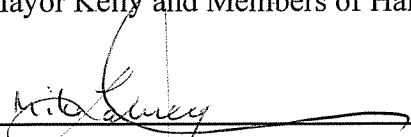


Halifax Regional Council
June 11, 2002

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
Mike Labrecque, Director
Real Property Services

DATE: May 7, 2002

SUBJECT: Burnside Park Information Centre

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

This report originates with staff.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

As a pilot project staff have negotiated the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding with Canada Post for the provision of a Burnside Park Information Centre based on the terms and conditions set out in this report.

Visitors to the Burnside Park needing information or direction presently call the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) through 490-6025 as directed on the information maps located throughout the Park. This number is for the most part a real estate inquiry line and not intended for giving direction or business information. The Business Parks Directory, published by the Daily News does offer business information but is only accurate at the time of printing. A single publicly promoted Information Centre would benefit visitors to the Park, businesses within the Park, and assist HRM in overall promotion and development of the Park.

Over the past 10 to 15 years several private sector concerns from time to time have approached the Municipality to establish some form of information centre in the Burnside Park. The concept has been supported by the Municipality but in the end none of the private sector interests were able to make a strong enough business case for the project to proceed to implementation. While the specific reasons varied from one company to another the main concerns, most often cited, were the cost of renting building space, other related overheads, and staffing.

Canada Post has recently moved to new premises at 95 Akerley Boulevard—a location that offers good exposure and visibility and ease of access. From this location the objectives of the proposed Information Centre would be to:

- Offer visitors to the Burnside Park a single location where they source information on businesses within the Park;
- Provide access via a courtesy phone and free Internet access for information regarding Burnside businesses;
- Partner in company retention and business growth of the Burnside Park; and
- Draw traffic into the Burnside Post Office.

The proposed Information Centre would provide for the delivery of the following services:

- **Computer with Internet Access** - Visitors to the Information Centre will be able to access the Internet to find information regarding businesses within the Park. They would access Website addresses by locating them in the on-site Business Parks Directory, from existing information such as Yellow Pages, or from the “directory wall” located within the Centre.
- **Printing of Information** - Customers who access websites can print information obtained from the Website for a nominal fee.
- **Courtesy Phone** - Visitors would be able to use a courtesy phone to contact businesses within the Park and the HRM 490-6025 number for information on building sites available for sale.
- **Directory Wall Ads** -Visitors would be able to view a wall mounted directory of companies listed. These listings would be sold to companies as a 1.75" x 3.5" ad to promote their website.
- **Free Burnside Directories & Maps** - Visitors to the Park would be able to pick up free Business Parks Directories and a map of the Burnside Park.

In the interest of raising its profile within the Burnside Park, Canada Post has offered to make its own premises available to house the Information Centre and to incur all of the operating costs associated with the Centre. The costs and associated revenues are set out in the following tables

Proposed Operating Budget Burnside Information Centre October 1, 2002 - March 31, 2003		
Expenditures:		
• Staffing - Provision for Utilization of time of Existing Staff person: 12 hours per week for 26 weeks		\$5200
• Phone/Internet Access - 2 lines at \$100 month		600
• Advertising - \$200 a month		<u>1200</u>
	Subtotal	\$7000
• Furniture and Equipment:		
• Desk	\$ 300	
• Personal Computer	1200	
• Materials for Construction of Directory Wall	<u>500</u>	<u>\$2000</u>
Total Estimated Expenditures		<u>\$9000</u>
Revenue:		
• Directory Wall Advertisements - 100 Ads @ \$50 per ad for 6 month rental		\$5000
Estimated Net Operating Position		(\$4000)

Proposed Operating Budget Burnside Information Centre for each of Fiscal 2003-04 and 2004-05		
Expenditures:		
• Staffing - Provision for Utilization of time of Existing Staff person: 12 hours per week for 52 weeks		\$10,400
• Phone/Internet Access - 2 lines at \$100 month		1,200
• Advertising - \$200 a month		<u>2,400</u>
Total Estimated Expenditures		<u>\$14,000</u>
Revenue:		
• Directory Wall Advertisements - 100 Ads @ \$100 per ad for 12 month rental		\$10,000
Estimated Net Operating Position		(\$4000)

In the initial six months and subsequent two full years of operation it is estimated that Canada Post will make a net contribution to the cost of operating the Burnside Park Information Centre of \$4000 for each of these three operating periods. HRM will be responsible for providing the Centre with a sufficient supply of the HRM Business Parks Directory plus maps of the Park. The Directory Wall ads are intended to supplement the exposure a company receives in the Directory. The minimal service fee will offer companies a 1.5" X 3" advertisement to promote their website or phone number under the appropriate Directory Wall heading—similar to what you might find in a shopping centre mall.

The Burnside Park Information Centre will also be referenced on revisions that will be made to the seven information maps that are located throughout the Park. Canada Post has also agreed to share 50 percent of the revisions to these maps to a maximum of \$10,000. The total estimated cost is \$20,000. The HRM share of the cost will be funded from the 2002-03 capital budget (Project CQ200257).

The basic terms of this partnership between Canada Post and HRM for the Burnside Park Information Centre would be as follows:

1. The basic purpose and objectives of the partnership are those set out in this report.
2. The term of the partnership would consist of an initial thirty (30) month ‘pilot project’ commencing October 1, 2002 during which there would be quarterly operational reviews by the two parties. Prior to the end of the thirty (30) month pilot project the parties will conduct individual reviews and a joint evaluation to determine the benefits of the Centre to the respective parties, the scope, range and quality of the services provided and the benefits to the Burnside Park.
3. Beyond the initial thirty (30) month pilot project term the partnership may be extended on a year to year basis by mutual consent of the parties. The Director, Real Property Services would be hereby authorized by Council, to approve these extensions on behalf of HRM.
4. The Centre is to be operated under the budgetary provisions set out in this report with Canada Post accepting responsibility for any “in-store” operating budget shortfall. Following the initial thirty (30) month pilot project the budgetary provisions for any subsequent extensions of the term of the partnership would be subject to approval as part of annual budgetary processes of Halifax Regional Municipality and Canada Post.
5. Procurement of materials and products would be done in accordance with policies of the respective party obtaining the materials and products.
6. HRM and Canada Post will prepare a joint media release announcing the partnership and both parties agree to participate in an official opening of the Centre at a time and in a manner that is agreeable to both parties.

7. The parties agree that the thirty (30) month pilot project will be used to examine the feasibility of establishing similar information centres in other business and industrial parks located within the Municipality.
8. The parties agree that the Centre is to operate as an information service and that the provision of any and all information is neither an explicit or implied endorsement of any of the companies located within the Burnside Park and their respective products and services.
9. With the exception of the basic financial terms of the partnership as set out in this report Council authorizes the Chief Administrative Officer to modify the terms of the partnership if the Chief Administrative Officer determines that the modifications would be in the best interest of the Municipality. Council is to be advised of any such modification within no more than thirty (30) days of the modification being agreed to by the parties.
10. Notwithstanding the best efforts of HRM and Canada Post, if either party, following completion of the first twelve (12) months of the pilot project, decides that the partnership is not providing the benefits that had been anticipated, the party may dissolve the partnership upon six months written notice to the other party; and at no obligation to either party.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Funding for the Municipality's obligations under the proposed partnership would be realized from the approved 2002-03 capital and operating budgets.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

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

ALTERNATIVES

There are no recommended alternatives to this proposed partnership agreement.

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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