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PO Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Halifax Regional Council
December 16, 2003

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:


George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: December 16, 2003

SUBJECT: Public Gardens Restoration - Update

ORIGIN

On October 21, 2003 Halifax Regional Municipality Council approved the establishment of the Halifax Public Gardens Restoration Foundation to make use of the funds raised by the Maritime Broadcasting Systems radioathon on October 13th. It was indicated that a formal Terms of Reference would be brought forward to Council for approval at a later date.

Following Council approval at the Oct. 21st meeting, an interim working group was established consisting of the Mayor, CAO, Councillor for the District, members of the business community, the Chair of the Friends of the Public Gardens, a representative from Parks Canada, with several internal HRM staff providing technical expertise and support to the group. Robert Pace is Chair of the working group, and we are in the process of incorporating the Halifax Public Gardens Restoration Foundation under the N.S. Societies Act.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended:

- that Council accept recommendations from the Halifax Public Gardens Restoration Foundation working group regarding how the proceeds of the MBS radioathon should be expended to restore the Public Gardens.
- that Council empower the Director of Real Property and Asset Management or his designate to authorize expenditures as recommended by the Halifax Public Gardens Restoration Foundation in accordance with HRM Procurement policies and procedures.

- That Council approve the attached scope for issuance of two Requests for Proposals; one for short term projects, and one for longer term issues regarding maintenance and sustainability that will eventually form a Master Plan for the Public Gardens.

BACKGROUND

Funds raised by the Maritime Broadcasting Systems radiothon on October 13th are going to be the main funding source for restoration of the Public Gardens. The charter and by-laws necessary to incorporate the Halifax Public Gardens Restoration (HPG) Foundation are being developed in cooperation with Maritime Broadcasting Systems and McInnes Cooper Robertson. It is intended that HRM will coordinate any initiatives involving HRM property and that the ongoing and regular maintenance of the Public Gardens will remain an HRM responsibility. The HPG Foundation will provide recommendations and direction regarding the restoration of the Gardens and ongoing capital improvements. In order to respond responsibly to the many suggestions and opportunities being submitted by the public, it was important to move quickly in establishing a strategic group to guide the infrastructure recovery and create a transparent process to account for donations.

The HPG working group coordinated a visit to the Public Gardens by a team of Parks Canada representatives including an archivist, and conservator. Parks Canada has agreed to provide ongoing support and advice regarding the restoration of the Gardens.

DISCUSSION

- HRM staff are removing the brush and damaged trees from the Public Gardens, completing necessary preparation for winter, and preserving as much wood as possible to keep a wide variety of options open regarding utilization of the wood.
- A survey company has been engaged to do a topographic map of the Public Gardens.
- An RFP for the short term projects identified in the attachment will be issued by January 5th.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The restoration of the Public Gardens will be funded through a variety of sources. Some expenditures will be recoverable under the federal Disaster Financial Assistance program, some expenditures will come from the Parks operating budget, and capital projects pertaining to restoration and improvement will be paid from the donations to the Halifax Public Gardens Restoration Foundation.

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

None - the activities of the Public Gardens Restoration Foundation in restoring the Public Gardens will impact the appearance of the municipality and quality of life of the residents, and community groups such as the Friends of the Public Gardens have been clear in expressing their desire for an independent organization to advise HRM on the restoration and ongoing operation of the Public Gardens.

ATTACHMENTS

Proposed Scope of Public Gardens Restoration Masterplan - Overview of short and long term work.

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: Cathie O'Toole, CGA - Executive Assistant, CAO's Office

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Public Gardens Restoration Foundation

FROM: Peter Bigelow, Manager Real Property Planning
Jeff Bray, Capital District Capital Projects Coordinator

DATE: December 12, 2003

**SUBJECT: Proposed Scope of Public Gardens Restoration Masterplan
Draft**

The issues currently facing the Public Gardens are two-fold in nature. Of immediate concern is the need to quickly address damage caused by Hurricane Juan. Secondly, the need exists for a comprehensive study to plan and create guidelines to address ongoing problems surrounding the Public Gardens.

Furthermore, it is important to identify, short and long term goals, resultant projects and to determine their relationships to each other and to the long-term success of the Gardens.

Note: 'Short Term' denotes project work proposed to be researched, designed and implemented within a six month time period, whereas 'Long term' items are typically issues identified as requiring a longer period of planning and implementation and in some cases longer term sustainable funding. These projects could be phased in over a 3-4 year period.

Overview of Works

Short Term Projects (in no order of priority)

1. **Removal of Felled Trees** - in preparation for the planning and design work which must occur during the Winter of 2004 opening. Removal will occur once the Assessment of Surviving Values is completed by Parks Canada. Some wood is to be set aside for donor gifts etc.
 2. **Electrical Repair and Upgrades** - Tree root plates have damaged some of the underground wiring which requires repair. Additional lighting would benefit the Gardens and possibly enhance it's use in the evenings.
 3. **Main Gates and Perimeter Fence Restoration and Repair** - There has been damage to the fence and gates which require repair before opening next spring. The Main Gates were damaged and require repair. As well, there is metal and foundation within the Main Gates which has been corroded which demand work if the life of the gates is to be extended for the next 100 years. This work would also allow the main gates to function again. All swing gates intended for the public need to be made "more friendly" to all users including the disabled. There is also an opportunity to improve maintenance access to the Gardens by changing certain lessor gate locations and/or their configuration. The remainder of the fence requires repainting and repair in some areas.
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4. **Griffin's Pond** - The pond is growing in size due to erosion. It suffers from algal growth and discoloration due to a lack of flow and an overpopulation of ducks. The scenic quality of the pond needs to be enhanced. Restoration of the water flow, water quality, repair and replanting of the shoreline would greatly enhance this primary feature of the Gardens and should be a priority.
5. **Lower Ponds and Freshwater Brook** - The freshwater brook and associated lower ponds have become a gully due to the same lack of water flow that affects Griffin's Pond. There is an opportunity and need to bring these areas back to their former state. The lower-most pond adjacent to the front gates is overgrown and sedimented. This area needs to become more of a focus with many trees being destroyed or damaged in this area due to Juan. Good photographic records exist of the past character of this area when it was more scenic.
6. **Main Gate Entrance Area** - As mentioned above, the entrance to the Gardens will be quite different with the number of significant trees downed in the hurricane. There is an opportunity to enhance this area, both outside and inside the gates. This would include work on the lower ponds/freshwater brook and better night lighting. There are opportunities to improve the entrance both outside and inside the gates in order to make a more stunning entrance.
7. **Redesign and Reconstruction of Drainage System** - Because the Gardens were built in a "swamp", good and proper drainage is very important to their success. The previous ad-hoc drainage system no longer functions, leading to degradation of lawn areas, planting beds and winter damage to root systems. Redesign and reinstatement of the existing drainage system would alleviate these problems and help produce a better display of lawn panels and beds especially in the southeast corner.
8. **Irrigation System** - Drier summers have meant that the appearance of the beds and lawns can wain in the summer months. An irrigation system would eliminate this problem and enhance the overall appearance of lawns, beds and trees. Water pulled from Griffin's Pond has traditionally been used but this further taxes an already under-supplied pond and the water quality from the pond is questionable.
9. **Washrooms** - Having the washrooms on opposite sides of the Gardens creates problems in terms of use for mixed groups and families and the occurrence of improper activities. Construction of one family washroom would provide better security, and provide family-oriented amenities. While several options exist, expanding the women's washroom behind Horticultural Hall to be a family washroom seems to offer the greatest benefit. This should be explored in detail and if proven should be followed through to construction in the short term.
10. **Improved Accessibility** - The Gardens should be made more accessible for disabled persons and to address other issues of accessibility. In the short term this may require changes to gates, as previously mentioned as well as entrance materials and walkway maintenance. Accessibility needs to be a theme that is carried through and incorporated into long term projects as well. This includes disabilities other than mobility.
11. **Spring Garden Road Sidewalk Improvements** - Preliminary planning had been carried out to improve the Spring Garden Road sidewalk running beside the Public Gardens. This was part of an urban streetscape design standards project. This project needs to be measured against National Historic Site Criteria prior to commencing.
12. **General Upgrades** - A formal Garden's success lies in the details. The Gardens would benefit from upgrades to planting beds, walkway alignment, walkway surfacing, regrading/returfing lawn areas, bench repair/replacement.
13. **Conservation of Built Garden Features** - Vandalism, Hurricane Juan and the layers of paint, parging, and minor repairs has reduced the condition and appearance of the statuary, bridges, urns and planter repairs. Conservation, restoration and replacement is required on many elements.
14. **Repairs/upgrades to Public Gardens Bandstand** - Presently in good condition, the

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Tel: (902) 490-4408 Fax: (902) 490-5730

E-mail: brayj@halifax.ca Website: www.region.halifax.ns.ca

structure requires some minor repairs and paint

15. **Enhancements to South West Corner of the Gardens** - The south west corner of the Gardens is the least used area within the park. This is due to a number of factors including; the original layout of the Gardens, interruption of the pedestrian circulation system by Horticultural Hall and maintenance area, a lack of enhancement and repair to the features found in this portion of the Gardens (i.e. Grotto, pond, planting material). There is opportunity to enhance this area while not changing the historical character or layout by repairing, improving and replanting.

Longer Term Issues

1. **Horticultural Sustainability** - Many of the trees are even-aged and are beginning to decline. Also there are quite a few trees of the same species. A strategy must be developed to ensure the long-term state of the Gardens.
2. **Urban Development Around the Gardens** - A number of developments are occurring around the Gardens. An examination is required to determine threats to the Public Gardens and to determine if additional planning regulations need to be in place to protect the Gardens and it's character as impacted by adjoining properties and viewplanes.
3. **Horticulture Hall** - There is an opportunity to revisit the previous planning work (Robert Parker study) for Horticulture Hall with an eye to, not only enhance the building, but also to explore enhancing the programming for this area of the Gardens. This would include the redesign of operations-related amenities perhaps creating an entrance for tours, better location of washrooms, interpretive and horticultural information and displays, improved catering services and the possibility of providing controlled winter access thereby extending public use of the Gardens.
4. **History and Interpretation of the Gardens** - Opportunities exist to better promote and educate the public regarding the Public Gardens through published materials, web sites, creation of a library collection at the public Archives and interpretive materials. While this is a long term project the collection of this background material will begin with short term projects and further accumulated, cataloguing and interpretation during the longer term.
5. **Interpretation and Educational Programing** - Originally built as a Victorian display garden the function of the Gardens could be enhanced to extend to citizen participation in horticultural upkeep, classes and public education.
6. **Greenhouse and Superintendents House** - There is an opportunity to link these buildings more closely with the Gardens by changing the function of the buildings. (i.e. Greenhouses become a conservatory/public greenhouse)
7. **Long Term Conservation of Built Elements** - There needs to be a program to address on-going conservation of statuary, bridges, fountains etc - Conservation work is required on such elements.
8. **On-Going Maintenance and Funding** - It is important to understand the funding and maintenance requirements to perpetuate the long term sustainability of the Gardens. Regular maintenance practices have been passed down from one gardener to another orally and through practical experience. These practices have evolved over the years. It is important to identify the critical maintenance practices which should be followed to ensure the integrity, accuracy and the beauty of the Gardens. These should be documented and used to help develop staff in order to provide the highest and most consistent seasonal maintenance. As well, a position should be established to focus solely on the Public Gardens and to perpetuate that vision through daily upkeep.

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All work should be guided by the following documents:

- *Cultural Resource Management Policy - Parks Canada*
- *Commemorative Integrity Statement for Halifax Public Gardens National Historic Site of Canada*
- *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*
- *Guide to Management Planning - Parks Canada*
- *Halifax Public Gardens National Historic Site of Canada Assessment of Surviving Values*

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Proposed Approach to Public Gardens Restoration Masterplan

Public Gardens Restoration Masterplan - Proposed Scope

In order to meet timelines, respective projects need to be divided into two distinct phases which correspond to the short and long term works that have been identified for the Gardens.

Short Term Projects are aimed at making repairs and improvements to the Gardens to coincide with a late June 2004 opening. These projects require a firm, individual, or team conversant with heritage conservation and historic landscapes, horticulture and horticultural display, hydrology/water quality, and landscape architecture for example. Individual projects may stretch beyond June due to the time of year that planning and construction may be required to take place. Public input and communications would be co-ordinated by the Foundation/HRM in conjunction with the consultants.

Longer Term Projects are aimed at ensuring the long term sustainability of the Gardens at or near their peak condition as well as possible enhancements to the Gardens. These enhancements require substantial planning and are generally directed at providing a program which better serves visitors and ensures the long term sustainability of the Gardens. These projects require many of the same skills as the short term projects, however there is a greater emphasis on planning, policy and physical management of the Gardens. These projects would require the addition of graphic communications/interpretation skills, an arbourist and a heritage architect, among others.

There will be a strong public consultation process integrated with the retention of the consultant and throughout the formulation of this phase of the Plan. Public awareness of the proposed future use and management of the Public Gardens and involvement of the public and key stakeholders; (e.g., the Heritage Advisory Committee and the Friends of the Public Gardens) is paramount.

Generally, it is anticipated that the development / letting of an RFP for the Public Gardens Restoration Masterplan Plan Phase I and the subsequent hiring of a Consultant will be completed January 2004. Design and tender preparation of landscape components would continue through the Winter with tenders let in time to begin April construction. Restoration and fabrication of specific elements (e.g. fences, gates, urns) could continue through the winter and be ready for spring installation to coincide with a late spring opening.

The longer term planning could follow within 2-3 months with Phase II RFP and would be complete within 12 months. Some individual long term projects may require a separate timeline based on their own merit, opportunities or constraints.

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