallum", with a stylized flourish below it.

R. Douglas McCallum
Senior Assistant Vice President