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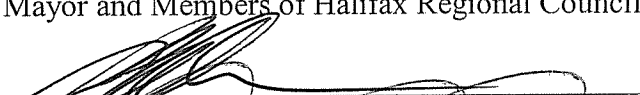
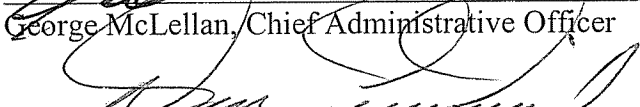


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Halifax Regional Council  
October 7, 2003

TO: Mayor and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

  
George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer  
  
Dan English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: September 17, 2003

SUBJECT: **Heritage Incentives Program: Proposed Programs**

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**ORIGIN:**

- In March 2003 staff proposed An Action Plan for Heritage Incentives. Council endorsed the development of the plan at their March 4, 2003 meeting and advised staff to bring forward policies and programs in consultation with the Heritage Advisory Committee;
- Staff consultation with the Heritage Advisory Committee has been positive and productive. At the HAC meeting of September 4, 2003 the committee recommended approval of a staff report dated August 27, 2003.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council review and approve the:

- **Heritage Grant Review Process,**
- **Residential Heritage Incentive Program,**
- **Commercial Facade Improvement Program.**

This is in keeping with the proposals by staff, endorsement by Regional Council on March 4, 2003 and consultation with the Heritage Advisory Committee and the recommendation of the Committee on September 4, 2003; these initiatives are described in this report and illustrated in Attachments A, B and C.

### **BACKGROUND:**

In September 2002 HRM launched a Residential Heritage Incentives Program. This program offered matching grants to municipal heritage property owners. The purpose of these grants is to offset the higher than normal costs incurred by heritage property owners to meet municipal heritage property regulations.

Building on the experience gained through the program and through observation of Canadian best practices, staff brought forward An Action Plan for Heritage Incentives in March 2003. Staff met with the Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) on a number of occasions from March 2003 to September 2003. This consultation included discussions with heritage developers and the Downtown Halifax Business Commission.

In September 2003 the HAC passed a motion recommending the August 27<sup>th</sup> staff report to Regional Council for review and approval.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Staff consultation with the HAC was thorough and comprehensive. It included a review of:

- the strengths and weaknesses of the Residential Heritage Incentives Program;
- the strengths and weaknesses of the Proposed Commercial Heritage Incentives Program;
- the timing and staff resourcing of Heritage Incentives Program;
- proposals that should be forwarded to Council at this time.

Staff met with potential partners as well during the review by the HAC, including representatives of the Downtown Business Commission and the Executive of the Heritage Trust. The staff report of August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2003 includes nine recommendations. The purpose of this report is to present the recommendations in point form for Regional Council's consideration.

#### **A. Relationship between Incentives and HAC:**

The HAC asked for a review of the relationship between the Heritage Incentive Program and the Committee to provide more opportunity to link guidance by the committee to actions that would enhance heritage alterations. This was agreed to by staff and five recommendations were drafted to enhance the relationship. These are to:

- Revise the Heritage Incentive Review Process (see Attachment A)
- Promote excellence through education, interpretation and presentations
- Promote participation by business and community organizations
- Seek excellence awards, provided by organizations like Heritage Canada
- Enhance communication with clients through publications designed to provide owners with additional guidance (such as sketches indicating appropriate and inappropriate actions) for presentation to the HAC and Regional Council.

**B. Proposed Amendments to the Residential Heritage Incentives Program**

The Residential Heritage Incentives Program has been operational for almost one year. The HAC wished to address issues raised by owners and Councillors. Staff agreed to propose three amendments (see Attachment B).

- to amend the eligibility criteria to include properties whose owner resides off site
- to amend the eligibility criteria to allow up to 8 residential units
- to amend the criteria to prioritize traditional materials, designs and skills

**C. Proposed Program to Assist Owners of Commercial Heritage Properties**

The HAC discussed two proposals related to commercial heritage properties. These proposals will bring heritage incentives in line with Canadian "best practice". This approach has the potential to create new, business based partnerships that could change the public perception of heritage and showcase excellence in heritage conservation. Staff agreed to propose one new heritage incentive program at this time (see Attachment C). Staff also propose to Council that a feasibility study, led RTC and assisted by Finance, to explore the costs and benefits of implementing a Commercial Property Tax Incentive Program.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:**

The Residential Heritage Incentives Program is funded by an existing budget of \$50,000 in the Culture & Heritage Budget. In 2003- 2004, and to address initial demand for the residential program Council approved \$50,000 from the Heritage Reserve. Council approved \$100,000 for new heritage incentives in the 2003-2004 Recreation, Tourism and Culture Operating Budget. This will be used to fund the Commercial Heritage Property Incentives Program.

A report that concludes the review of the Action Plan for Heritage Incentives proposed by staff will also be brought forward to address Tax Incentives, Non-Profit Incentives, Public Works Initiatives and the proposal for a Community Based Heritage Fund.

**REGIONAL PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

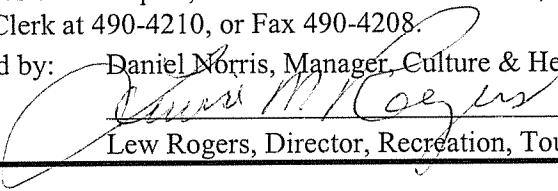
There are no regional planning implications.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

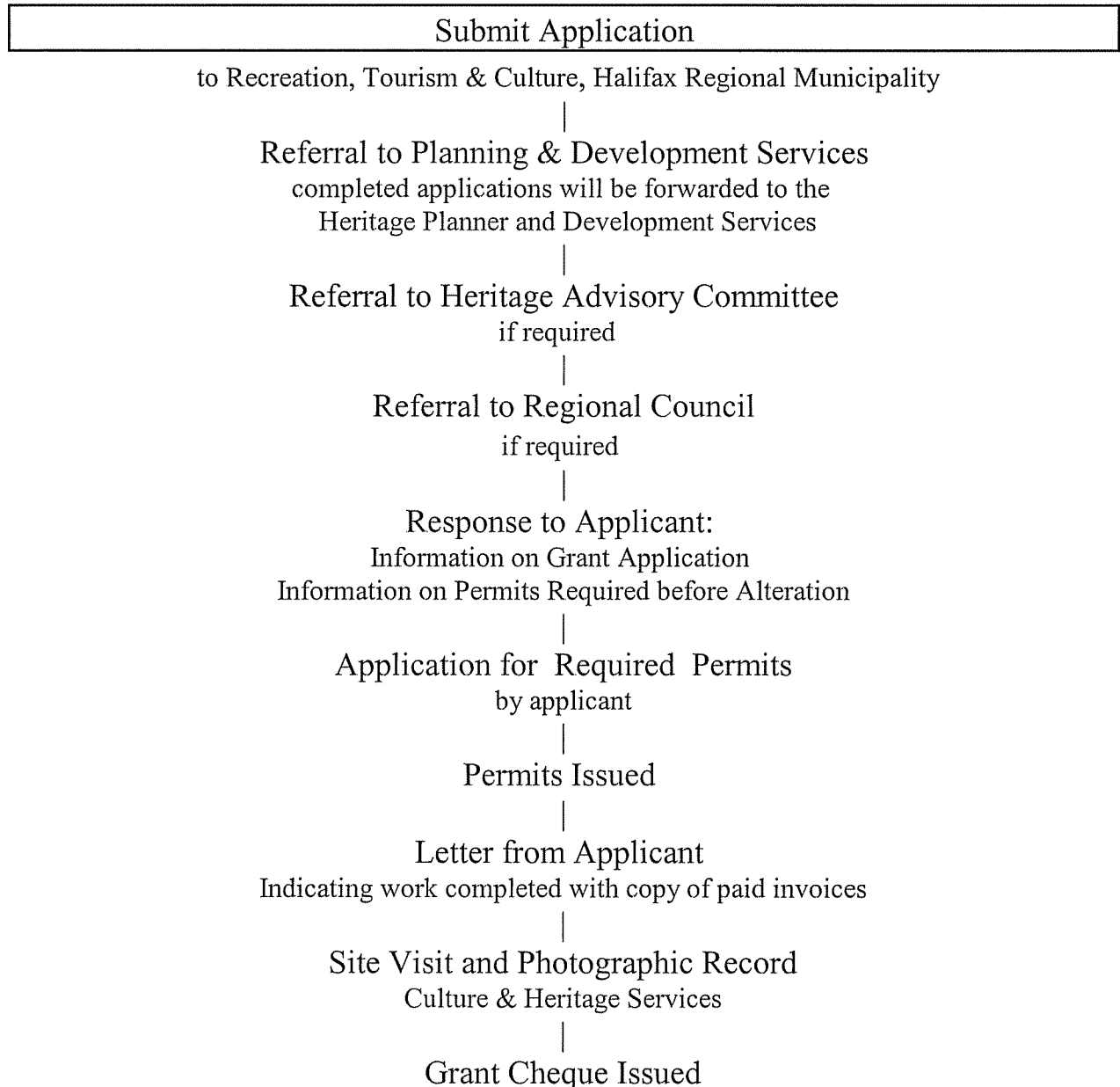
- Attachment A: Proposed Application Review Process  
Attachment B: Proposed Residential Heritage Incentive Program  
Attachment C: Proposed Commercial Heritage Incentive Program

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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Lew Rogers, Director, Recreation, Tourism & Culture

## Heritage Incentives Review Process



### NOTES:

This flowchart illustrates an application that meets the program eligibility and funding criteria. Applications that are not complete will require additional time and consultation with staff. Grant cheques are normally issued within 14 business days of Letter from Applicant

## Residential Heritage Incentive Program

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this program is to assist home owners to improve the exterior appearance of residential heritage properties. Assistance will be provided for: painting the exterior in period correct colours; repairing historic porches, windows, walls and roofs; and, restoring damaged or missing historic features. Interior work is not eligible.

### **Eligibility:**

Heritage Incentive grants are available to owners meeting the following criteria:

- The property must be within Halifax Regional Municipality
- The property must be a municipal registered heritage property
- The property must be a residential property, up to 8 units
- Alterations must be reviewed and approved by the municipality

### **Cost Sharing:**

Halifax Regional Municipality will provide a matching grant up to 50% of the costs of eligible work to a maximum municipal contribution of \$5000.

### **Applications:**

HRM will consider Exterior projects that meet the Heritage Alteration Guidelines and incorporate traditional materials, designs and skills. Property owners must have obtained all required municipal permits before Heritage Grants will be awarded.

### **Application Deadlines:**

The 2003/2004 application deadlines are as follows:  
December 1, March 1, June 1, September 1st.

### **Approval Process:**

All requests must be submitted to Recreation, Tourism and Culture at the Halifax Regional Municipality. The municipality will conduct a review in accordance with the Heritage Incentives Review Process illustration, shown in Attachment A.

## ATTACHMENT C

### Commercial Heritage Incentive Program

#### **Purpose:**

To encourage the owners of commercial municipal heritage properties to improve building facades through a program that offers matching grants. The matching grants are provided to encourage the use of period correct materials, traditional designs and time-honoured skills.

#### **Eligibility:**

- The property must be a commercial, municipal registered heritage property in HRM;
- The property must have a facade improvement drawing completed by an Architect;
- A priority will be assigned to registered heritage properties located within the Business Improvement Areas encompassed within the Capital District;
- A priority will be given to registered heritage properties located within Designated heritage districts (ie the Proposed Barrington Street Heritage District);
- Second and subsequent application from heritage property owners will be given considered after first applications, in any given year, based on availability of funds.

#### **Cost Sharing:**

Halifax Regional Municipality will provide a matching grant up to 50% of the costs of eligible exterior facade improvement projects to a maximum municipal contribution of \$10,000.

#### **Applications:**

HRM will consider Exterior projects that meet the Heritage Alteration Guidelines and incorporate traditional materials, designs and skills. Property owners must have obtained municipal permits before Heritage Grants will be awarded.

#### **Application Deadlines:**

The 2003 - 2004 Commercial Heritage Facade Improvement program deadlines are as follows: December 1, March 1, June 1, September 1st.

#### **Approval Process:**

All requests must be submitted to Recreation, Tourism and Culture at the Halifax Regional Municipality. The municipality will conduct a review in accordance with the Heritage Incentives Review Process illustration, shown in Attachment A. The review by the Heritage Advisory Committee will include recommendations from: the Capital District, Business Commission, District Councillor and HRM staff.