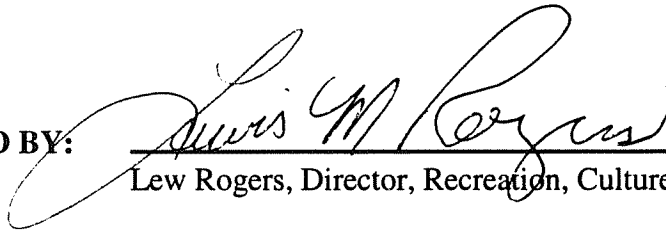


Halifax Regional Council
April 1, 2003

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:



Lewis Rogers, Director, Recreation, Culture & Heritage

DATE: March 20, 2003

SUBJECT: Deadman's Island

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

The National Cemetery Administration of the US Department of Veterans Affairs is prepared to provide a Group Memorial Monument to be placed on Deadman's Island if the municipality agrees. The purpose of this report is to provide background information to Council on this offer.

BACKGROUND

Following the acquisition of Deadman's Island by the municipality in 1999, a series of initiatives were undertaken by individuals and organizations in the United States with an interest in commemorating the American Prisoners of War buried on Deadman's Island.

In the United States, efforts lead by the Society of the War of 1812, focused on securing a Group Memorial Monument to commemorate the 195 prisoners of war who died in Melville Island prison and were buried on Deadman's Island. The Society has secured the support of the American Legion, the US Department of Veterans Affairs and the US Department of State. The Canadian Legion also supports the proposal.

DISCUSSION

Although the US Department of Veterans Affairs indicated that it would provide a Group Memorial Marker by letter of February 28, 2000, two issues were outstanding: public access to Deadman's Island and critical records regarding verification of veteran's service.

The public access issue has been addressed by the municipality through the Capital Budget process. In 2002 a trail was built through the public lands acquired by HRM to provide year round public access to Deadman's Island. This trail has been sensitively integrated into the treed ravine that runs from Pine Haven Drive to the North West Arm. Additional funds are budgeted for 2003/04 to provide public amenities, such as benches and interpretive panels, that will complete the trail.

The issue of providing critical records to corroborate veteran's service required extensive research of records held in Canada and Great Britain. Research by members of the Deadman's Island Committee, including that of Royal Navy logs held at London, has now been completed to the extent that a definitive list of the 195 prisoners can be forwarded to the US Department of Veterans Affairs. At this time, staff have prepared a letter of transmittal for signature by the Mayor (see Attachment #1) to inform the US Department of Veterans Affairs that the issues outstanding in February 2000 have been resolved.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There is no cost to the municipality for the Group Memorial Monument. It would be provided by the US Department of Veterans Affairs. There will be a modest cost for a base for the monument. But this cannot be estimated until the monument has been designed. When this cost is known, it will be included in the 2004/05 Capital Budget and funded through the Culture and Heritage Reserve.

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


There are no alternatives.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment # 1: Letter to Lawrence De Meo, Jr. Director, Memorial Program Service

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:


Dan Norris, Manager, Culture & Heritage

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Lawrence J. DeMeo, Jr.
Director
Memorial Programs Service
National Cemetery Administration
Department of Veterans Affairs
P.O. Box 34760
Washington, DC 20043-4760

DRAFT

February 20, 2003

Dear Mr. DeMeo,

I understand that several organizations, including the American Legion and the Society for the War of 1812, have proposed that there be a memorial to honour the memory of American seamen, soldiers and merchantmen who died while prisoners of war in Halifax during the War of 1812 and were buried in unmarked graves on Deadman's Island.

It is my understanding also that the National Cemetery Administration is prepared to provide a Group Memorial Monument to be placed on Deadman's Island provided that the owner of the property, the Halifax Regional Municipality, agrees.

I can confirm at this time that the Municipality will be pleased to cooperate in such an undertaking.

Members of the municipal Council have shown a keen interest in Deadman's Island since they first learned that American servicemen had been buried there during the War of 1812. They did not hesitate to vote unanimously to purchase the Island when it was threatened by commercial development. They did so in the expectation that in due course it would become an international memorial site.

We did not contact you until now because we discovered that there was a problem of public access across private property. That problem has now been solved. We have constructed a pedestrian pathway over public land through an old-growth ravine that connects with the Island. The work of landscaping on the Island itself will be completed this summer so that the site will be ready for placement of monuments any time after August 1st. I should add that staff responsible have been given strict instructions that there be minimal disturbance of the surface as this work proceeds and that the Island remain in its natural state. We appreciate that for many Americans this is sacred ground and we intend to treat it as such.

DRAFT

You will find enclosed several items of information including: (1) reports which provide the historical context and evidence for burials on Deadman's Island; (2) copies of pages from the prison registry on Melville Island listing the names of 195 Americans who died in prison together with a memorandum describing the authenticity of this list; (3) photographs indicating the most appropriate site for a Group Memorial Monument and; (4) a resolution regarding a memorial on Deadman's Island adopted by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in October, 2000.

We look forward to cooperating with you in this project. It will not only honour those who died in the service of their country, but will also serve to remind us that the War of 1812 was followed by two centuries of peace between the United States and Canada.

Yours truly,

Peter Kelly
Mayor

cc. Harrison Scott Baker II, * SOCIETY OF THE WAR OF 1812

American Consul **

Canadian Legion **

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* *

STAFF TO PROVIDE
ADDRESSES.