



Rockingham - Wentworth
Debbie Hum
District 16 Newsletter
Halifax Regional Municipality

Debbie Hum

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How to Contact Me

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Dear Residents,

Thank you for giving me the privilege of representing you on Regional Council. I hope you will find this newsletter very informative.

It has been an extremely busy year in HRM, with the new council elected October 2004. Indeed, District 16 and Mainland North issues and needs have been front and center.

It is my intention to increase communication to residents with another newsletter in the spring. Watch for the launching of my personal website by the end of January. My website will be www.debbiehum.com.

In 2005, District 16 residents have benefited from many area capital improvements, including streets paved, 2 new sidewalk projects at Bayview and Rocky Hill Drive area; Dunbrack/Lacewood intersection improvements; traffic signal light upgrades at Dunbrack intersections, Bedford Hwy at KLR and Bayview intersections; new half signal lights at Lacewood/Thomas Raddall Dr; new RA 5 overhead pedestrian signalization (still under construction) at Bedford Hwy/Charlotte Lane and Parkland Drive @ Farnham Gate and Fairfax intersections; and new traffic signalization at Bed. Hwy @ Larry Uteck Blvd which was installed as part of the Royal Hemlock development agreement.

HRM and I were pleased to partner with Rockingham Residents Association as they embarked on a \$120,000 D.J. Butler playground improvement initiative. District 16 residents also benefited from other park and playground enhancements. As well, the Bayview and Flamingo Drive area neighborhood shortcutting trial study will be reviewed in the near future, Prince's Lodge sewer and water project is completed; and the Mainland Common Recreation Centre is moving ahead.

2005 and 2006 will go down in history as HRM brings forward the Regional Plan, Harbour Plan, Transportation Plan, Cultural Plan, Immigration Strategy and Economic Strategy. A municipal tax structure review is currently underway, as is our Youth Strategy, and is expected to be brought forward to Regional Council this winter or spring. Harbour Solutions is moving ahead as planned. HRM is also recognized internationally as a leader in environmental sustainability initiatives.

It hasn't been all roses however. Issues pertaining to ongoing development, land use, increasing property assessments and taxes, traffic and safety, infrastructure improvements, and youth related issues continue to be a concern for many residents.

I will continue to work hard on your behalf to enhance our community and address your concerns to the best of my ability. Please don't hesitate to contact me.

The Regional Plan - Draft #2 Released December 6, 2005

There are many new and exciting initiatives in HRM and none more so than the Regional Plan. This is the blueprint which will determine how our Municipality will grow over the next 25 years. Council has been working with the community for over 3 years.

Draft #2 of the Regional Plan is now complete and available for public review.
<http://www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning/RegionalPlanDraft2.html>

HRM will receive written submissions on Draft #2 until January 31, 2006. In February 2006, following review of all submissions to Draft #2, a final Regional Plan will be tabled with Council for First Reading and a date set for the Public Hearing.

“Engage HRM” is the new e-consultation bulletin board which allows residents to submit their views and provide feedback on the draft regional plan, suggest solutions for improvements to draft policies, as well as read the views of others and communicate directly with other bulletin board users. To register please go to: www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning/forum

MetroLink - Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Operating

HRM’s newest transit service, MetroLink, was launched in August in Portland Hills, and will be coming to Sackville in 2006. So far, it has far exceeded expectations for ridership. MetroLink’s 40’ buses have low floors, air conditioning, high-backed upholstered seats and bike racks. They also feature more direct, limited-stop bus service, Park and Ride lots, an Opticom Transit Priority Signal System to activate traffic signals to advance the green light. It is expected to reduce the number of private vehicles going into the urban core and help reduce greenhouse gases. Clayton Park area is expected to be the third location for a MetroLink terminal and route planning is already underway. The timing for the start of service will depend on availability of funding.

Metro Transit U-Pass



In September 2003, Metro Transit and Saint Mary’s University introduced the Transit U-Pass for full time SMU students giving them unlimited access to regular transit services for \$110 per school year. In January 2006, the U-Pass service will be introduced for Dalhousie full-time students. Discussions are underway for MSVU students to participate in the U-Pass program as well, hopefully for 2006-07, but again, depending on future budgets.

HRM Volunteer Appreciation Awards:

HRM is accepting nominations for deserving volunteers to be recognized. Nominations are open to Youth (ages 13-19) and for Adults (ages 20+). Nomination deadline is 4 p.m., January 31, 2006. For additional information and application forms, please contact HRM Civic Events & Festivals @ 490-5739.

Halifax Regional Council and Community Council minutes, agendas, and staff reports are now available online. Follow this link:
<http://halifax.ca/council/agendasc/agenda.html>

HRM’s First Cultural Plan is nearing Completion!

Since April 2005, HRM has been working with community, industry, government, and business stakeholders to develop a ten-year Plan for protecting, enhancing, and promoting HRM’s culture. The Plan will integrate all of HRM’s cultural pillars in a way that assures lasting benefits to the community and the Region as a whole.

HRM’s Cultural Advisory Committee has completed a first draft of the Cultural Plan which outlines a number of Goals and a comprehensive set of policies and actions to ensure Culture is a key piece of the community and economic development puzzle. From coordinated service delivery and partnerships, community design, to children and youth, the Cultural Plan strives to put a blueprint in place that will tie Culture to public and community investment strategies for years to come.

The Cultural Plan is still a work in progress and your continued feedback and input is needed to ensure that it is community-driven and supported. The plan is to have the document presented to Regional Council by late January following continued input from the community.

You can receive a copy of the draft Cultural Plan by visiting the web-site at www.halifax.ca/culturalplan, by visiting your nearest Community Centre or Library, or by contacting Holly Richardson, HRM Recreation, Tourism & Culture, Phone: 490-6889

HRM Customer Service

HRM’s Call Centre, **490-4000**, is your one stop call centre regarding any municipal issue whether it be by-law enforcement, solid waste schedules, animal control, planning matters, bus schedules, property taxes, snow and ice control, damage done by snow plows, or graffiti markings. Note, please record the number the agent gives you for future reference. If you require the use of a TTY/TDD line, please dial (902) 490-6645.

Grffiti is a **Crime**

If you see it happening, please call Halifax Regional Police at 490-5020.

Police Launch HRM Traffic Unit



Halifax Regional Police and the RCMP launched the new integrated Traffic Unit on October 11. The unit features 10 members and will be expanded to include 20 members in 2006. Over the past several years at Town Hall Meetings citizens have identified traffic safety issues including speeding, motorists not obeying traffic signs and signals, and pedestrian safety as their primary concern. The new Traffic Unit will aim to improve municipal traffic enforcement and enhance public safety across HRM.

Harbour Update

Concurrent with the Regional Planning exercise, HRM is preparing a long range plan for Halifax Harbour, including the North West Arm and Bedford Basin. The Harbour Plan is addressing topics such as the Working Harbour (marine dependent industrial uses), transportation opportunities (including ferry service expansions), recreational opportunities (harbourfront parkland and trails), residential development opportunities and environmental improvement opportunities.

As part of the Harbour Plan, HRM is now finalizing Terms of Reference for a more detailed study of the western shoreline of Bedford Basin, generally between Birch Cove and the Bedford waterfront. Consultants will be asked to conduct analyses and provide recommendations on topics including future land use, access considerations (vehicular and pedestrian), multi-use trail and parkland, servicing (sewer/water), cultural heritage and archeological assets, public viewplane opportunities, and marine environmental considerations. The study will include extensive opportunities for consultation with the public and stakeholders. It is anticipated that this study will be awarded early in 2006 and will take several months to complete.

Proposed Mainland Common Recreation Centre Update

HRM recently distributed a survey to 26,000 residents in Districts 10, 15, 16 and a portion of 22 regarding proposed options A, B, & C for the new MCRC. Local Area Councillors and staff held a public meeting on December 8, at which time we brought forward a recommendation to the community for an enhanced option C - "Option C Plus." A more detailed update on the MCRC, including survey results, option information, and next steps, is being mailed to area residents in January. For more information, please log on to www.halifax.ca/mainlandcommon or email mainland@halifax.ca.

Fast Ferry Visits Halifax Harbour



Caption: Bedford to downtown in 20 minutes

Recent trials were conducted with the Whaling City Express, brought in from New Bedford, Massachusetts. These trials will provide information which will form part of a study on the feasibility of fast ferry service between Bedford and downtown Halifax. Staff will be presenting the study to Council early in the new year.

Animal Control Enforcement

Effective December 15, 2005, the Halifax Regional Municipality assumed responsibility for the enforcement component of Animal Control. Residents with questions or concerns regarding:

- dog attacks and biting incidents
- lost/found dogs
- dogs running at large
- dog licensing
- excessive barking
- dog defecation
- prohibited animals

should contact the HRM Call Centre at **490-4000**.

For more information on HRM Animal Services visit the HRM website at www.halifax.ca/AnimalControl

Off Leash Areas

Remember, you can be ticketed for having a dog off-leash in any HRM park which is not specifically posted as an off-leash area, and only Seaview Park and Point Pleasant Park have sections designated for off-leash use. During the off season though, i.e. from November 1st to May 1st, when sport and athletic fields are not in use, they are also available for off-leash between 6am and 10am.



Re-Building the Tax Structure in Halifax Regional Municipality

Halifax Regional Municipality will be embarking on a Tax Reform Strategy beginning in the New Year, and we need your help!

“Market Value” assessments are the only significant source of revenue available to local governments in Nova Scotia today. While Market Value assessment is the traditionally accepted method of levying property tax, there is increasing concern over its relevance in HRM. In the past several years, HRM has experienced unevenly distributed market value increases which have little to do with changes in municipal services available, the cost of municipal programs, and the ability of the individual homeowner to pay. As a result, citizens have become understandably frustrated with the market value system.

Council has asked staff to look for alternatives to the current tax structure. A series of round table discussions will take place in late January to gather citizen and stakeholder suggestions and input. A tax conference and community consultation will follow the round tables in February and March. The consultation will focus on the intended principles and visions of a prospective tax system, while gathering support and suggestions from citizens.

If you are interested in taking part in a round table discussion in your area, please let me know. Have a say in what you feel constitutes the best possible tax system for Halifax Regional Municipality.

Winter Parking Ban

Residents are reminded that having streets free and clear of parked vehicles during snow storms makes for more efficient and cost-effective snow removal operations. It also provided for better access/mobility by emergency response agencies.

Remember, vehicles obstructing snow removal or winter maintenance operations may be removed at the owner’s cost.

When the Overnight Winter Parking Ban is implemented, the public is notified through the media. Once that is in place, it applies every night from 1 a.m. to 7 a.m. until March 31, 2006, regardless of the weather conditions.

Snow & Ice Control

If you have questions related to snow plowing, or sidewalk snow clearing, please call the HRM Call Centre at **490-4000**. Your call will be recorded and the information relayed to the Snow Removal Supervisors.

Lists for the repair of property damaged by plows are compiled from these requests, so make sure you report any damage and get a Customer Service Request number which can be followed up later.



Bedford Highway As-of-right Development Restrictions

On December 12, after a 15 month process, Chebucto Community Council (CCC) held a public meeting regarding Case 00795: Bedford Hwy As-of-Right Development. CCC approved my motion to change the Mainland Area of the Halifax Land Use Bylaw limiting the height of residential buildings in C-2A (Minor Commercial) and C-2B (Highway Commercial) zoned properties to 35 feet; and also repealed the provision of allowing development on septic and wells along the Bedford Highway.

To obtain a copy of the HRM staff report, please contact the Municipal Clerks office at 490-4210.

Other Important Numbers

Emergency (Police/Fire/Ambulance).....	911
Halifax Regional Police - non emergency.....	490-5020
HRM Call Centre - Open seven days a week (7:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m).....	490-4000
Call Centre TTY/TDD.....	490-6645
HRM Homepage.....	www.halifax.ca
Community Council Information Line.....	490-6080
Mayor’s Office.....	490-4010
Councillors’ Office.....	490-4050
Diana Whalen, MLA, Halifax Clayton Park	443-8318
Peter Christie, MLA, Bedford.....	832-7383
School Board Member, Gary O’Hara.....	443-4077
Home.....	431-4084
Email.....	go’hara@hrsb.ns.ca
Public Works (After Hours).....	490-6203
Halifax Regional WaterCommission General Inquiries and Billing Info.....	490-4820



Delivery Note
Due to delivery routes followed by Canada Post, it is possible that some of these Newsletters may appear in other Districts. Please accept my apology for any confusion.