

Stormwater and Flooding in the HRM

The major issue for some areas of the municipality before Council is the issue of stormwater and residential flooding. Finding causes, solutions, and making improvements to existing public infrastructure is a shared responsibility between HRM and Halifax Water, and in some cases the Halifax Regional School Board.

Halifax Water is the water, wastewater and stormwater utility serving the residents of the Halifax Regional Municipality pursuant to the *Public Utilities Act*. Halifax Water is an autonomous, self-financed utility that is regulated by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board.

Halifax Water is incorporated under the Halifax Regional Water Commission Act, authorized to own and operate water supply, wastewater facilities and shared and non-shared HRM stormwater systems for the benefit of HRM residents. Halifax Water is owned by HRM; however, its property, assets and operations are governed by a board of commissioners appointed by HRM Regional Council. Council does not govern Halifax Water.

Stormwater management and infrastructure contributing to flooding were key issues I heard as a resident of Lower Sackville, and during the campaign for Regional Council. Because this is a significant ongoing issue impacting properties and people, it is and will continue to be one of my main focuses as Councillor, to work with all parties to find a solution to this huge problem.

I've been told that bigger advancements on this issue have been made in the last months than in the previous five or ten years.

In February, Regional Council approved a new Stormwater Infrastructure Funding Policy which puts a new three million dollars from HRM, and likely another one million per year from Halifax Water into annual projects for new and enhanced stormwater infrastructure. Early projects are complex, particularly while examining the role individual residents have in the funding model. However, it is certain that in 2013, HRM has made progress.

I believe that Halifax Water should be a regulated utility; however, it should be under the governance of HRM elected officials. In January, Regional Council approved my motion to:

1. Clarify the current governance framework respecting Halifax Water and the authorities of Regional Council; and
2. Provide options, including consideration for realignment of the organizational reporting structure, and / or responsibility transfer, to improve governance, accountability, communication, policy, public service and public infrastructure, and the authority of Regional Council to direct such.

Currently, HRM's Chief Financial Officer is developing a project plan and method to provide a sound analysis to review the 2006 decision by Regional Council to transfer wastewater and stormwater service from HRM to Halifax Water. I am looking forward to constructive and progressive discussion and improvement with this work.

Lots in the works, lots to be done...

In November 2012, along with HRM and Halifax Water staff, I held a public meeting to discuss matters related to the localized "Riverside" flooding area within Lower Sackville. The meeting covered issues of to public and private property owner responsibility for stormwater management, infrastructure currently in place, and possible solutions for future infrastructure upgrades. There was a subsequent public meeting with representatives of the insurance industry.

In June, there will be a follow-up meeting to provide an overview of the results of recent Halifax Water stormwater system modeling and possible solutions for future infrastructure upgrades. This meeting will be held **on June 13th from 7-9 p.m. at the Kinsmen Hall, 70 First Lake Drive.**

Regardless of where you live in HRM, in the event of a stormwater/flooding issue, residents are advised to call the HRM Citizen Contact Center at 3-1-1 to log their issue. This will ensure it is routed to the proper authority and facilitates the tracking of the issue and confirmation of follow up.

I communicate with residents through various social media, newsletters, and internet. For updates on community events, and various municipal information, please visit my HRM web page at: www.halifax.ca/councillors/district15 . Or my Facebook page at: Steve Craig for HRM Council. You can also reach me by phone at [\(902\) 240-0441](tel:9022400441), by e-mail at Steve.Craig@halifax.ca, or my office at [490-1577](tel:4901577).

If you are interested in receiving my monthly Electronic Newsletter, please email Nadine.Yuriev@halifax.ca with "District 15 E-Newsletter" in the subject line and you will be added to the distribution list. E-mail addresses will not be shared.

Best Regards Always,

Steve