



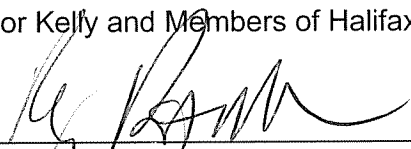
P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

9.1.1

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
February 4, 2003

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

FROM:


Reg Rankin, Chair
Western Region Community Council

DATE: January 28, 2003

SUBJECT: Westwood Hills Residents Association - Area Rate

ORIGIN:

Western Region Community Council meeting held on January 28, 2003.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that Regional Council approve a flat rate of \$50.00 to be applied against the properties within the mapped area depicted in Appendix A of the Staff Report dated December 9, 2002 effective with the 2003/04 fiscal year for the purpose of enabling the Westwood Hills Residents Association to develop parkland and other recreational amenities within the Westwood Hills Subdivision.

ATTACHMENT:

Staff Report dated December 9, 2002

Western Region Community Council
January 27, 2003

TO: Chairman and Members of Western Regional Community Council

SUBMITTED BY:



Dale MacLennan, Director, Financial Services

DATE: December 9, 2002

SUBJECT: **Westwood Hills Residents 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 Westwood Hills Subdivision.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

A flat rate of \$50 be approved to be applied against the properties within the mapped area depicted in Appendix A effective with the 2003/2004 fiscal year for the purpose of enabling the Westwood Hills Residents Association to develop parkland and other recreational amenities within the Westwood Hills Subdivision.

BACKGROUND

The Westwood Hills Residents Association was formed in August 2002 and registered under the Societies Act with the Registry of Joint Stock Companies. The Association is proposing to use the area rate revenue to develop parkland and a trails system and for the maintenance of the current playgrounds and toboggan hill and other projects as may arise which will benefit all residents of the subdivision.

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 its predecessor municipal units have traditionally funded, either entirely or partially through partnerships, the construction and ongoing 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 to which the area rate would be applied is entirely outside the urban and suburban areas of HRM. Further, the Association is not duplicating any services currently provided directly by the Municipality to the community.

- 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 of all community households in November 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 23, 2002 to discuss the proposed area rate. The date, time, location, and purpose of the meeting were advertised on the bulletin board at the entrance to the subdivision and the notice (Appendix C) and agenda (Appendix C-1) was delivered to every property owner of the subdivision.

In response to the interest shown at that meeting, Councillor Rankin prepared a ballot. The ballot (Appendix E) along with a letter from the Association's President, Gerry Seaward, dated October 31, 2002 (Appendix B) providing an explanation of the purpose of the new area rate was delivered to each property owner along with a stamped envelope for convenience of returning the ballot.

In addition, the proposed area rate was again discussed at the Westwood Hills General Meeting held on November 17, 2000. Notice (Appendix D) of the meeting was delivered to each property owner of the Westwood Hills subdivision. This meeting provided further discussion of the rate and allowed for additional input by residents before casting their ballots.

The results of the voting process are as follows:

| | | Percentage of Total |
|-------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|
| Ballots Mailed | 271 | |
| Ballots Returned | 143 | 53% of Property Owners |
| Votes in Favour | 109 | 76% |
| Votes Against | 27 | 19% |
| Spoiled Ballots | 7 | 5% |

There were two additional ballots received after the November 22, 2002 deadline. Both ballots were cast in favour of the area rate.

- 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.***

The purpose of this report submitted by the Director, Financial Services is to provide the Western Region Community Council with the necessary information required to consider making a recommendation to Halifax Regional Council for the new area rate. The results of the public meeting and vote were outlined previously in this report, and the implications to the Municipality are identified under the Budget Implications section which follows.

- 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.*

Completion of steps 6 and 7 are contingent of the Western Regional Community Council approving the Recommendation contained in this report.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications. The Municipality is simply collecting this amount from each property owner in the in the subdivision on behalf of the Westwood Hills Residents Association. There are currently 271 properties within the proposed catchment area which would generate \$13,550.00 in revenue from the new area 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

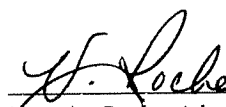
Western Region Community Council may decide not to make a recommendation to Regional Council for this new area rate, in which case the Westwood Hills Residents Association would continue to engage in fund raising activities to generate the funds it requires.

ATTACHMENTS

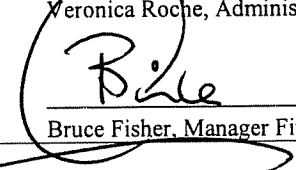
- Appendix A Map of Catchment Area for Proposed Area Rate
- Appendix B Letter from Westwood Hills Residents Association Chair dated October 31, 2002
- Appendix C Notice of Westwood Hills Annual General Meeting - June 23, 2002
- Appendix C-1 Agenda - Westwood Hills Annual General Meeting - June 23, 2002
- Appendix D Notice of Westwood Hills General Meeting - November 17, 2002
- Appendix E: Ballot

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.

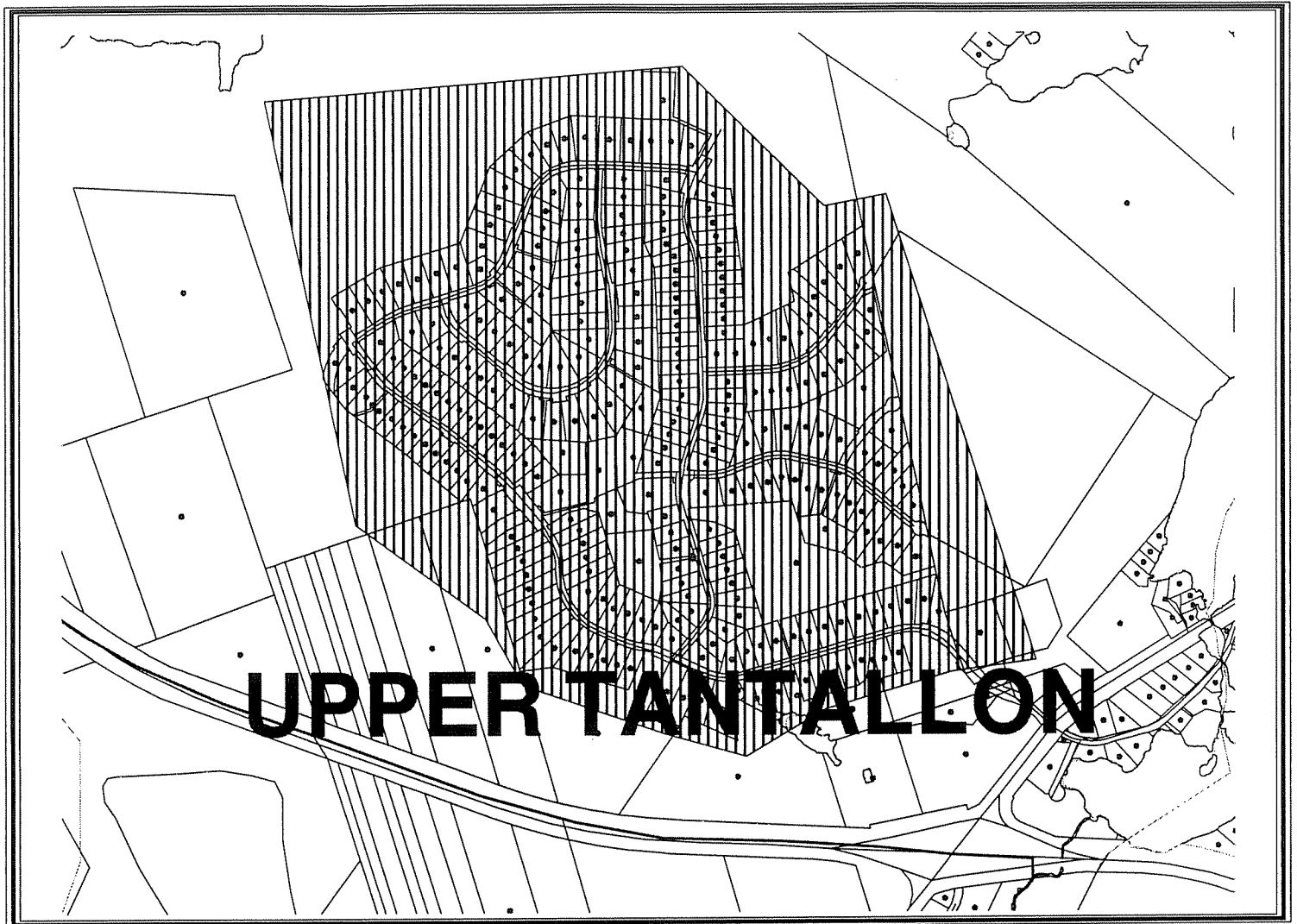
Report Prepared by:


Veronica Roche, Administrative Support Assistance, Financial Planning 490-6498






Report Approved by:


Bruce Fisher, Manager Financial Planning 490-4493

Halifax Regional Municipality



APPENDIX A WESTWOOD HILLS SUBDIVISION

-  Westwood hills.shp
-  GSA Boundary
-  Ritcher Information points
-  Districts
-  Street

14-4 Westwood Boulevard, Suite 162
Upper Tantallon, Nova Scotia
B3Z 1H3

October 31, 2002

Dear Neighbour:

We are writing this letter to ask for your support of the Westwood Hills Residents' Association by voting **yes** to the \$50.00; per annum, area rate being proposed for Westwood Hills. The Westwood Hills Residents' Association is a fully registered non-profit society comprised of volunteers dedicated to representing the interests of the residents, and enhancing the quality of life within Westwood Hills through neighbourhood improvement programs, and recreational development in our community.

As was agreed upon at the 1st Annual General Meeting, the rate being proposed is a flat rate amount of \$50.00 per year (\$4.17 per month), and is applied to our property bills. Please remember, that unlike your property taxes, this money is **not a tax** and stays within our community. We truly believe that the area rate will strengthen our sense of community, and increase our property values.

The area rate being requested (approximately \$13,450.00 per year total) is not enough to cover the full cost of one playground (approximately \$50,000.00). The money will be used to apply to government and corporate funding programs which often match the community's contribution. This rate cannot be increased without public consultation, and every resident will have equal opportunity to have input into the proposed projects, and enjoy the benefits created through the community's efforts.

We would also like to take this opportunity to update you on our accomplishments, since the 1st Annual General Meeting held in June, 2002, and briefly outline some of the future plans:

- Received \$1,500.00, in funding from Councillor Rankin, to be used toward development of parkland.
- Obtained Officer's & Director's Non-Profit Liability Insurance
- Received 1000 native species trees.
- Successfully lobbied ASC to undertake improvements to the entrance.
- Created a proposed green space plan for the development of parks and recreation areas.
- Established fund raising and recreation sub-committees.
- Developed plan for donation of community mail-box bulletin boards, and have secured the donation of one (1) sign to date.
- Sent a letter to ASC outlining concerns raised by residents at the 1st Annual General Meeting.

WESTWOOD HILLS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING RESCHEDULED

Please be advised that the Westwood Hills Homeowners AGM has been rescheduled till Sunday, June 23, 2002 7:00 P.M. at St. Margaret's Bay Arena in the multi purpose room due to the emergency meeting scheduled for **THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 2002 7:30 P.M. AT THE RIDGECLIFFE SCHOOL, BEECHVILLE SURROUNDING THE CLOSURE OF SIR JOHN A. HIGH SCHOOL**

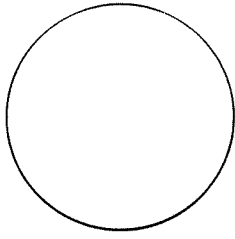
Meet your Interim Board of Directors

Vote on the proposed \$100.00 tax increase in order to develop our 30 acre park plus other projects.

Consider becoming a member of the Board of Directors

Come and tell us what you think. This is your chance. This is your money. This is your sub-division.

| | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Guest speakers: | Atlantic Shopping Centre: | Mrs Virginia Bonn |
| | Councilor | Reg Rankin |
| | MLA | Bill Estabrook |



Westwood Hills AGM

23 June 1900hrs

St Margaret's Bay Arena

Agenda

| | | |
|----|--|-------------|
| 1 | Call to order | Chairperson |
| 2 | Intro, welcome and history of association to date | Chairperson |
| 3 | Goals of the Association | Chairperson |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop 30 acre park • Front entrance • Property enhancement (bulk purchase and preferred pricing from selected vendors) • Winslow/Hemlock Green area • Fix Toboggan Hill of Hemlock • Elimination of the use of truck access road on Westwood Blvd (rd reserve) • Development of sub-committees | |
| 4 | Tactics: rate payer fee, fundraising, etc. | Chairperson |
| 5 | Election of committee | Chair |
| 6 | Guests speakers: ASC, MLA, HRM | Guests |
| 7 | Question Period | General |
| 8 | Vote for Organization | General |
| 9 | New Business: | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate Payer Agreement • Sub-Committees • Others | |
| 10 | Adjournment | Chairperson |

WESTWOOD HILLS GENERAL MEETING

For the Homeowners of Westwood Hills, your attendance is requested at the Westwood Hills Homeowners Meeting to discuss the proposed area rate for Westwood Hills.

Sunday, November 17, 2002 7:00 PM at St Margaret's Bay Arena in the multi purpose room.

Consider becoming a member of the Board of Directors

Come and tell us what you think. This is your chance. This is your money. This is your sub-division.



**Councillors' Office
Councillor Reg Rankin, District 22**

DEADLINE FOR RETURN: NOVEMBER 22, 2002

Dear Residents:

In response to the interest shown at the Westwood Hills Ratepayers Association meeting held on June 23, 2002, I am asking you to complete the following ballot and return it to the Councillors Office at the earliest possible date. The ballot results will be used to determine if an area rate, in the amount of a flat fee of \$50.00 per annum, will be applied to the tax billings of all residents in the Westwood Hills Subdivision.

- ☐ **YES**, I am in favour of paying a \$50.00 flat rate per annum in support of the Westwood Hills Ratepayers Association for the purpose of recreational development.
- ☐ **NO**, I am not in favour of paying a \$50.00 flat rate per annum in support of the Westwood Hills Ratepayers Association for the purpose of recreational development.

Date

Signature

Property Address (Assessment Number if available)

Please return to the Councillors Office, PO Box 1749, Halifax, NS B3J 3A5 or FAX 490-4122. Ballots will be counted on November 25th, 2002 and residents will be informed of the results through a newsletter from the Westwood Hills Ratepayers Association.

Reg Rankin
Councillor, District 22
Hammonds Plains - Timberlea

PLEASE SUBMIT ONLY ONE BALLOT PER PROPERTY.