



Halifax Regional Council July 9, 2002

TO:

Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE:

June 25, 2002

SUBJECT:

New Area Rate for Kingswood Ratepayers Association

ORIGIN

Interim Area Rate Guidelines were adopted by Council in January 2000 to create a process to assist communities establish new area rates, ensure that all taxpayers have an opportunity to participate in setting a rate and ensure that rates are set only for valid municipal purposes and not for services already covered by the general rate.

The purpose of this report is to determine if the Interim Area Rate Guidelines have been satisfied thus far with regard to a proposed new area rate to develop parkland and other recreational amenities within the Kingswood, Kingswood West, Blue Mountain Estates, Queenswood and Kingswood South subdivisions which make up the Kingswood Ratepayers Association.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

A. A flat rate of \$50.00 be approved to be applied against the properties within the mapped area depicted in Appendix A effective with the 2002/03 fiscal year for the purpose of enabling the Kingswood Ratepayers Association to develop parkiand and other recreational amenities within the community of Kingswood, Kingswood West, Blue Mountain Estates, Queenswood and Kingswood South subdivisions which make up the Kingswood Ratepayers Association.

- B. In future years submission for new area rates, in addition to following the Interim Area Rate Guidelines, comply with the deadline for submissions as established in the budgeting guidelines. The deadline for 2002-03 area rate budgets was set as November 30, 2001.
- C. Tax Structure Committee in their review of the Interim Area Rate Guidelines include the setting of a deadline for submissions of new area rates.

BACKGROUND

The Kingswood Ratepayers Association was formed in April 1995 and registered under the Societies Act with the Registry of Joint Stock Companies. In the Kingswood Courier of May 2002 the Ratepayers Association informed the community of their continued attempts to be included into the HRM's capital budget and their desire to develop the 35 acres located off Kingswood Drive, behind George Samuel Drive and Nousha Court (Map provided by the Kingswood Ratepayers Association showing area parks attached as Appendix B). An estimate to develop the site, which would include a sports field and a hiking fitness trail around the perimeter, is approximately \$250,000 to \$300,000. The Kingswood Ratepayers Association are proposing to use the area rate revenue to either develop this site or for completion of the trail with the field(s) to be developed at a later date.

The deadline for area rate budgets was set as November 30, 2001. This is six (6) weeks more than available for Business Units. Area rate organizations, frequently composed of volunteers, had difficulty meeting this deadline. Clearly addressing the deadline needs to be communicated more broadly. Late submissions of area rated budgets leads to delays in finalizing the HRM budget and have been a source of difficulty in publishing the final budget book.

DISCUSSION

The current status of this proposed new area rate in terms of the Interim Area Rate Guidelines is as follows:

1. Area rates can only be used for the provision of services within the municipal mandate; services traditionally provided by the municipality.

Section 65 (ag) of the Municipal Government Act states that "Council may expend money required by the municipality for playgrounds, trails, bicycle paths, swimming pools, ice arenas and other recreational facilities." The Halifax Regional Municipality and it's predecessor municipal units have traditionally funded, either entirely or partially through partnerships, the construction and on-going operating costs of recreation facilities.

2. Area rates are not to be used to provide different levels of a municipal service within urban and suburban areas where said service is covered by the general tax rate.

The community is located in the suburban area of HRM. The area rate would provide for basic parkland and recreational amenities and would not provide a level of service in excess of that generally available in the suburban and urban core.

3. In order for a proposed new area rate to move to the process as outlined in #4 below, it must have the support of the area's Councillor(s).

The catchment area for the proposed area rate falls entirely within District 22. The Councillor for the District, Reg Rankin, conducted a vote at the Kingswood Ratepayers Association Annual General Meeting in June 2002 to determine if there was support from a majority of the community for the area rate. The results of the vote are indicated below. Having determined that sufficient support existed, he has requested staff prepare a report in compliance with Step 5 of the Interim Area Rate Guidelines for consideration at the next meeting of the Western Region Community Council.

4. Proposals for new area rates must be advertised publicly, clearly identifying affected areas, the purpose for the rate, rate information and the duration the rate is expected to be charged. A public meeting will be held and those attending the meeting will be informed of the rationale for the rate and consulted on its appropriateness.

A public meeting was held on June 5, 2002 vote on the proposed area rate. The date, time, location, and purpose of the meeting was advertised in the Association's newsletter of May 2002 (Appendix C) which is delivered to every household in the Kingswood, Kingswood West, Blue Mountain Estates, Queenswood and Kingswood South subdivisions. A notice of the meeting was also advertised on the Bulletin Board in the entry to the Happy Market, Kingswood. As well, a notice of the meeting along with a "Proxy" form was also distributed to each residence via Canada Post as well copies left at the Happy Market, Kingswood.

Ten (10%) percent of the residents attended the meeting with ninety-five (95%) percent of those in attendance in favour of the flat annual rate of \$50.00 per household. The details of the poll are as follows:

		Percentage of Total	
Property Owners Advised	1048		
Number in Attendance at Annual General Meeting	105	10%	
Votes in Favour	100	95% of Attendees	
Votes Against	5	5% of Attendees	

5. With the concurrence of the Councillor, the request is forwarded to the Community Council for review and a recommendation to Halifax Regional Council. Where a Community Council does not exist, the request will go directly to Halifax Regional Council.

At the June 24, 2002 meeting, the Marine Drive, Valley, and Canal Community Council approved forwarding to Halifax Regional Council the recommendation contained in this report.

- 6. Any proposed new area rates recommended by a Community Council (or, in the absence of a Community Council, the Councillor for the area) will be submitted to Halifax Regional Council through a staff report with a recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer. The staff report will identify the implications to the Municipality along with the results of any public meeting.
- 7. Halifax Regional Council is responsible for approving all area rates.

The purpose of this report submitted by the Chief Administrative Officer is to provide Council with the necessary information required to consider the recommendation forwarded from the Western Region Community Council for a new area rate. The results of the public meeting and poll were outlined previously in this report, and the implications to the Municipality are identified under the Budget Implications section which follows.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Because all funding provided by the Municipality is through area rates without transfers from the general rate, there are no implications to the Municipality's Operating Budget. There are currently 1,048 properties within the proposed catchment area which would generate \$52,400 in revenue from the new rate.

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.

ALTERNATIVES

Council may decide not to approve this new area rate, in which case the Kingswood Ratepayers Association would continue to engage in fund raising activities to generate the funds it requires.

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ATTACHMENTS

Map of Catchment Area for Proposed Area Rate Appendix A: Kingswood Ratepayers Association map of parklands Appendix B: Copy of excerpts from Kingswood Courier May 2002 Appendix C:

Notice of Kingswood Ratepayers Association Annual General Meeting Appendix D:

Notice of Kingswood Ratepayers Association Annual General Meeting & Proxy Form Appendix E:

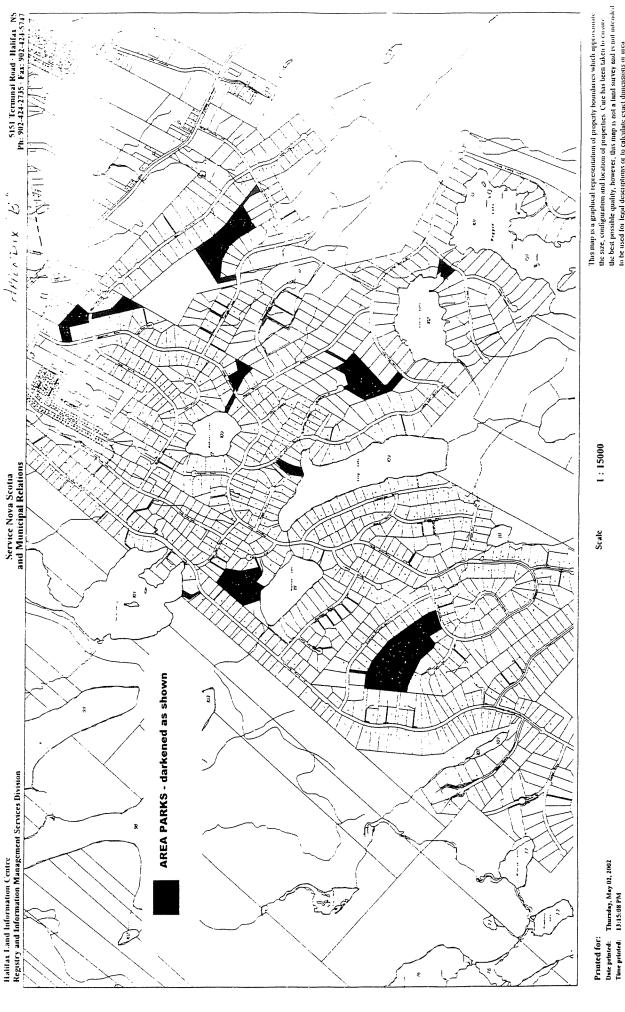
Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208. Report Prepared by: Veronica Roche, Administrative Support Assistance, Financial Planning 490-6498

Report Approved by:

Dale MacLennan, Director, Financial Services 490-630

Karen MacTavish, Director, Parks & Recreational Services 490-4734

GSA Boundary Ritcher Information points Districts Street Kingswood Ratepayers Association alifax Regional Municipal 2 Miles



This map is a graphical representation of property boundaries which approximate the size, configuration and location of properties. Care has been taken to custor. the best possible quality, however, this map is not a land survey and is not intended to be used for legal descriptions or to calculate exact dimensions or area. THIS IS NOT AN OFFICIAL RECORD.

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Kingswood Courier

Kingswood, Kingswood West, Blue Mountain Estates, Queenswood, Kingswood South, and area

May 2002, Issue 15

News and events of the Kingswood Ratepayers Association

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS by Scott Weatherby

In this past year, the activities of the Board have focussed on local events such as the community yard sale and barbecue, both of which were a tremendous success. There were no serious issues that arose (i.e., no tax debate) so the year was somewhat uneventful in that regard. We look forward to the upcoming year during which we will have various issues on our plate — a proposed area rate, overcrowding in our schools, etc.

REGULATIONS AND COMPLIANCE

No formal issues were brought forward to the Board of Directors during the past year.

Inside, info on:

- -> Schooling
- → Donating Wisely
- → Parks and Recreation
- → Kingswood Child Caregivers
- Gardening
- → Community Services
- → 2002 Community BBQ
- → Annual Yard Sale
- Annual General Meeting

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Marlene Fairhurst-Vaughan, along with other volunteers as named in her report, coordinated four successful events in 2001. More information on these events can be found in Marlene's report on pages 9–10.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

See the update on the schooling situation, written by Greg Golden, on page 3.

GOALS FOR 2002

The Board has set some achievable goals for the upcoming year:

- **1.)** To keep in regular contact with the community via the *Kingswood Courier.*
- 2.) To continue with our established community events (Yard Sale, BBQ, Christmas Carol Sing/Tree Decorating, Christmas House-Decorating Contest) and to consider new events.

3.) To bring forth a proposal at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for a walking-trail development in the subdivision.

With regard to the last goal, we offer the following discussion:

PARKS AND RECREATION – THE AREA-RATE DEBATE

We have a wonderful community that is closely in touch with nature, and an obvious extension is to create spaces in which residents can enjoy the outdoors. In the Kingswood area, we currently have four developed sites, three of which have playground equipment and two of which provide access to our lakes. (See pages 6–7.) We have had comments from the community that as children grow older, parents are continually driving them out of the subdivision to recreational areas. This puts a strain on family time.

There has not been any construction of park sites since the playground on Blue Mountain Drive. We have put forth proposals to the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM); however, it is unlikely that any grant moneys will be forthcoming in the near future.

At the upcoming AGM on June 5, the community will have a difficult choice to make. Two years ago the issue of an area rate was proposed in order to fund local development. This motion did not garner enough support to be passed on to the HRM. However, it will again be put forward to the community.

While Kingswood cannot realistically sustain a facility such as a gymnasium or hockey rink, there is interest in additional park development in the subdivision as evidenced from the residents' survey. In the survey, many homeowners expressed interest in having some form of recreational area in the community. The first priority indicated in the survey was a walking trail. To

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that end we are putting forth a proposal to develop a walking trail. (See pages 6-7.)

To have an area rate or not to have an area rate ... that is the question.

Arguments For:

- 1.) It will take too long to develop any site if we wait for funding by other means.
- 2.) We need a walking trail because the streets, especially Kingswood Drive, have become too busy on which to safely walk.
- 3.) An area rate will help the community seek matching funds from government departments.
- 4.) It will be the best \$50 you spend all year.

Arguments Against:

- 1.) An area rate is just a tax; taxes are already too high.
- 2.) Why pay for something if I never plan to use it?
- 3.) We don't need any extra community parks; we already have enough.

Frequently asked questions:

1.) How do I know the HRM will not take this money and use it on other projects?

Answer: The area-rate funds are placed in a special trust account that will be used only upon the request of the community.

2.) Do we not already pay into an area rate for Kingswood?

Answer: No.

- 3.) How is the Ratepayers Association funded?
- Answer: It is not funded; it is run by volunteers. The nominal funds used to annually operate the Association are raised through community events and newsletter advertising.
- **4.)** What will \$50 a year do for my community and me? Answer: This rate would raise approximately \$50,000 per year. Not only does this give the community a start towards funding development; it allows the community to use the "availability of funds" to source other funds by applying for matching grants from various levels of government. A subdivision is in a much better position to be awarded grant money if it is prepared to invest some of its own money into a project.

5.) Does the area rate last forever?

Answer: No, it can be voted in with a specific time period.

6.) What are the voting rules?

Answer: Each household is entitled to two votes. There need to be a total of 100 residents at the AGM to constitute a quorum. If there are less than 100 residents present, then proxies are allowed to be counted in order to reach the required number of votes. A passing vote will be based on the number of votes in attendance, not on the number of votes in the entire subdivision.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The Association has been fortunate to have the support of dedicated Board members who continue to volunteer their time to make our community a better place in which to live.

We as a Board put forth the area-rate proposal as a service to the community. There are individuals on the Board who support this, and there are those who do not. However, we as a body will remain impartial throughout this process. Our actions are completely guided by the community. Our goal is simple: Let's move the subdivision forward. We need to have a vision of where we want to be in five years ... in ten years. We encourage all concerned citizens to turn out at the meeting so that we can have a healthy discussion.

We have requested the presence of our councillor Reg Rankin and a representative of the HRM. Together with these officials, your Ratepayers Association Board will help the community make an informed decision.

Host A Party & Earn Free Books

Usborne has been delighting children with Award-winning non-fiction books for over 27 years!

Baby Board Books

Call me to find out how you and a few friends can turn a

Puzzle Adventures

Arts & Crafts

• French Books

fun-filled afternoon into

Science Experiments

FREE books for your kids!

History & Mythology

"Making Finding Out Fun!"

Tara MacDonald 832-6289

From the editor...

Your Ratepayers Association Board would like to publish more-frequent issues of this newsletter

because we feel this is the best way to communicate to all residents about community issues. The greatest need is for additional articles of interest. So if you have any information that you might like to pass along to us all or have any suggestions for what you might like to see in future newsletter issues, I would love to hear from you. Please contact me (Jane Bell) at 835-2859 (e-mail: jbell@netcom.ca). Many thanks to all who contributed to this issue!

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

by Dorothy Grant, former CBC consumer reporter

Raise the issue of abused and/or missing children and most of us immediately feel very concerned. In fact, when someone approaches us asking for contributions to a charitable organization that he or she claims is actively involved in reducing this terrible social problem, the usual reaction is to make a donation. The trouble is, many of these so-called "charitable organizations" are often fronts for unscrupulous entrepreneurs who are exploiting caring consumers' generosity. Don't fall for their clever tactics, which often are orchestrated at our front doors.

Unfortunately, many of these "door-to-door fundraisers" can produce a charitable tax number that they will want you to believe means their activities have been carefully reviewed by Revenue Canada. Without my going into an in-depth discussion of this process, you should know that having a charitable tax number does not necessarily guarantee credibility. In fact, many of the companies currently raising money for abused and/or missing children have never provided the Better Business Bureau with an audited annual report. This is a very troubling situation since legitimate charities have nothing to hide. They always have annual audits available for anyone to review should they wish to know exactly how their charitable donations are being spent.

So what's the bottom line here? The next time an unknown individual arrives at your door seeking a donation for an organization that is raising money for abused and/or missing children, think twice before handing over cash or a cheque. Better still, make a donation to a long-established, highly credible charity

that you know will use your hard-earned money for a worthy cause. After all, who wants to support any group that has only one agenda — to personally profit from their questionable fundraising activities!

2002 Community Family Barbecue

Sunday, September 15 (3-6 p.m.)

Watch for more details to follow closer to the event. If you wish information or have ideas for activities/sponsorship, call Marlene at 832-0668; if you wish to volunteer during the event, call Lynn at 835-9980; if you have adult silent auction donations, call Roseann at 835-6226; or if you have children's silent auction donations, call Cheryl at 835-0094.



PARKS AND RECREATION by Richard DeLong

Once again, parks and recreation facilities - or

rather an insufficient number of them within our community — are an issue. Your Ratepayers Association Board of Directors has been somewhat tied up when it comes to gathering funds for parks and recreation development. In the past, we have been able to seek development funds through both the municipal and provincial levels of government. In fact, all four existing park/playground areas have been for the most part funded by these government grants. Here is a bit of history:

As part of their development agreements, developers give parcels of land to the HRM to be used for subdivision parks and recreation. Though by doing this they have fulfilled their agreement obligation, sometimes the land they provide does not turn out to be suitable for the types of activities desired by the community. (Obviously, developers wish to keep the best parcels of land for division into sellable lots.) In any case, the HRM becomes the owner of the pieces of land that are

ed for parks and recreation use. It then seeks m the subdivision residents about how to with developing the land parcels. Our role, as a ity, is to push for what the residents want to place and to make every effort to get these sites for the best possible use by everyone. Within nmunity, there are some parcels of land ed for parks and recreation that are not very In some cases the piece of land is mostly developing it into a usable site has great is and would be very costly. Other sites assing hilly or rocky terrain are similarly difficult Most residents prefer usable space rather than green space" - not that green space is bad, but ike to see resources used for the benefit of all s of the community.

mmunity has several remaining undeveloped ne of which is a fairly large parcel of land near k end of Kingswood Drive at the crest of the hill. je, covering about 35 acres. This site is located iswood Drive and is in behind George Samuel nd Nousha Court. (See the map on pages 6-7.) of you may recall that at one time, prior to being ver to the HRM, it was proposed for use as a school site to be developed by the Armoyan Since this time, the focus has shifted to using the r a large community project - perhaps a sports ith a developed hiking/fitness trail around its ter. In fact, the site is large enough to allow for I plus a couple of fields and a parking area at the ection for about 20 vehicles. Unfortunately, full pment of this site would be costly. The last te was somewhere around \$250,000 to \$300,000! ve been seeking funds either for full development site or for completion of the trail, with the field(s) to reloped at a later date. The factor preventing the pment of this site (and of other parcels of land ated for parks and recreation use) is that we do ve the necessary money.

ng for parks and recreation is our biggest. We all want to have nice usable parks and ounds. However, the reality is that they are very sive and difficult to build. Over the past few years, ave been denied requests for inclusion into the

HRM's capital budget, but we keep asking – and will continue to do so.

Parks are a great community asset - gathering places in which to bring people together to be social and to foster community spirit. Parks provide safe areas off streets and out of harm's way for people to enjoy outdoor activities. We've had great response to our existing park facilities. Playground equipment has been for the most part well utilized, and parking areas at these locations have been of great benefit. Noise has not been an issue for residents that live close to these areas, and the upkeep of these parks by HRM staff has been fairly consistent (with a little help from volunteers for an occasional grass mowing). However, our parks to date have been focussed on younger children. It would be great if we could also provide facilities for our older youths - those who enjoy soccer, football, rugby, and field hockey - so they are not forced to travel a great distance in order to participate in various field activities.

With your input, the Ratepayers Association Board will continue to work on your behalf towards providing the community with the best possible and most usable parks and recreation facilities.

Annual Community Yard Sale June 15 (Rain Date: June 16)

Mark these dates on your calendar, keep your fingers crossed for good weather, decide what you might wish to sell, and get ready to cruise around the subdivision in search of treasures.



D. J. (Deb) Lutes Financial Consultant

Residence: 19 St. George Blvd. Hammonds Plains, Nova Scotia B4B 1K7 Bus: (902) 835-1290 Res/Fax: (902) 835-3513 Branch Office: Clyde River Nova Scotia BOW 1R0 Tel: (902) 637-3204 Fax: (902) 637-3703

Kingswood Ratepayers Association

DIRECTORS:

Richard DeLong

(39 Terradore Lane - 835-4838)

Marlene Fairhurst-Vaughan

(45 Kingswood Drive - 832-0668)

Alex MacDonald

(9 Lakeshore Drive - 835-4914)

Lynn MacKendrick

(1 Royal Oak Court - 835-9980)

Ray Oliver

(46 St. George Boulevard - 835-8814)

Scott Weatherby

(22 Morall Court - 832-1114)

NOTE: The Kingswood Ratepayers Association needs more directors. If you would like to get involved in the Board, please call any one of the directors listed above. Being a director does not require much time, and it will provide you with the satisfaction of knowing that you are working towards bettering your community.



KINGSWOOD RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, June 5, 2002 7:00 p.m. Hammonds Plains Fire Hall

Agenda items include:

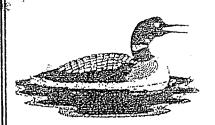
- * Presentation of directors' reports
- * Election of officers for vacant Board of Directors positions
- * Discussion about, and vote on, an area rate
- ★ Update on schooling issues

Watch your mailbox for a meeting reminder and proxy form. It is critical that we have at least 100 legal votes in attendance at this meeting in order to pass the actions of the Board during 2001 and to provide us with the ability to continue to conduct Association business in 2002. Please note that as a member of the Association, you are bound by the decisions made by other members as a result of votes carried out at the AGM. So if you wish to have as much say as possible about decisions being made that affect your community, it is in your best interest to be present at the AGM.

Please mark your calendar and plan to attend. We look forward to seeing you at the meeting!

APPENDIX "D"

KINGSWOOD RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Wednesday, June 5, 2002 7:00 p.m. Hammonds Plains Fire Hall

Agenda items include:

- → Presentation of directors' reports
- ➡ Election of officers for vacant Board of Directors positions
- ➡ Discussion about, and vote on, an area rate
- ⇒ Update on schooling issues

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KINGSWOOD RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING PROXY FORM

		BEING A MEM	IBER OF THE KI	NGSWOOD RAT	EPAYERS
ASSOCIATION, HI					
ATTEND, ACT, A	ND VOTE FOR	ME AND ON M	Y BEHALF AT	THE ANNUAL	GENERAL
MEETING OF THE	ASSOCIATION	TO BE HELD O	N THE 5TH DA	Y OF JUNE, 200	2, AT THE
HOUR OF 7:00 P.	W. AT THE HAM	MONDS PLAINS	FIRE HALL, HA	MMONDS PLAI	NS, NOVA
SCOTIA, AND A	NY ADJOURNI	MENT THEREOF	F. I HEREBY	REVOKE ANY	FORMER
INSTRUMENTS A	PPOINTING A P	ROXY FOR ME	AT THE MEETIN	IG MENTIONED	ABOVE.
D/ ED THIS	DAY OF	,	2002		
X					
(sig	nature)				
(PLEASE PRINT)	Name:				
	Address:				
	Phone:				

DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETION:

- 1. Clearly print the name of the person to whom you are giving your proxy. Please note that this person must be a member of the Association.
- Date and sign the proxy form above, where indicated, and clearly print your name, address, and phone number in the spaces provided. (Only proxy forms with original signatures will be accepted. No faxed or photocopied signatures.)
- Your proxy must present this completed form to the registration desk at the Annual General Meeting.
- 4. Proxy votes will only be recorded where they could affect the outcome of a vote; therefore, proxy votes may not necessarily be cast.

Board of Directors — Kingswood Ratepayers Association

PPENDIX "E

KINGSWOOD RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Wednesday, June 5, 2002 7:00 p.m. Hammonds Plains Fire Hall

Agenda items include:

- ⇒ Presentation of directors' reports
- ⇒ Election of officers for vacant Board of Directors positions
- ⇒ Discussion about, and vote on, an area rate
- Update on schooling issues

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PROXY FORM ON REVERSE

Kingswood Ratepayers Association

DIRECTORS:

Richard DeLong

(39 Terradore Lane - 835-4838)

Marlene Fairhurst-Vaughan

(45 Kingswood Drive – 832-0668)

Alex MacDonald

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