

Halifax Regional Council
June 25, 2002

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: *Karen MacTavish*
Karen MacTavish, Director, Parks & Recreation Services

DATE: June 7, 2002

SUBJECT: Strategic and Sustainable Resource Management Update

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

After a presentation to the May 22, 2002, Program and Service Review Committee, staff received a request to provide a similar update to Regional Council.

BACKGROUND

At the May 22, 2002, Program and Service Review Committee meeting staff provided an overview on the strategic and sustainable resource management initiatives underway including a summary on the roll out of the Pesticide By-law and the related public education and awareness programs on sustainable alternatives. A 17 page 2001 Overview Report on the Pesticide By-law was presented to the Program and Service Review Committee. This report is now also available on-line through both the Naturally Green and Pesticide By-law web sites on our corporate Home Page.

Staff also provided updates on several other key resource management initiatives during the Program and Service Review Committee presentation.

DISCUSSION

Halifax Regional Municipality was experiencing some major park and environment related issues, ranging from public demands for pesticide use reduction, Brown Spruce Longhorn Beetle infestations to a number of other serious threats to our parks, forests and natural areas.

No specific business unit was taking the lead to address these serious concerns and each issue had substantial environmental and financial implications for HRM.

Therefore in the summer of 2000 and as directed by the Executive Management Team (EMT), Parks and Recreation Services was tasked with these corporate responsibilities. A business unit was established through some reorganization and within existing resources to focus on the sustainable management of our parks, forests and natural areas and to coordinate internal and external resources to strategically manage these issues.

Five major themes of responsibility were established:

- 1. Manage major threats to our parks, forests and natural areas**
i.e. BSLB infestation; protection and management protocols/ templates; public awareness; etc.
- 2. Corporate By-laws, Policy, etc.**
i.e. Pesticide By-law; Adm. Order #23; Corporate By-law Rationalization Project; parks and natural resource related legislation; etc.
- 3. Environmental Sustainability - External**
i.e. Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources/ Canadian Forest Service/ Canadian Food Inspection Agency/ Landscape Industry/ Academea, etc; topsoil availability and sustainability; parks, forests and natural areas sustainability; Regional Planning process; public awareness; etc.
- 4. Environmental Sustainability - Internal**
i.e. Sustainable in-house practices; internal education; sustainable maintenance research; Regional Planning process; etc.
- 5. Public Education and Awareness Programs on Sustainable Gardening and Landscape Maintenance**
i.e. Public Workshops, web sites, fact sheets, t.v. and radio ads, etc.

The two largest initiatives to date have been the roll out of the Pesticide By-law and the related public education and awareness programs and the management of the Brown Spruce Longhorn Beetle infestation.

The Pesticide By-law appears to be going well overall and is summarized in the 2001 Overview Report presented at Program and Service Review in May. As earlier indicated this detailed report is now available on-line as well.

Regarding the Brown Spruce Longhorn Beetle (BSLB) infestation a multi-agency task force lead by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and partnered with Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), the Canadian Forest Service (CFS), Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources

(NSDNR) and others has worked diligently at establishing a science based eradication, surveying and monitoring program which to date appears to have been quite successful. However, the efforts, particularly surveying and monitoring, will be ongoing over the next several years to help protect Canada's forests from this particular pest.

Staff has also been working closely with a number of industry, business, community and academic partners on some other key sustainable resource management initiatives which are summarized on the attached appendix.

Conclusion

These resource management initiatives will help provide valuable research information, standards and guidelines, enhanced partnerships and community opportunities towards the sustainable management and maintenance of our parks, forests and natural areas.

In Vision 20/20 and other similar public consultations, the use, protection and sustainability of our parks and other related natural resources for public use and enjoyment was a fundamental priority with residents and visitors. Partnering with business, community and other levels of government was seen as paramount as well.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Any related internal costs are incorporated into the approved operating budget.

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

List of Strategic and Sustainable Resource Management Initiatives

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: Stephen King, Manager-Senior Advisor, Parks & Natural Areas, 490-6188



Report Approved by: _____
Karen MacTavish, Director, Parks & Recreation Services, 490-4734

**Parks and Recreation Services
Strategic and Sustainable Resource Management Initiatives**

June 7, 2002

Examples include:

Urban Forest Threat Management Protocols/ Templates

- Collaborative partnership with the Canadian Forest Service, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, Fredericton and HRM
- To be released late this summer

Urban Forest Best Practices Guidebook

- Partnered with the University of Toronto, University of Guelph, Region of York, HRM and others
- To be released in the fall at the Canadian Urban Forest Symposium

Applied Science Sustainable Athletic Field Maintenance Research Trials

- Utilizing source separated compost top dressing on athletic fields as part of an overall sustainable maintenance regime
- Evaluating environmental and operational benefits and costs
- Partnered with Dalhousie University, FCM, NSRRB, HRM and others

Topsoil Availability/ Sustainability - Practices, Standards, Policies etc.

- Working partnership with Landscape Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Dalhousie University, HRM and others

Public Education and Awareness Programs on Sustainable Gardening and Landscape Maintenance

- Several hundreds of residents have now participated in the various workshops held over the past two years in the spring and fall
- Over 100 volunteer trainers from throughout HRM have received training and are assisting with community requests for information and workshops.
- Partnered with Regional Libraries, Landscape Nova Scotia, HRM and others

Sustainable Practices National Symposium - Department of National Defence - HRM - September 2002

The federal Department of National Defence (DND) has issued an environmental directive paralleling HRM's Pesticide By-law, that will ban the use of cosmetic pesticides on turf areas on all DND properties across Canada, effective March 31, 2003.

In conjunction with this directive, DND has selected HRM as the host area for a symposium this fall on sustainable landscape maintenance practices. HRM, industry and others will be assisting and showcasing a number of related operational and research initiatives in HRM.

Information Sharing Workshop with the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources (NSDNR)

This workshop was held in the spring with senior staff from both NSDNR and HRM with a focus on strategic and sustainable resource management issues and policies and areas of mutual interest and cooperation.