

On Thursday, August 8, we held the inaugural meeting of our new Community Champions initiative. This group consists of extremely active community volunteers with experience and expertise in recreation, wharves, lighthouse preservation, community centres and many other interests throughout our district.

As we introduced ourselves, I was in awe of the level of volunteerism and commitment. We shared areas of concern and discussed situations which were common to all. The constant topic was that of liability insurance and Director's Insurance: the cost for which ranged from \$750 to \$2,500 and has greatly impacted the ability of community groups to provide services.

As a result of this meeting, we are seeking information on the process to develop an all-encompassing community group to manage insurance costs. The intent is to allow all existing Boards and Associations to continue and remain autonomous. We will be seeking to utilize a model that works in the best interests of all.

Metro Transit – Public Meetings

In the coming weeks, Metro Transit will be hosting a series of public meetings to engage residents discussion on topics related to public transit in HRM; why it's important, and how you believe it should grow in the next five years. The results will be used to establish the community's goals and aspirations for the future of transit in the region, and will direct the development of Metro Transit's Five Year Service Plan. This is your chance to make an impact; it's your transit system, and it's time for us to move forward together.

The first-round of public sessions are scheduled for September 9 (St. Agnes Church Hall, Halifax), September 11 (Sackville Legion, Lr. Sackville), and September 12 (Holiday Inn – Harbourview, 101 Wyse Road, Dartmouth). Sessions will be held in both the afternoon and evening on these dates. Please check the HRM webpage at: <http://www.halifax.ca/> for more information.

2013/14 School Year

As always, September brings the start of school. Whether it be grade primary, junior or senior high school, Community College or University. September brings a new beginning to learning. No matter where you are on the education journey, I am certain you will experience excitement and perhaps a little anxiety. The anxiety will surely pass. Simply do the very best you can, the rest will fall into place.

Sambro Sou'Wester Days

Sambro Sou'Wester Days was a resounding success, by all measures. The much anticipated ball championships were entertaining and the washer-toss, as always, had plenty of laughs. The parade keeps getting better, with more community groups participating. And the Lobster Chowder was outstanding.

As you all know, Sou'Wester Days don't just happen. There is a lot of preparation, planning and work that allows us all the opportunity to participate. Without the incredible work of all the volunteers, this festival would not be a success. I thank everyone for what you have done.

A very special thanks goes out to Leslie Harnish and Kim McKay for their tireless work. It is impossible to measure the hours they put in over the past

months. Their hard work and dedication has not gone unnoticed.

Funds

There has been a new process implemented by HRM for community groups who request district capital funds for projects. Whether it be large amounts for playground and sport field upgrades or smaller amounts for a community project, a form will be provided for you to fill out. This additional step will ensure all disbursements are in keeping with our policies and can stand-up under public scrutiny.

Although I do my very best to help as many as possible, some requests simply do not qualify; however, that is not to say they are not worthwhile.

I welcome your suggestions and requests.

3-1-1 HRM Citizen Contact Centre

Our 3-1-1 HRM Citizen Contact Centre service has been in place for some time now and is designed to offer assistance on a variety of municipal matters from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. seven days a week, with the exception of Christmas Day and New Year's Day. The 3-1-1 services responded to just over 413,000 calls last year alone with a goal of answering each call within 25 seconds.

Our agents will take your information and provide you with a Customer Service Request (CSR) reference number which will allow you to track your issue. At any time you can call 3-1-1 with your CSR number and request an update.