

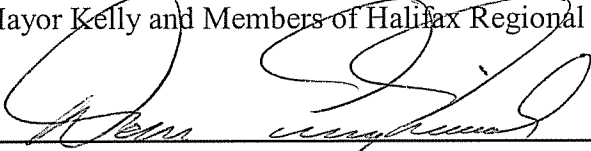
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Halifax Regional Council
March 18, 2003

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
Dan English, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: February 21, 2003

SUBJECT: National Historic Site Designation, Starr Manufacturing Lands

ORIGIN

Harbour East Community Council at its February 6, 2003, meeting requested that staff prepare a report for Regional Council, in response to a presentation by the Dartmouth Heritage Foundation. The Foundation is requesting that HRM make application to the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board to designate the Starr Manufacturing lands as a National Historic Site.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Regional Council:

- **Support the position of the Dartmouth Heritage Foundation, and authorize staff to commission a background report to document the history of the Starr site;**
- **Authorize staff to commence, upon completion of the background report, the nomination process to designate the Starr lands as a National Historic Site; and**
- **Authorize staff to prepare, in partnership with the Shubenacadie Canal Commission, a joint management plan for other portions of the Shubenacadie Canal system, including the identification of other sites where it may be appropriate to seek National Historic Site status.**

BACKGROUND

Acquisition by HRM:

The Starr Manufacturing site was acquired by HRM in 1996. Two adjacent smaller parcels, originally part of the canal and Starr lands, were acquired in 1997. The purpose of the acquisitions had two primary reasons; first to provide land for a vital trail linkage between the harbour and the Trans Canada Trail at Sullivan's Pond; and secondly to provide HRM with the opportunity to promote and enhance the site as a significant heritage site.

The Starr site is currently under purchase and sale agreement with Provident Development, following an RFP process undertaken in 2001. Staff are waiting for a revised development concept from Provident.

History:

The Starr site is significant in several respects:

- the site was part of the traditional aboriginal route between the harbour, the inland lakes and the Minas Basin,
- the site was part of the Shubenacadie Canal system; initially 3 locks on the site, later replaced by the water powered marine railway or inclined plane)
- the site was part of a Water Powered Industrial Complex (first hardware, then skates, then gates)

The Starr plant closed in 1996. The building was badly damaged by fire in 1998, and was demolished in 2000.

The Dartmouth Heritage Foundation, represented by former Dartmouth Mayors Roland Thornhill and John Savage, gave a presentation to Harbour East Community Council on February 6, 2003. The Foundation was seeking support from community council, prior to making a submission to Regional Council, to begin the process to register the site as a National Historic Site. Community Council supported this initiative and requested that a staff report be prepared for Regional Council on the issue.

DISCUSSION

National Historic Site (NHS) Designation Process:

There is no doubt that the Starr site is of significant historical, social and economic importance to the region. As such, it is appropriate that Council seek to have this importance recognized nationally. The National Historic Sites and Monuments Board, under the federal Heritage Canada agency, is the body which determines if a site is of national significance. This determination is made subsequent to an application by the property owner, with each case being evaluated against

established criteria in various categories. Included in the process is a need to establish the historical significance. Typically this is addressed in a research report and submission paper. The Municipality has a system in place to produce these reports.

The Board has several classifications under which a significant property can be placed. The municipality plans to take a strategic approach and seek an existing NHS designation for “water-powered” industry that has yet to be applied to a specific site in Canada. This should considerably shorten the process. This means that only those elements of the Shubenacadie Canal that relate to the water powered industry on the Starr Site would be designated by this strategic approach. These would include the underground turbine chamber, with its head race water supply and tail race discharge, and the inclined marine railway.

Impact on Development Potential:

A NHS designation by itself presents no obstacle to HRM in dealing with the Starr site as it sees fit. The designation by itself is simply commemorative, and places no encumbrances on the property. The development potential would not be diminished and HRM can still sell portions of the site as may be deemed appropriate by Regional Council.

Timing:

It will take perhaps three months to compile the appropriate level of information for the application. During this preparation period, it is expected that final decisions will be made regarding the Provident Development proposal. A request for a NHS designation starts a process that can take up to two years. The National Historic Sites and Monuments Board would not consider the application before the fall of this year at the soonest, as they meet only twice per year.

Other Canal Features:

The Starr site stands alone as a significant site, given the long and varied uses and achievements associated with it. However, the site is only one portion of the much larger Shubenacadie Canal system, much of which is owned by HRM or the Province. There is a need to ensure that heritage planning proceeds on a larger scale, as the importance of the whole canal must be recognized, as an aboriginal and European transportation route, as a cultural feature, and as a recreation corridor. Staff are therefore recommending that a Cultural Resource Management Plan be developed for publicly owned sites in this historic corridor. This would be done in partnership with the Shubenacadie Canal Commission and the NS Department of Natural Resources.

Conclusion:

Staff strongly support moving ahead with an application to designate the Starr lands as a National Historic Site. Consideration should also be given to preparing a joint management plan, in

partnership with the Shubenacadie Canal Commission, for other portions of the canal system within HRM.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Preparing an application to the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board for National Historic Site designation requires significant research and report preparation. This may cost as much as \$5000. Funds are not available from the 2002-2003 Tourism, Culture and Heritage budget. However, the 2003-2004 proposed budget envelope for the department includes funds for research for this, and other heritage projects. In addition, the Canal Commission may have funds which it wishes to allocate to support the initiative.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

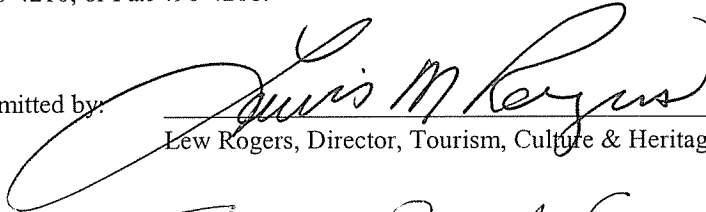
This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

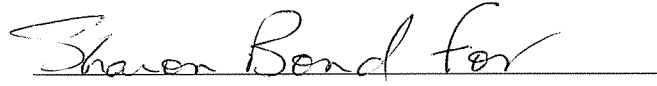
ALTERNATIVES


- (1) It is recommended that Regional Council:
 - Support the position of the Dartmouth Heritage Foundation, and authorize staff to commission a background report to document the history of the Starr site;
 - Authorize staff to commence, upon completion of the background report, the nomination process to designate the Starr lands as a National Historic Site; and
 - Authorize staff to prepare, in partnership with the Shubenacadie Canal Commission, a joint management plan for other portions of the Shubenacadie Canal system, including the identification of other sites where it may be appropriate to seek National Historic Site status.
- (2) Regional Council could choose not to proceed with these recommendations. This is not recommended, as it is in the interest of all parties to proceed to designate the Starr site, while still seeking an acceptable development solution for portions of the site. The remainder of the canal system, which includes both municipal and provincially owned lands, will benefit from the development of a management framework to enhance opportunities for recreational and historical interpretation.

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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