



District 17 Purcell's Cove - Armdale

The Mosher Report

Spring 2006



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Dear Residents,

RE: Sidewalk Snow Removal

The winter weather this year has been unusual; fortunately we have been light on snow storms! Back in August 2005, Council again discussed sidewalk snow removal. It has been ten years since the HRM amalgamation, and we still have different services for sidewalk snow removal in different areas of HRM. At the Council session on August 9, 2005, a motion was passed that HRM provide sidewalk snow removal for all HRM streets, funded through the urban tax rate. It was great to know that finally we would have equity and fairness throughout the municipality and I looked forward to the report.

After 6 months the staff report came back with a different recommendation, one that did not address HRM-wide sidewalk snow removal. It recommended that districts that currently pay an area rate for HRM to clear the sidewalks continue to do so, and districts in the former City of Halifax that currently do not have sidewalk snow removal receive removal only on sidewalks on arterial roads. During Council debate, we decided to increase this to include bus routes, in front of schools and possibly collector roads, with funding coming from the general urban tax rate.

I voted against the motion as I wanted a fair and uniform sidewalk snow clearing policy for all of HRM. However, Council chose to keep the status quo in their respective districts and add a small enhancement to the districts

presently without any service. Unfortunately, this means that there will still be a disparity of services within HRM, yet all residents who pay the urban tax rate will pay the increase. Since our district has only 25 kilometres of sidewalks, and some of the arterials were already cleared by HRM, it is probable that part of our property taxes will be subsidizing sidewalk snow removal in other areas.

Snow removal is a service in many Canadian municipalities, such as Montreal, Saint John and areas in Ontario. They understand that there are many people (eg. elderly, those with strollers, and persons with disabilities) who, after a snow storm, are prisoners in their own homes until the sidewalks are finally cleared. Although we do have By-laws in place to regulate snow removal standards, by the time a complaint is lodged, an inspector visits the site and the sidewalk is finally cleared, it can be days. This is not fair to many residents in our district. I will be working hard to find a final and fair resolution to the sidewalk snow removal issue before next year.

Linda Mosher



Spryfield Christmas Parade

“Dingle Bells”
Elizabeth Sutherland School
Winner of Best School category

Interpretive panels for Melville Park and Deadman's Island

New interpretive panels depicting the story of both Deadman's Island and Melville Island have recently been installed. There are three panels on Purcell's Cove Road in the small HRM park area across the water from the Armdale Yacht Club and three on Deadman's Island. From the well-marked entrance at Pinehaven Road walk down the path and you will see the interpretive Panels as well as the American monument.

HRM is trying to have these areas designated as National Historic sites, and we also would like to enhance public understanding of the history of these areas. The panels tell the story of Melville Island from the early 1800's to present day. Melville Island, now home to the Armdale Yacht Club, formerly served as a military prison for French and American prisoners captured in conflicts between the British and French prior to and during the War of 1812. Also, some refugees escaping slavery in the United States, known as the "Chesapeake Blacks," were quarantined in a hospital on Melville Island, as were Irish immigrants fleeing Ireland during the Great Famine of 1847. A number of those prisoners, immigrants and refugees, died of illness during their time on Melville Island and are believed to be buried on nearby Deadman's Island. In addition to enjoying the natural beauty of the site, visitors will be fascinated by the rich history told on the panels and will learn more about the significance of the two islands.



Dissolution of Deadman's Island Committee

The Deadman's Island Committee was established in late 2000 to "Advise and assist the Halifax Regional Municipality in the development of Deadman's Island as an international, national, provincial and municipal historic site." At their last meeting, in December 2005, the committee unanimously agreed that it had fulfilled its mandate and should be dissolved. This committee has had many accomplishments since HRM purchased Deadman's Island. The site was developed including construction of a pathway and bridge from Pinehaven Drive to the island and a path encircling the island. The area for installation of monuments was prepared and in May, 2005, a ceremony was held to dedicate the monument that was furnished by the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs. The bronze plaque identifies the 195 American soldiers buried at the site. The area also includes the three aforementioned interpretative panels.

The most recent members of the committee were: Guy MacLean (Chair), Wayne Adams, Derm Dunphy, Jack Hartnett, William MacLennan, Judy Robertson, and me. The committee's hard work and dedication is greatly appreciated. Staff from HRM, the American Consulate, Department of National Defence, U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs and the Canadian Armed Forces also played a significant role in ensuring that this historic site and its history has been captured for future generations. Thank you to all who helped.

New Year's Levees



Spryfield Earl Francis Memorial Legion, with President Betty Neville and Sergeant at Arms Al Bergeron



Armdale Yacht Club, with Commodore Karen Smith and Vice-Commodore Betty Anne Haliburton

Birthdays at Melville Lodge



Lena Skinner's 105th



Edith (Molly) Jones' 100th

Fair and Equitable Funding

As everyone knows, rising property assessments and taxes are major issues in our district. I have written articles with suggestions on how to improve this situation. Eighty per cent of HRM's revenue comes from property taxes. One of our major issues is that the province takes 25% of that for provincial services such as corrections, public housing, and education. This is an issue for all fifty-five Municipal units in the Province. The interests of these Municipal units are represented by the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) which was established in 1905. As the voice representing municipalities in Nova Scotia, it brings forward and presses the importance of the municipal agenda to the provincial government. The UNSM is run by a Board of Directors consisting of twelve voting members who are elected by their respective Municipal Councils. HRM has two members, Deputy Mayor Russell Walker and me.

Because of the unfairness of Municipal property tax dollars funding Provincial responsibilities, UNSM commissioned a study, lead by Dr. Paul Hobson, called "A Question of Balance - An Assessment of the State of Local Government in Nova Scotia." The report includes three main guiding principles: each level of government should fund expenditures in its respective jurisdictions from its own revenues; the Province should ensure that municipalities have access to broad property tax powers and revenues sufficient to finance their responsibilities; and

Nova Scotia's equalization program (ensuring municipalities receive reasonably comparable levels of service for reasonably comparable tax burdens) is fully funded by Provincial revenues. Currently the Province follows none of these principles. (<http://www.unsm.ca>)

The report is fair and makes good sense as it calls for each level of government raising and spending money within their respective mandates. If the Province were to accept the equity and fairness principles, then Municipalities would assume ownership of all roads in designated urban core areas and the Province would fully fund equalization, corrections, public housing and education from their own revenues. To put this in perspective, the mandatory money that HRM pays toward education, not including supplementary education funding, is almost \$90 million. Imagine what HRM could do with that extra funding. The list is very long. We could lower the property tax rates, have sufficient recreational facilities, better roads, improved transit and policing. I will be working hard through HRM, UNSM, and on my own to ensure that our Provincial representatives support equity and fairness and allow municipalities to use property tax revenues to support municipal needs. We are hopeful that the new Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations will support our recommendations. **I also urge all residents to contact their MLA to voice support for a fair taxation system.**

Armdale Rotary Conversion Update

The Armdale Rotary conversion to a roundabout and the Chebucto Road lane reversal project are integral parts of the regional transportation system. Last year's approved capital budget included \$600,000 for 2005/2006 and \$2.2 million for 2006/2007 for the conversion. These projects are presently in the design phase and are scheduled to begin this year.

The Chebucto Road project requires property acquisition in order to move ahead. Currently there are only two lanes in total from the rotary to Mumford Road. The acquired land will allow us to have two lanes inbound during the a.m. peak and two lanes outbound during the p.m. peak. This would give improved capacity and enable us to move forward with the rotary conversion. Overhead signals would operate similarly to the Herring Cove Road reversing lane system.

Depending on the timing of the acquisitions, both projects may get delayed until next spring; however, all efforts will be made to start these projects this year. In addition, improvements to the St. Margaret's Bay Road from Keating to Douglas Drive, including a sidewalk and pedestrian crossing, are being designed. Unfortunately, due to design complications, this project cannot start construction until the spring of 2007. As you can appreciate, land acquisitions and tender awards are all subject to Council approval.

J.L. Ilsley Class of '86 Reunion



There will be a Reunion of the J. L. Ilsley High School Class of '86 on August 10 to 12, 2006. There is a web site established for this event: <http://jl86.everage.ca>. If you would like to participate in the planning, please contact David Jollimore at djjollimore@yahoo.com

Cowie Hill Underground Wiring

Cowie Hill residents were fortunate during Hurricane Juan to have lost power for only a brief time. This area has underground wiring which was installed by a private contractor in 1973 and involved cables being installed directly in a sand-filled trench instead of a conduit system. Today's standards would not allow cables to be installed in this manner. Nova Scotia Power Incorporated (NSPI) feels that the system has exhausted its useful life and that, if this is not addressed in the near future, it may not continue to be reliable. There have been a couple of recent failures and NSPI indicates there is also a risk of oil leakage associated with corroded equipment. Since about 2000, NSPI has wanted to replace the underground wiring with overhead utility because it is cheaper: about \$900,000 for overhead service versus \$3.1 million for new underground utility. Residents in Cowie Hill are being represented by Condominium Corporation Managers and a lawyer they have retained to represent the residents' interests. This group has asked NSPI to come up with a more cost effective way to replace underground wiring. If an agreement cannot be reached, then a hearing will be held starting May 01, 2006 before the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (UARB), the governing body that regulates NSPI. If the matter does appear before the UARB, HRM will be seeking intervener status along with the Condo Managers and residents. HRM staff and I will be making presentations as to why we feel that this area must have underground wiring. HRM staff, both Legal and Engineering, and the Chebucto Community Council, have confirmed in writing the position that NSPI should replace this wiring with underground wiring, not overhead. When this development was constructed in 1973 it was designed for all services to be underground. This is a very compact subdivision that was not designed for overhead wires. There was no indication to the (former) City of Halifax that power service would be moved overhead at a later date.

Residents in Cowie Hill deserve to continue with underground wiring which not only gives them a more reliable power source, but increases property values and improves aesthetics. Underground wiring also allows for trees in increased numbers and sizes. This also improves aesthetics, air quality, reduces wind speed, reduces heating & cooling costs, reduces potential damage from motor vehicle accidents, and allows for reduced operating costs, such as tree trimming, etc. As well, underground lines reduce the potential for fire hazards and safety risks from downed lines. HRM has commissioned many studies that will be useful in presenting our case to the UARB. In fact, I initiated and obtained Council approval for the underground feasibility study. We have many resources at our disposal to assist Cowie Hill residents in putting forward credible rationale for the continuation of underground wiring.

Foresters Big Swim for Arthritis



Councillor Steve Adams and I had the pleasure of participating in the Halifax kick-off for the Foresters Big Swim for Arthritis at the Captain William Spry Centre. Leading the program was three-time Olympian, Joanne Malar, and Breakfast Television's Cyril Lunney, who had a "race" in the pool to jumpstart the event. The Foresters BIG Swim for Arthritis, "the first ever nationwide swim event," will be in more than 125 pools across Canada from April 20 to 23, 2006. By supporting this initiative, you will help The Arthritis Society fund critical research to help the four million Canadians with arthritis live their lives to the fullest.

Please join thousands of other swimmers and participate in the Foresters BIG Swim. There will be free pool entry on the day of your swim, a free swim cap, an AquaFun beach ball for AquaFun kids and you have access to Olympian Joanne Malar's exclusive training program. To register go on line at www.bigswim.ca or call 1-877-244-7946. More information can be obtained by emailing info@bigswim.ca. Each of the participating pools in HRM, Captain William Spry Centre, Centennial pool and Northcliffe pool, has different events such as individual, team and kids challenges. For those who fundraise for this worthy cause, there are incentives that include gifts such as t-shirts, merchandise gift certificates and a chance to win free airfare.



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