

Tall tally of cash for historic sites

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Halifax regional council authorized staff to spend \$675,000 for the restoration of two of Halifax's national historic sites.

Memorial Tower, commonly known as the Dingle Tower, will receive \$425,000 for the refurbishment of its exterior masonry, as well as the stabilization and restoration of plaques inside the tower. A further \$250,000 will be spent on the Victoria Jubilee Bandstand, located in the Public Gardens, for structural stabilization.

The money will be matched by the federal government under Parks Canada's cost-sharing program — part of the federal government's stimulus plan.

Municipal staff also applied to the cost-sharing program for aide in restoring the masonry at city hall, another national historic site.

According to a report delivered to council yesterday, however, staff were not confident the work could be completed by the program's March 31, 2011, deadline — partially due to the \$2 million worth of work currently underway on the building.

"There is a commitment to spend \$2 million of stimulus funds on city hall restoration by the end of March 2011," read the report. "Staff are not confident that the scope could be increased by another \$850,000 and work completed by the end of the March deadline."

Because of the hesitance to push more money into the project this year, staff asked council to divert \$85,500 from the city hall project to the Dingle Tower restoration budget.

HRM Mayor Peter Kelly said he is fairly confident the federal money will still be available when staff reapply for it next year, although he admits it is not a given.

"Even if we wanted to, we couldn't spend it now," said Kelly.

"So we're saying let's work on with the \$2-million project we have now underway, and then apply for (the funding) again for next year and, hopefully, we would receive the funds for next year."

for Metro Halifax



Ryan Taplin/Metro Halifax
HRM will receive money from the federal government to fix up the Dingle Tower, as well as cash for the Public Gardens.