

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
APRIL 4, 2007

PRESENT:

Mayor Peter Kelly
Deputy Mayor Sue Uteck
Councillors: Krista Snow
David Hendsbee
Harry McInroy
Gloria McCluskey
Bill Karsten
Jim Smith
Mary Wile
Patrick Murphy
Dawn Sloane
Shelia Fougere
Debbie Hum
Linda Mosher
Steve Adams
Brad Johns
Bob Harvey
Gary Martin
Reg Rankin
Gary Meade

REGRETS:

Councillors: Steve Streach
Becky Kent
Russell Walker
Andrew Younger

STAFF:

Mr. Wayne Anstey, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Jan Gibson, Municipal Clerk
Ms. Chrissy White, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:56 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES- None

3. BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

3.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (continuation)

Council continued debate on the Community Development budget.

Councillor Patrick Murphy joined the meeting at 10:02 a.m.

Staff advised that Council had approved a \$40,000 budget to hire an external consultant to advise on communications surrounding the Community Development project.

Councillor Snow expressed concern with the funding allotment for the Sackville Sports Stadium in comparison with other sports facilities in HRM. She advised that she would like staff to provide a break down of costs for the Sackville Sports Stadium.

Mr. Paul Dunphy, Director of Community Development advised that staff will be re-organizing the recreation budget process to become more transparent.

Following a brief discussion regarding the need for more ice surfaces in HRM, Mr. Dunphy advised that an Arena Study will be conducted and incorporated into a Facility Update Plan that will assess and outline the facility and program needs for communities throughout HRM. The study will assess immediate needs based on population and interests.

Councillor Adams advised that he would like staff to consider a proposal endorsed by community groups for a second ice surface in Spryfield. Staff advised that they would come back with a report after consultation with the Province.

Councillor Smith expressed concern with the composition of the community development teams and requested an explanation regarding their mandate and purpose.

Councillor Karsten expressed concern regarding the closing of Akerley Rink and the need for ice surfaces in the Dartmouth area.

MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Smith, that \$250,000 be moved to the parking lot to address the need for a new ice surface in Dartmouth. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Hendsbee advised that he would like to see the service counter located in Alderney Gate moved to the first level to provide easier access for citizens. He suggested staff should approach the Province to support this move.

In response to Councillor Hendsbee's request regarding the Community Visioning Project addressing a second ice surface in Musquodoboit Harbour, staff advised that a criteria and selection process that will be vetted through Council will be followed for the next round of community visioning. Staff further advised that the potential need for a second ice surface in Musquodoboit Harbour will be made clear through that process.

Councillors McInroy and Rankin joined the meeting at 10:39 a.m.

In response to Councillor Murphy, Mr. Dunphy advised that there is no strategy in place for specific facility upgrades, but the plan is to evaluate the needs for HRM arenas.

Deputy Mayor Uteck and Councillor Hum entered the meeting at 10:41 am.

Council recessed at 10:46 a.m.

Council reconvened at 10:59 a.m.

Councillor Wile expressed concern regarding the architectural state of the Northcliffe pool and advised of the need for continual improvements until a new pool is constructed.

In response to Council's concerns regarding the state of City Hall, Mr. Dunphy advised that minor improvements have been made to City Hall over the last few years, but no significant changes have been made. Mr. Dunphy further advised that a report will be brought to Council regarding this issue.

Councillor Smith expressed concern regarding the loss of sports teams in the Dartmouth area and advised that staff should conduct a needs assessment to provide more programming.

Following a brief discussion regarding HRM and community programs, staff advised that Community Development will prepare a report analysing what services and programs are being delivered by HRM and what programs are being delivered by external community groups. This report will also analyse what groups HRM is targeting and the benefits associated with particular targets.

Councillor Snow expressed concern regarding District 2 funding allotments and advised that she would like to see increased funding in the future.

Mr. Dunphy advised of the need for more arenas in HRM and that arenas will be studied as part of a recreation facility study. He advised that contingency planning for increased

demand, and budgeting for more arenas are in progress.

Councillor McInroy expressed concern regarding “tunnel crime” in the Dartmouth area.

MOVED by Councillor McInroy, seconded by Councillor Smith that \$75,000 be moved into the parking lot to address issues raised by the CPTED audit in Cole Harbour. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Deputy Mayor Uteck advised of the need for repair to the shore line at St. Mary’s Boat Club.

The meeting recessed at 11:46 a.m.

The meeting was called to order at 1:20 p.m. with the same Councillors in attendance.

Responding to Councillor Hendsbee, Mr. Dunphy advised that a report will be before Regional Council in a few months regarding initiatives at the administrative level and value in kind services to support the local film industry.

Mr. Doug Rafuse, Manager, Service Delivery, Real Property and Asset Management, responded to Councillor Hendsbee that he will provide a list of projects in regard to community centre upgrades.

Mr. Peter Bigelow, Manager, Real Property Planning, responded to Councillor Hendsbee that:

- no money has been received in regard to Hurricane Juan clean-up. Any clean-up work being done now is being paid for by HRM.
- Clean-up work is continuing in the following areas: Hemlock Ravine, Mainland Commons, Point Pleasant Park, Shubenacadie Canal Park and the Eastern Shore area.
- He suggested that Mr. John Simmonds, Supervisor, Urban Forestry, Real Property and Asset Management be contacted in regard to assistance for the Eastern Shore area.
- Work is being done cooperatively with the province for that area to ensure small wood lot owners are taken care of.

Mayor Kelly left the meeting at 1:25 p.m. and Deputy Mayor Uteck assumed the chair at this time.

Mr. Dunphy responded to Councillor Snow that details of the facility study for ice surfaces will be part of the parking lot report back to Regional Council.

Councillor Adams requested staff’s assistance in creating a skateboard park in the

Spryfield area. He further requested that, since the money has already been allocated, staff proceed with the BMX Park for the Williamswood area to make that project a reality in 2007-2008.

MOVED BY Councillor Martin, seconded by Councillor McCluskey that \$100,000 be placed in the parking lot for public washroom facilities in DeWolfe Park, Bedford. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Mayor Kelly resumed the chair at 1:42 p.m.

Councillor Mosher suggested the Spryfield skateboard park be included as part of the renovations for the Captain William Spry Centre as there is space at that location.

Councillor Mosher also requested staff address issues of erosion, lack of washroom facilities and playground equipment at the Chocolate Lake Beach area. She suggested that porta-potties be brought in until washroom facilities could be constructed. Councillor Mosher requested washroom facilities for the J. Albert Walker field in the Stanley Park/Stoneridge area. She further suggested fencing be installed around washrooms as a security measure.

Mayor Kelly left the meeting at 1:45 p.m. and Deputy Mayor Uteck assumed the chair at this time.

Councillor Rankin entered the meeting at 1:48 p.m.

Councillor Wile commented that staff should be mindful that there is still Hurricane Juan damage in the Clayton Park area as well.

Councillor Hum expressed concern with the budget process as follows:

- there is approximately \$2 million in the parking lot already and there are other business units still to present.
- her residents have indicated that they cannot handle any more tax increases.
- she is concerned the tax rate may have to be raised to accommodate the number of items already in the parking lot.
- each Councillor had an opportunity to discuss their priorities with staff prior to the budget sessions and inquired why some of the projects being discussed today were not addressed at that time.
- the Program and Service Review was a valuable process
- more detail should be provided to Council prior to the budget debate.

Councillor Fougere entered the meeting at 1:52 p.m.

Councillor Snow requested an explanation for why some costs have doubled and some

have gone down for pools/gyms across HRM. Mr. Dunphy responded that staff will attempt to include that information in the report back to Council.

Councillor Johns entered the meeting at 1:56 p.m.

Councillor Karsten requested that port-a-potties be available for tournaments at HRM sports field provided advance notice is given.

Mayor Kelly resumed the chair at 1:59 p.m.

Deputy Mayor Uteck, assisted by Ms. Holly Richardson, Regional Coordinator, Culture and Heritage, showed slides of downtown Halifax (two block radius) that indicate garbage and boarded up doorways as well as the poor condition of some bikeracks, phone booths and parking meters and gravel strewn over Bishop Street from a renovation site. She requested that the area be cleaned-up as cruise ships will be arriving as of April 14th. Deputy Mayor Uteck further commented that there appears to be no money for art work in HRM (one statue is to be cost-shared) and suggested that money be placed in the budget for public art and to clean-up damaged art work.

MOVED BY Deputy Mayor Uteck, seconded by Councillor Sloane that \$25,000 be placed in the parking lot for clean-up of the downtown and public art. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

In response to Councillor Sloane, Ms. Richardson advised that the Downtown Business Commission, through the area rate, does hire seasonal student work/enviro teams who will start June 1st. The Downtown Business Commission also assists with graffiti clean-up. Councillor Sloane suggested that the students be hired to work from May to October.

Mr. Mike Labrecque, Director, Transportation and Public Works advised that the recent job fair resulted in 315 student applications. As soon as the budget is approved, students will be hired and trained, hopefully by late April.

Councillor McCluskey suggested that HRM take a tougher approach with Canada Post and Aliant in regard to maintenance of their mailboxes/phone booths.

MOVED BY Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Mosher that Council direct all Business Commissions, in conjunction with HRM staff, to take an immediate, aggressive, pro-active approach in cleaning the downtown cores.

Deputy Mayor Uteck explained that there is an agreement between HRM and the Business Commissions with clearly defined roles/responsibilities. The Business Commissions are looking for assistance from HRM and they already do fundraising to assist with graffiti removal. She suggested the service agreements and the year end reports for the Business

Commissions be reviewed.

Councillor Sloane commented that the Business Commissions are collecting a levy (area rate) and from October to May are sitting on that money. The message to them is to clean up the garbage and help out.

MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.

Council recessed at 2:27 p.m.

Council resumed at 2:39 p.m.

MOVED BY Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee that Council complete the Finance Department budget discussions prior to moving forward with Transportation and Public Works budget presentation and discussion. MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.

3.2 TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS

- A copy of the PowerPoint presentation was before Council.
- A copy of the Crosswalk Data was before Council.
- A staff report, dated April 3, 2007, on Pedestrian Crosswalk Issues was before Council.
- A copy of the Pedestrian Collision Summaries, dated April 4, 2007, was before Council.
- A copy of an e-mail from Cpl. P. W. Moran, RCMP, dated March 27, 2007 was before Council.

Mr. Mike Labrecque, Director, Transportation and Public Works (TPW) presented the 2007-2008 proposed Budget and Business Plans.

Highlights of the presentation are as follows:

- TPW has a net operating increase of 4.3%.
- A satellite garage is needed but is not included in this capital year as the funds were allocated to paving and more buses. The garage will need to be considered in next year's budget to service the additional buses.
- Suggestion that it may be time for Council to strike an Advisory Committee on funding.
- Continued investment in the Burnside Business Park is strategic for continued development of HRM.
- Conversion of up to 40 LED Traffic signals.
- Enhanced traffic education program.
- Support to Canada Winter Games 2011.

- Improved response to and resolution of all service requests involving litter and graffiti.
- Enhanced service levels in Capital District during summer months - increased hiring of students and season workers.
- Improved passenger capacity on existing overcrowded routes.
- Enhanced routing to service MSVU, Dartmouth Crossing and Bedford West.
- Service adjustments for peak, evening and weekend frequency.
- AVL-GOTime system implemented.
- Decreases: 44% of staff are eligible to retire in next four (4) years. Difficulty staffing technical jobs specifically engineers.
- Reduced traffic signal maintenance and increased response time to requests.
- Perhaps look into multiple year paving contracts. The feasibility of this to be reviewed but HRM has to align its resources and get the street work done. There was a 150 km increase this year.
- Expected services not to be delivered: Neighbourhood Bus - need to develop concept more and help Council understand the benefit of a neighbourhood bus service.
- Consideration given to honouring fares from Community Transit to regular Metro Transit service: may not be significant but this initiative would provide an additional twelve (12) months and will provide some improvement for ridership.

Mr. Ken Reashor, Traffic Authority, commented that the provincial Municipal Government Act (MGA) and Motor Vehicle Act (MVA) outline the Traffic Authority's ability to regulate and control all traffic signs, markings and signals in HRM.

Highlights of Mr. Reashor's presentation are as follows:

- Referring to the staff report and crosswalk data before Council, Mr. Reashor advised that he is prepared to install some of the measures outlined if Council places funding in the budget.
- Over the next 2 to 2.5 years, all traffic signals will be converted to LED. Now is the time for Council to decide if they wish to have pedestrian count down signals as the additional cost would only be \$1600 per location if done now, the cost to retrofit any new location or convert to LED would be approximately \$7000 per location due to the labour and material involved.
- Fluorescent crosswalk signs are not legally allowed in Nova Scotia.
- He does not recommend the use of pedestrian half signal
- Fatalities have dropped since the 1960's and the injury rate in HRM has been dropping since 2001. The fatality rate is 0.8 on average which is lower than other cities (based on 49.1 per 100,000 population). Population growth does equal more pedestrian/vehicle relations.
- Traffic volumes have increased but collisions are down.
- Pedestrian collision statistics show that unmarked crosswalks have a significantly less injury rate as pedestrians are more cautious.

- Recommend money in the budget for education and enforcement; not more pedestrian crossing markings/signalization. The concern is with pedestrian safety not more perceived security to pedestrians. Do not want pedestrians to *feel* safer we want pedestrians to *act* safer.
- Staff need direction on whether Council wishes painted lines. Tender is out and there is a high potential that not all locations will be marked this year. Crosswalks are painted every year.

Councillor McInroy indicated that he will ask Council to request a change in legislation to enable the use of fluorescent crosswalk signs as they are more visible to motorists and are used in other areas of the province and Atlantic Canada for school zones.

MOVED BY Councillor McInroy, seconded by Councillor Mosher that all Supplementary Crosswalk Control Devices, as outlined in Mr. Ken Reashor's presentation and included in the table on Crosswalk Data, be placed in the parking lot and that;

1. **Staff bring back a strategy (funding and time lines) for implementing all measures taking into account cost sharing opportunities.**
2. **Council seek the necessary legislative changes to permit fluorescent signs.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Mr. Reashor advised that, by the authority provided to him through the MGA and MVA as the Traffic Authority, and; in consideration that the Traffic Authority could be sued and challenged in court, pedestrian half signals will only be installed where justified and in the proper locations.

MOVED BY Councillor Meade, seconded by Councillor Johns that Baysland Drive in Highland Park be added to the Shopping List for new paving.

Councillor Meade explained that there is one section of road in Highland Park (Baysland Drive) that connects to Haliburton Hills that is not paved. Referring to Page J11 in the budget book, he requested that if there is money left over from the Glen Eagle paving projects, that Baysland Drive be paved as it is a small section of gravel road.

MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.

MOVED BY Councillor Meade, seconded by Councillor Johns that an additional \$1 million be added to the new paving projects for inside the core.

Referring to Page R11 in the budget book and the \$5 million allotted to the Strategic

Growth Reserve, Councillor Meade suggested that the Strategic Growth Reserve be reduced by \$1 million and that \$1 million be utilized for paving inside the core area.

Ms. Cathie O'Toole advised that there is a Council report forthcoming in regard to the utilization of the Strategic Growth Reserves. She suggested that the overall vision of the Strategic Growth Reserve should be discussed and issues such as this addressed by Council.

Deputy CAO Anstey clarified with Councillor Meade that his intent is for \$1 million be added to the gross budget, net would be \$500,000.

MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.

MOVED BY Councillor Snow, seconded by Councillor Johns that \$120,000 be placed in the parking lot for traffic lights at the Beaver Bank / Windsor Junction Cross Road intersection.

Councillor Snow commented that she has received a petition with 910 signatures and numerous e-mails and letters from concerned residents, the local MLA and MP as well as the RCMP in regard to the morning peak hours and the inability to get in or out of that intersection due to through traffic.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Ms. Cathie O'Toole, in response to Councillor Sloane's concerns that items are being added to the parking lot without identifying where the funding is to come from, advised that staff would prefer Council to identify where the funding is to come from, and; if not identifiable, that time be allocated for discussion. She added that items are being added to the parking lot at an unprecedented rate and that there used to be debate on the merit of the items going to the parking lot.

MOVED BY Deputy Mayor Uteck, seconded by Councillor Fougere that the Committee of the Whole budget discussions adjourn at 4:00 p.m. today. MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.

Due to a loss of quorum, Council took a five minute break at 4:00 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 4:08 p.m.

MOVED BY Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee that \$50,000 be added to the parking lot to compliment the Crosswalk Control Devices by increasing and enhancing education and enforcement. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED BY Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor Johns that \$100,000 be placed in the parking lot for the installation of Pedestrian Count Down Signals to be concurrent with the LED Traffic control conversion program on a go forward basis. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Mosher requested that resurfacing of the tennis court at Springvale Elementary School and Cunard Junior High be priority items. Also that bus service be extended to Stoneridge on the Park due to future development.

MOVED BY Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor McCluskey that Mayor Kelly write to the Honourable Peter McKay requesting funding to rebuild the Seawall at Regatta Point / Sir Sandford Fleming Park on the North West Arm due to significant damage caused by Hurricane Juan.

In response to Mayor Kelly, Mr. Peter Bigelow advised that pre-approval had been sought, through prepared engineering reports to the Federal government for the disaster assistance program, but was turned down as the Federal agency felt HRM could not adequately demonstrate the condition of the walls prior to the hurricane.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

Councillor Wile requested more education for students to teach them how to properly cross at a crosswalk. She also suggested ticketing pedestrians who do not cross properly as some are crossing on red lights and signals will not mean anything to them.

Councillor Wile requested that the rose bushes along Dunbrack and Clayton Park Drive be trimmed as motorists (heading west) cannot see the pedestrians. Mr. Reashor responded to Councillor Wile that side mounted flashers would work with crosswalk lights and consideration will be given as to whether the area on Dunbrack /Clayton Park Drive is a suitable location as well as the area near the school at Main Avenue.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Due to a loss of quorum, the meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

Jan Gibson
Municipal Clerk

