

## **East Dartmouth Community Centre Ground Breaking** **Saturday, August 11, 2007**

Minister Muir, MP Mike Savage, MLA Joan Massey, Members of the Dartmouth East Recreation Centre Society, and importantly, residents of our wonderful, vibrant community.

On behalf of Mayor Peter Kelly and my fellow members of regional council, I want to thank you all for coming to the third annual Great East Dartmouth BBQ and the ground breaking for the long awaited East Dartmouth Community Centre.

When this annual community event started, the intent was to create a new, exciting, and free event that was accessible to and fun for the entire community. Over the past three years it's truly become a community event with the participation and support of many organizations including the East Dartmouth Boys and Girls Club, Kiwanis who always do a great job cooking hotdogs, many residents and HRM staff, and financial supporters such as Kinsmen and the Dartmouth Community Health Board, both of whom we welcome back this year.

When we looked to schedule the ground breaking for the new East Dartmouth Community Centre we realized this was the perfect event at which to do it. The community centre is a natural evolution of this annual event. Just like this event, the centre is about bringing together the community in a space designed, managed, and used by the community.

This is an important site. It will be an environmental leader in HRM heated and cooled with geothermal energy. It will house a new community police office. It will house the boys and girls club in a space finally sized to their needs. And it will have recreation and community space that all groups can make use of. For the first time this community will have easily accessible, public, meeting and recreation space. It's a need I hear constantly and now its being delivered through cooperation between government and the community.

I am pleased to announce today that HRM has awarded the construction tender to Maxxim Contruction. On Monday you will see the fencing go up around the construction site and following that the work begins with a scheduled opening in June of next year. The entire project is valued at over \$4.5 million with around \$4 million of that dedicated to actual construction. We are only here today because of the strong support of partners such as ACOA and the provincial government, and the hard work of many volunteers on the current community centre board and those who have tried to get this project going many times over the past two decades. While the early efforts may not have been entirely successful they helped lay the groundwork for breaking ground today.

I want to particularly recognize regional council. Last year council agreed through the budget process to move the project ahead a year in recognition of the hard work done by the current board. At the time council agreed to contribute \$1.1 million to the project.

This year, seeing the potential in this project and the need in the community, council increased their support by a further \$750,000 bringing the municipal contribution to \$1.85 million. It's important to thank Mayor Kelly and all members of council for their support in providing this additional funding.

There is still work to do. While the construction is fully paid for, over the next few months we will be seeking your contributions to outfit the building properly so that the building is as versatile as possible. Councillor Bill Karsten and I recently announced we are each contributing \$15,000 to kick start this fund raising effort.

Today the East Dartmouth Community Centre goes from dream to reality. At the fourth annual Great East Dartmouth BBQ we won't be imagining a new community centre, we'll be experiencing it. On behalf of Mayor Kelly and member of council, once again thank you for coming today and continuing to show your support for this project. Please take time to enjoy the free hot dogs, bounce castles, Art Bikers, and many more activities that will be going on all afternoon.