

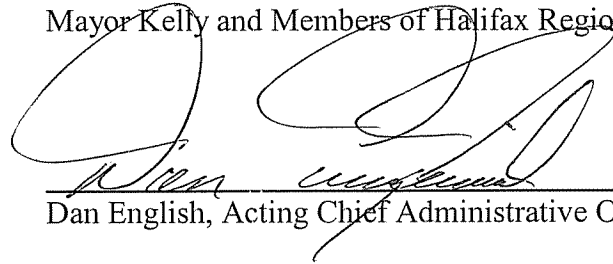
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Halifax Regional Council
November 26, 2002

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan English", written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dan English, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: November 26, 2002

SUBJECT: **Public Consultations: *Commitment to Community 2003*,
A Proposed New Tax Structure for HRM**

ORIGIN

During the July 16, 2002 Committee of the Whole session the Tax Structure Committee presented a proposal for the funding of public safety services within HRM. The model was accepted by Council in principle to obtain public feedback and the Tax Structure Committee was instructed to present the results of these meetings.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that :

1. this report be tabled to allow members of Council to digest the information and give the public an opportunity to review the report and provide further feedback to Councillors and staff.
2. The additional feedback as well as the Tax Structure Committee recommendations will be presented at Committee of the Whole December 10, 2002
3. the CAO develop strategies to allow all of HRM's citizens an opportunity to participate in the decision making process

BACKGROUND

In May 2000, Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Council approved the creation of a sub-committee of Council (with staff representation) to review the current tax structure. On May 14th 2002, the Tax Structure Committee presented an Information Report to Committee of the Whole outlining details of proposed changes to the existing HRM Tax Structure. At that point, Staff were directed to provide financial impact information prior to beginning public consultations. On July 16th 2002, the Tax Structure Committee returned to Council and recommended a revised tax structure for purposes of public consultations. The HRM Council approved a public consultation schedule that included 14 meetings throughout HRM from September 16th to October 24th.

DISCUSSION

The level of public participation in this process was impressive in terms of the historical attendance at public consultations; however, there is concern that this does not capture the views of all citizens of HRM.

One other, unexpected outcome arose from the process followed. It was too compelling to ignore during these meetings that HRM staff need to build stronger bridges of understanding with our citizens. These sessions revealed not only that communications between HRM and its citizens are insufficient, but that citizens have a great desire to be involved in HRM's decisions.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

n/a

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

n/a

ALTERNATIVES

1. HRM Council could make an immediate decision on the proposed Tax Structure.
2. HRM Council could extend the date for additional public input.

ATTACHMENTS

Public Consultation Report: *Commitment to Community 2003*, A Proposed New Tax Structure for HRM

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: Bruce Fisher, Manager of Financial Planning

Report Approved by:



Dale MacLennan, Director of Financial Services