



District 17 Purcell's Cove - Armdale

The Mosher Report

Winter 2003 - 2004



HOW TO CONTACT ME



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DEAR RESIDENTS

Welcome to the latest edition of the Mosher Report. It has been a very busy year in our district as well as in all of HRM. Some long awaited projects have been started including the start of the Harbour Solutions Project and public consultation for the Regional Planning Process. As well, I am very pleased to announce after two years of hard work, that HRM now has a new blasting by-law which will provide better protection to residents, their homes, and the environment. There are also a number of other exciting initiatives that are underway in our district, which I have outlined in this newsletter.

I wish everyone a wonderful Holiday Season and a Happy New Year.

Sincerely,

Linda Mosher



UPDATE - STONERIDGE ON THE PARK

Based on resident feedback during numerous public meetings, and consultation with the local Councillor, the developer of Stoneridge On The Park have reduced their 1991 approved height for the Roxbury Building from 12 storeys to 10 storeys. As well, they have taken out the ground floor commercial component and replaced this with residential units. The primary green space/recreation in this area is the walkway along Hail Pond. United Gulf has agreed to provide an extra \$10,000 for additional trail development around the pond to create a more naturalistic pedestrian walkway. Although they have met their minimum land requirements for parkland dedication, I am pleased to announce they are providing additional land for a playground. I have requested that HRM include monies in the next capital budget for new playground equipment to service this rapidly growing subdivision

MURAL

To eliminate and prevent graffiti on the retaining wall at the intersection of Purcell's Cove Road at Herring Cove Road, I used district capital funds to have a mural painted. Artist Kenny Head has included elements reflecting the historical fabric of this community. The majority of the mural is painted on a plywood base which can be removed if necessary. There is a special coating painted on the mural to ensure the preservation of this work. Based on initial consultation with area residents, the mural depicts local scenery including the Memorial Tower, Sir Sandford Fleming, sailboats and a picture of Bill Purcell, the founder of the original ferry from Purcell's Cove to downtown.





INFILLING ON THE NORTH WEST ARM

I have received numerous calls regarding infilling of water lots on the North West Arm, and construction of buildings on these newly created land parcels. Many people are concerned about infilling on the North West Arm, view planes and HRM's role in the permitting process. Infilling permits are completely in the jurisdiction of the Federal Government, and approval must be obtained from Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Currently the Municipality's jurisdiction involves the use of the land once it has been infilled. There is no specific zoning requirement which applies exclusively to infilled water lots. The land use by-laws for Halifax Peninsula and Mainland provide that land created by infilling of a water lot takes on the zoning of the abutting land. Use of such land is then subject to the applicable provisions of the land use by-law. If the application complies with the land use by-laws, HRM must issue permits for accessory buildings.

The members of Chebucto Community Council have asked staff to investigate how the Municipality could be involved in regulating the infilling of water lots and if we can have specific provisions for infilled lots in our land use by-laws. It does not appear that HRM can have any authority over the infilling. However, it may be possible for the municipality to have specific regulations apply to infilled water lots to decrease allowable height on such land, require greater setbacks from the water or decrease the percentage of land that can be built upon. Staff will be presenting a report Chebucto Community Council early in 2004. If changes can be made to our land use by-laws, a public hearing will be held to ascertain the opinions of area residents. I have forwarded a copy of the first staff report and resident concerns on infilling to Geoff Regan, MP, 426-2217.

INVITATION TO SERVE HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Volunteer applications are being accepted to fill a vacancy on the Deadman's Island Committee. The mandate is to: "Advise and assist the Halifax Regional Municipality in the development of Deadman's Island as an international, national, provincial and municipal historic site". This is an ad hoc committee of Council and the meetings are usually held quarterly. It is preferable that the successful applicant be a resident of district 17 or district 18.

Applications are available at HRM Customer Services Centres, such as West End Mall; City Hall, or online: www.halifax.ca/boardscom/index.html. For more information, contact Sandra Shute at 490-6519.



COPS PROGRAM

The Halifax Regional Police (HRP) have initiated a new program called COPS - Citizens on Patrol. Councillors Adams, Walker and I supported this pilot project, which will run in our three districts, expanding to other areas of HRM if it proves successful. On November 22nd, 2003, 20 volunteers completed their training and are now patrolling the streets. These citizens have been screened by HRP and passed a formal application process to be accepted into the program. They will work under the direction of the Community Liaison Officer in the West Division, Constable Roger Booker. The COPS volunteers partner up and patrol the neighbourhoods using their own vehicles. These volunteers will assist Halifax Regional Police as an extra set of "eyes and ears on the street". They will report any suspicious activity, traffic accidents, or emergency situations to the central dispatch, who will send HRP units as required. Soon you will notice the new COPS signs on various streets indicating the area is serviced by the COPS program.



BLASTING BYLAW

There are many new developments in District 17, and these projects usually require blasting. About two years ago, I raised the issue of blasting to Regional Council, based on numerous calls from residents who were concerned about safety, damage to their properties, and nuisance issues such as dust and noise. I questioned the blasting practises and the effectiveness of our by-law to protect residents, their properties and the environment. After conducting extensive research on blasting practises throughout North America and consulting with numerous residents, I determined that significant changes were required to our by-law. I presented these findings to Council and obtained their approval to have staff assess the blasting practises in HRM.

Before the report was complete, there were many other blasting incidences in HRM with reports of rocks flying through the air considerable distances, even landing on vehicles and homes. The main issue was that the previous by-law was not effective in regulating blasting practises and was not a sufficient deterrent. In some cases, companies came in and used excessive charges for the area with little regard for existing communities. Although some of these incidences resulted in companies being charged, they either received a minimal fine, or the courts dismissed the charges due to insufficient evidence. When residents reported the damage they perceived to be a result of the blasting, no one would take ownership for causing the damage. This left homeowners with no recourse. I asked staff to develop a new, effective by-law; as the required changes were so substantial that amendments could not be made to the existing bylaw. This new by-law was prepared by HRM Engineer, Peter Duncan, after extensive study and consultation with industry, citizens, and government agencies. As more development will be ongoing in our area, the new by-law will discourage improper blasting practises that may

HRM staff audited blasting practises and blast designs for previous projects. They concluded that the ground vibration and air blast levels were not being accurately recorded all the time and that often larger than usual charge weights were being used, and our by-law was not effective in preventing these issues.

Our new by-law has incorporated many improvements, including:

- Standards for blast monitoring and reporting.
- Ensuring the weight of the explosive charge is recorded and regulated.
- "Scaled distance" determination will be made for each application, taking into account factors such as the types of rock formation and distance of nearest structure.
- Increased permit fees so that HRM can hire a full time Blasting Inspector.
- Provisions for a \$5,000 security deposit.
- The blasting company's monitor must now be a Professional Engineer or Professional Geoscientist.
- Specific requirements for calibration and placement of the monitoring machines.
- Strict requirements for community notification and provisions for public information meetings.
- Mandatory videotaping of interior for pre-blast inspections versus previous subjective dictating into recorder.
- Increasing the level of the blaster's insurance from \$1 million to \$2 million.
- Notification provisions for schools and hospitals before each blast.
- Water quality measurement requirement for homes with wells.
- Increasing the maximum fines to \$10,000 and more offences which can be prosecuted.

To put the changes of the new by-law in context, the weight of the explosives used in Fairmount was about 85 lbs in 5 inch holes, and the pre-blast survey area was 150m without staff conducting an extensive review. The new by-law would only allow about 35 lbs of explosives in 2 inch holes and the pre-blast survey area would be 200m. By-Law B-600 Respecting Blasting is available at www.region.halifax.ns.ca or at the Office of the Municipal Clerk, City Hall.



TRAFFIC CONGESTION COMING INTO THE PENINSULA

Area residents are experiencing greater problems with traffic travelling through their neighbourhoods to get to the peninsula. Motorists are also increasingly experiencing frustration trying to access the Peninsula of Halifax. There are varied public opinions and solutions to this problem and most cite that rotary corrections are necessary. However, changing the rotary without making changes to the arterial roads such as Quinpool and Chebucto, would still see traffic backed up on these roads.

HRM is currently in the midst of our Regional Planning Process that should be completed in 2005, included is a transportation component. I do not think that we have to wait until 2005 for someone to tell us that the rotary and its arterials are a problem. This is quite obvious. All points onto the Peninsula are suffering from heavy traffic congestion and regardless of the Regional Plan outcome, there will be additional loading due to the proliferation of development. I raised this issue at Council and obtained their support that "staff prepare a report addressing the issue of heavy traffic congestion accessing the peninsula in the short term". My goal is to have this issue assessed immediately, so that we can properly plan and budget for these major transportation projects now versus waiting until the plan is complete.

We have a new Traffic Manager at HRM. I had the opportunity to take him out to see the numerous traffic issues throughout my entire district. I summarized the requests I have had from residents including those for traffic lights, speed humps, crosswalks and visibility issues. Our traffic department will be conducting an assessment of our current standards for guidelines such as crosswalks. When these guidelines are complete, our requests will be reassessed. I will keep residents apprised of any new traffic initiatives once this analysis is complete.

WATER COMMISSION MOVING TO COWIE HILL AREA

The Halifax Regional Water Commission (HRWC) will be constructing a new building on Cowie Hill Road on their existing lands. This will house their Western Region Operations Centre and administrative offices which currently work out of the existing HRWC facility on Lady Hammond Road. The

Cowie Hill site is 19 acres and now includes the HRWC water reservoir and smaller pumping chamber. The main building area will be about 19,000 square feet. A second building will be about 5,000 square feet and will be a long term parts storage building. This will be located in the rear yard of the site, farthest away from any residential areas. Access to the property will be off Cowie Hill Road. The landscaping plan must be submitted when they apply for a building permit. The plan will include buffering of onsite uses and functions from the neighbouring residential uses, and the retention of all suitable existing vegetation. I look forward to seeing the management and staff of HRWC moving to and becoming involved in our district.

UPDATES - SIR SANDFORD FLEMING PARK - "THE DINGLE"

Hurricane Juan caused damage throughout Sir Sandford Fleming Park. The first priority of HRM staff was to stabilize the site to ensure that unsafe areas were clearly marked. The hurricane damaged the roof of the tower, and I have worked with HRM staff to ensure immediate repairs so newly restored tower would not suffer interior damage. Staff is now in the process of detailing the damage in the park and submitting a disaster assistance request to the federal government. I have also identified areas that I would like HRM staff to include in the next fiscal budget for this Park.

Last year Council approved \$50,000 for playground equipment replacement at Sir Sandford Fleming Park. This project was tendered and awarded, however, installation was delayed due to the hurricane. Existing equipment, which was deemed unsafe, was removed but three new structures will be installed this year.

HARBOUR SOLUTIONS UPDATE

Last month, Federal, Provincial, Municipal leaders and invited guests attended the official ground-breaking ceremony in Halifax to mark the start of construction on the first phase of the sewage collection system for the Harbour Cleanup. Although some preliminary construction had already begun, the ceremony marked the beginning of excavation of a 1075 metre tunnel, which will run from the corner of Sackville Street and Lower Water Street to the Halifax sewage treatment plant site. This site is located at the intersection of Barrington Street and Cornwallis Street. Halifax Regional Council signed an agreement in August 2003 for installation of the new sewer collection system infrastructure. This phase of the project is expected to take 24 months to complete. HRM is continuing to negotiate with a private consortium to design and build the three sewage treatment plants in Halifax, Dartmouth and Herring Cove. The overall Harbour Solutions Project is expected to cost more than \$300 million and take approximately 54 months to complete. The Federal government has agreed to contribute \$30 million to the project and the Province of Nova Scotia has agreed to contribute \$30 million as well as approximately \$2 million in required land.



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