

Frequently Asked Questions

A virtual public information meeting was held on Thursday, June 17, 2021. The following are a list of frequently asked questions regarding the proposal at lands to the east of Lovett Lake.

When can the community/Baptist church receive the baptismal path lands?

There are areas of historical significance identified on the site which include a historic baptismal path used by the Beechville Baptist Church - a Municipally Registered Heritage Property, gravesites, and an area of land where historic building foundation remains related to the habitations and activity of first-generation War of 1812 Black refugees that formed the community, were uncovered, and excavated in 2014.

The proposal includes intent to provide an area of land to the west of the Beechville Baptist Church where the historic baptismal path and gravesites are located, to the community. This area of land is currently approved as parkland under the existing agreement and cannot yet be subdivided and land transferred. Through this current application process, the agreement can be amended to remove the parkland from this site and allow the land subdivision to occur. If an amending agreement is approved by Community Council that enables the subdivision, the private land transfer can be completed between the property owner and the community.

What was Council Direction in 2020?

In 2020, Council acknowledged that this site is no longer part of Case 20226 - Beechville Planning Strategy Review & Community Benefit Action Plan, and directed staff to address the following within the current development agreement application:

- creating policy to ensure the Beechville Baptist Church property and associated heritage assets are protected;
- integrating parkland and community uses into the Armco development;
- creating opportunities for cultural and community amenities to commemorate the African Nova Scotian history in Beechville;
- active engagement with the Beechville African Nova Scotia community

Council also directed that the assets and opportunities identified by the Beechville African Nova Scotian community are considered and addressed wherever possible (these include securing the burial grounds and the baptismal path for the church and protecting and commemorating archaeological sites). Council also directs staff to engage with Beechville Community Development Association prior to developing a draft development agreement for these lands.

Feedback collected at the public information meeting is helping inform the process going forward, including drafting the amending agreement to address protection of heritage assets,

integrating parkland, and the ability for the landowner to subdivide the lands where the baptismal path and graves are located in order for the owner to deed the land to the community.

There are additional aspects of Council direction that were given in the report, which are being addressed in the ongoing Beechville Planning Strategy Review and Community Benefit Action Plan.

How will be historic building foundation be commemorated?

The Municipality acknowledges the historical importance of the building foundation remains related to the habitations and activity of first-generation War of 1812 Black refugees. The building foundation was excavated and removed from the property in 2014. The area where the foundation was located is proposed as municipal parkland, however the Parks department is welcoming feedback from the community to properly commemorate the site. Feedback collected from the public engagement meeting has been passed along to the Parks department.

Will there be buffering/screening from the church?

A 15 foot buffer is required for all residential lands that abut the Church. No development shall be permitted in the buffer and must consist of trees, shrubbery, and existing vegetation.

A 5 foot buffer is required for all residential lands that abut Parkland.

What will the areas of Parkland look like? Will there be access to Lovett Lake? Will parks be accessible for strollers/mobility impaired?

On the current plan there are three areas of proposed parkland. Generally on areas of parkland this size, there would be children's play equipment, benches, trees/plantings, and possibly a sports court in one area. The parkland near the lake is quite sloped, so the area might have access to the lake, but with the steep slope, it is not clear yet what that will look like infrastructure-wise. The Parks department has commented that with slopes that challenging, it may be unlikely that they could construct infrastructure to be completely accessible.

Other areas of the parkland would likely include children's play equipment, park benches, etc.

There is a historic baptismal path and gravesites located on the land near the lake that is intended to be deeded to the Baptist Church by the property owner, so parkland near this area will require thoughtful design as to not impede on the historic value.

Can Blasting be stopped?

The Municipality cannot stop blasting unless the construction does not adhere to the Basting By-law. The Blasting By Law B-600 regulates blasting in the HRM. Some of the rules in that bylaw include:

- No blasting Sat, Sun, or holidays

- No blasting after 6pm or before 8am
- No blasting after sunset
- Pre blast survey is required which includes public notification
- No blasting within 300m of a school, hospital, or other health care facility unless notice has been given to the senior administrator of the school or health care facility and they are informed at least 2 hours prior to blast.

Will there be school capacity?

HRM sends planning applications with a significant amount of residential development to the Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE) for their comment. HRCE provides responses noting that the Education Act mandates that every person over the age of five years and under the age of 21 years has the right to attend a public school serving the school region in which that person resides. The HRCE will work to ensure all students are provided with access.

Will there be environmental protection?

Any wetland alteration requires a permit through the Department of Environment. Additionally, grade alteration and stormwater management plans are required at permitting and the site has to meet the by-law G-200.

Will there be a new lighted intersection and crosswalks on St. Margarets Bay Road and Higgins Ave (the Phase 1 access)?

HRM Engineering has approved the street design for phase 1 which includes traffic signals and intersection upgrades at this intersection.

Will there be crosswalk extension along the North side of St. Margarets Bay Road? Will there be any additional crosswalks along St. Margarets Bay Road?

Other than the intersection upgrades mentioned above for Phase 1, this development does not include any additional crosswalks. Through the HRM Road Safety plan the St. Margarets Bay Road corridor is scheduled to be reviewed to identify and plan for additional marked crosswalks to better support pedestrian connectivity. This review is scheduled to start this year.

Will there be affordable housing within the development?

The Municipality recognizes affordable housing as important and supports and facilitates it when we are able. At this point, the province regulates affordable housing and this process is something worked out between the Developer and the Provincial Government housing department.

The HRM is working with the provincial government to expand legislation to allow for new tools to require affordable units within new development and expanding programs to support and encourage affordable housing throughout the non-profit and private housing sector in the future.

Is there any flexibility in the location of the stormwater management area?

There may not be because of the topography and retention areas are in the low lying areas of the development. The development agreement process is intended to vary subdivision and land use by-law requirements, and does not necessarily allow for Halifax Water staff to manage the location of infrastructure.

What will the management system look like (rock lined with fence, gradual grassed/natural area or underground tank?)

Stormwater management ponds, on Halifax Water property, in recent years have not included a fenced-in area. Instead, Halifax Water has been going with a grassed, or vegetated swale/depression. It is a naturalized depression.

Halifax Water expects that will be the same approach, however, the amount of land will dictate the pond/slope. If it has a steeper slope, a fence may be required.

Typically, these are dry ponds, and only slow down the peak flows, so water does not sit for long periods.

Is Lovett Lake maintained by HRM? Will it be suitable for swimming?

The federal and provincial governments share the responsibility over water issues related to agriculture, health and significant national water issues. This notwithstanding, as the level of government closest to residents and with responsibilities for planning, parks and recreation, community enjoyment and wellbeing, and environmental sustainability, the Municipality has a critical role to play.

Council's direction in 2020 as part of Case 20226 - Beechville Planning Strategy Review & Community Benefit Action Plan, and directed staff to address policy options to ensure water quality of Lovett Lake is protected. This work is being completed through Case 20226 and the work involves both the HRM and the Province of Nova Scotia.