

Happy Holidays



Councillor Bill Karsten
Portland - East Woodlawn
District 7 Newsletter

Halifax Regional Municipality

Winter 2007



Dear Residents,

As the Holiday Season approaches I am pleased to have this opportunity to wish you and your families Peace and Happiness throughout the Season. I also wish you Prosperity and Health for the upcoming New Year.

How quickly the months fly by! It has again been a very busy year with many positive things happening in District 7 and throughout the Municipality. Although there were a few construction delays, the nine streets that were promised for reconstruction, resurfacing or micro sealing have been successfully completed. The major reconstructions were Spar Crescent and Spring Ave. and they look great! We are now in the process of developing next year's Proposed Capital Budget and although we are making progress I will continue to work towards getting our District's streets back up to standard. The Hwy.111, Mount Hope Interchange is now open and is another positive step in helping reduce the traffic congestion on Portland St. The next step is the proposed connector road from Caldwell Rd. to the Interchange. We have begun work on the project by forming the Shearwater Advisory Committee comprised of 4 residents and key stakeholders to make recommendations as the project moves forward.

I have received many positive comments in regard to the painting of murals on our traffic boxes and am pleased to inform you that we have completed that program and that all our boxes are done. I believe they add beauty to our streetscape and character to our community.

I have included in this newsletter an article on our Council Focus areas which outlines Council's multi- year issues. I encourage you to take the time to read it and hope you find it informative.

As your Councillor, I am committed to continuing to work hard to achieve results for our District and our Municipality. Not only on the daily issues that cross my desk but for the long term issues that will result in making our community a more vibrant, healthy and safe place to live and play. It continues to be an honour and privilege to serve you and I thank you for your continued support.

In closing, on behalf of my wife Muriel, my family and myself, I again wish to extend to you and your family Happy Holidays and all best the Season has to offer.

How to Reach Me

Councillors' Support Office
Halifax Regional Municipality
Post Office Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5

Home Office..... 490-7032
Cellular 476-1855
Fax..... 490-5482
Email..... karsteb@halifax.ca

HRM Call Centre.....490-4000
24hr Police Non-Emergency..490-5020
Fire Non-Emergency:.....490-5530

Two New Programs Launched in District 7

Over the past several months 2 new programs have been introduced to our community and I wish to commend and thank those who helped to launch these initiatives. Following are highlights of the programs:

Stop Speeding with the Pace Car Program

Help stop speeding with the Pace Car Program, an initiative of Active & Safe Routes to School in partnership with Canada's home, car and business insurers was introduced at the Annual Portland Estates Spring Fair.

It's simple!!! Drivers in the community sign the Pace Car pledge, and then proudly display the official Pace Car emblem on the bumper of their car. By agreeing to drive within the speed limit, cars become a mobile example, slowing the traffic behind them. Drivers also agree to become more aware of and courteous to other road users, especially pedestrians and cyclists. Many Pace Cars can have a positive effect on calming traffic throughout your neighbourhood. The more people who join, the better it works! For more information please contact Cheyenne Dickinson at 442-5055 or walk@ecologyaction.ca

Speeding throughout our communities continues to be an issue in District 7. This program is just one example of how YOU can make a difference. It seems that in our society speeding is still looked at as being socially accepted much as drinking and driving was many years ago. To change this accepted attitude, behavior and attitudes must change. Small differences in vehicle speeds, before braking begins, can result in large differences in impact speeds.

Consider two cars traveling side by side at a given instant. One car traveling at 50 km/h and one car overtaking the other at 60 km/h. Suppose, that a child runs onto the street at a point just beyond that at which the car traveling at 50 km/h can stop. The other car will still be traveling at 44 km/h at that point. This has been proven and documented through speeding research.

One great reason to conscientiously slow down and observe the speed limit!

Constant reminders and education have proven to be effective in getting people aware of the dangers of speeding. To that end I am pleased that recently council supported my motion to have the Mayor write a letter to the Minister of Transportation and Public Works to encourage the Province to initiate a Provincial Speeding Education Campaign. I will continue to pursue this important issue.

Idle-Free Program



The Children's Clean Air Network introduced the Idle Free Program on September 21st at Portland Estates Elementary School. Its mission is to bring forward the issue of excessive idling and encourage our residents to reduce idling as much as possible. The program points out the large amount of greenhouse gases and air pollutants that needlessly goes out into the atmosphere and dispels some of the myths surrounding the idling of our cars. Every year idling adds thousands of tons of pollutants to our atmosphere and contribute to health concerns such as asthma.

Excessive idling also contributes to smog and poor air quality and fouls spark plugs and increases engine wear. A few ways you can help are as follows: 1) In most conditions, start driving your vehicle after no more that 30 seconds of idling. Most cars and trucks are designed to warm up

while driving at moderate speed. 2) Turn off your engine if you are going to be stopped for more than 10 seconds except in traffic. Idling for more than 10 seconds uses more fuel than restarting your engine. For more information please contact Ron Zima at Children's Clean Air Network 456-2550 or e-mail rzima@accesswave.ca

Clearcutting: A Clear Violation

Within the past month a group of residents for whatever misguided reason decided to clearcut the protected buffer zone behind their homes on Russell Lake. Although a few mature trees were left, this is a blatant violation of the Development Agreement and will not be tolerated. Much thought went into the wording of the development agreement through the public process and Russell Lake West was to be a standard in terms of environmental protection. HRM staff continues to work with the residents to proceed towards reinstating the properties. I commit that should that fail other enforcement measures will be taken. We had a similar situation on Bell Lake a few years ago, and we were successful by replanting and charging the violating resident. I commend HRM staff for their swift response and also for undertaking the HRM Urban Forest Master Plan. I had the opportunity on Wednesday September 19th to participate in a lecture, The Importance of Trees to Cities by Dr. David Nowak from the USDA Forest Service which again stressed issues surrounding this important topic. We have 5 beautiful Lakes in District 7 and in a day of higher understanding of environmental issues we must protect them. Please let this be the last time we deal with this issue and please do not cut trees in a protected buffer zone.

East Dartmouth Community Centre



A Dream comes True! After many years of disappointment and delays, construction has finally started on the East Dartmouth Community Centre. Located beside Caledonia Junior High School, the Centre is located just outside the boundary of District 7 but will service residents in many of our communities in East Dartmouth. Along with a dedicated group of residents, key stakeholders, HRM staff, and support from myself and other elected officials much thanks goes out to Councillor Andrew Younger. He has worked tirelessly to make this dream become a reality. The projected cost is approximately \$4M with \$2.2M being provided in provincial and federal funding. The Community Centre is scheduled to open in June 2008 and will be a much needed asset to our Districts.

HRM Council Focus Areas 2008/09

Often much attention in the media or public form is placed on types of issues that Council deals with on a daily basis. Following I have outlined our "Council Focus Areas" which are discussions that are regional priority setting exercises representing multi-year issues. In October 2006, Halifax Regional Council consolidated fourteen previously established areas of priority into four categories. A brief update for each of the four categories is presented below. For more detailed information please review the reports online at: <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/November132007CommitteeoftheWholeAgendaHalifaxRegionalMunicipality.html>

1. PROPERTY TAX REFORM

Council requested that staff review the foundations of the current property tax system as the objectives and philosophy of the present system are unclear and there has been much debate over the relevance of using property assessment values for municipal tax purposes. A thirteen member Tax Reform Committee has been formed comprised of 7 appointed residents and 6 councillors. It is expected that the committee's work will take 12-18 months in total. Public consultations and a public opinion survey have already been undertaken in order to identify: the principles of a well thought out tax system; what foundations the tax system should be based on; and, how views of residents/businesses might differ. The committee submitted an Information Report to Regional Council on July 3rd and I have provided the web site should you wish to see it in detail. It can be found at: www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/070703cai07.

The next steps are: the setting of final timelines for the project including the timing of the expected 2008 public consultations; review of proposed foundations of the tax system including its purpose and an explanation of the evaluation criteria that has been developed; presentation of the proposed tax packages that could replace the existing tax system and the impact of the system on various types of taxpayers as well as implementation considerations.

2. INFRASTRUCTURE

The Infrastructure Focus Area represents capital planning and infrastructure needs for all HRM business units, Halifax Regional Water Commission and the Halifax Regional Library. This priority area requires an integration across the four Council Focus Areas to ensure consistency and to avoid redundancy. In December 2006, Council approved a five-year approach for Infrastructure Recapitalization Planning; endorsed asset management as an approach for better Capital Planning; and recognized that staffing capacity and alignment will be key to effectively delivering the five-year plan. As a result, on October 2, 2007, the Infrastructure and Asset Management Business Unit was formed to support improved Capital Planning and project delivery.

The next steps include building a culture of asset management into the organization, including the security and safeguarding of assets, and the development of an Asset Management Strategy with a more detailed five-year capability and recapitalization plan, and funding strategy, within each asset class. Development of a capital project prioritization tool will assist in rationalizing and incorporating the priorities of the following initiatives: Regional Plan, Community Visions, Active Transportation Plan, Environmental Sustainability, Cultural Plan and Economic Strategy priorities.

3. PUBLIC SAFETY

Citizens expect a timely and appropriate emergency response, a feeling of safety in their neighbourhoods and that buildings, properties and infrastructure in HRM be safe, healthy and well maintained. Public Safety consists of Fire, Integrated Emergency Services and Police/RCMP Services. To address root causes of crime, improve public education and enhance community safety, HRM Fire and Police are striving to develop new partnerships and enhance existing ones through community and government participation and engagement. In response to these goals, there were 52 new hires for the Halifax Regional Police force in 2007 for a total of 170 over the last four years. Of those new hires, 104 replaced retiring officers and 67 were hired to meet the increase in the number of additional police officers required. The RCMP have hired 24 new recruits, to date, in 2007 in addition to the 26 hired in 2006.

The re-alignment of Community Projects to Police continues to reflect a more balanced and coordinated response to By-Law issues. To date in 2007, the Park Patrol has made 25,102 visits to HRM parks resulting in 28 Summary Offence Tickets being issued. Enforcement of By-Law M100 (Minimum Standards) resulted in 689 inspections with an additional 95 inspections conducted by Fire Services.

Fire and Emergency Services are continuing volunteer firefighter recruitment with emphasis in those areas with low volunteer turn out during day time hours. The identified major deficiencies with rural fire stations have been corrected and ongoing maintenance will address remaining concerns. A draft Pandemic Plan has been developed and approved by the EMO (Emergency Measures) Planning and Advisory Committee. The plan will be before Council in March 2008 for final approval. A facility profile has been developed and is currently under review. Fire and EMO will continue to address the challenge of recruiting and retaining volunteers in the rural communities and will continue to seek Federal and Provincial funding in support of Emergency preparedness.

HRM Police, RCMP and Fire will continue to work with the communities to provide timely emergency response. HRP and RCMP will review the findings of the Perivale +Taylor Report, the Mayor's Roundtable on Violence and the Provincial Crime Reduction Strategy to advocate the next reasonable steps within their mandate.

4. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Building Communities that are self supporting and equipped to address opportunities and challenges are key to HRM's success. Recognizing the important function communities can play in their respective development has led HRM to shift towards a community-based service delivery model. The community-based model places greater emphasis on empowering and organising community, building relationships and facilitating community networks and ensuring systems, processes and institutions are in place for communities to be successful. The focus is on the positive assets of the community and their involvement in setting their own priorities and being part of the solution. The essential ingredient of community building is a healthy volunteer base that is engaged and active in community life and proud of their community and cultural diversity.

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4. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - Continued -

HRM's Community Visioning process is a follow up to the Regional Plan and is an important aspect of implementing the community-based model. Community driven visions were approved by Council for Musquodoboit Harbour, Fall River and the Bedford Waterfront and includes action plans to guide both short and long term service delivery and community planning needs. Other Districts, including ours, will be selected for the Community Visioning process on an ongoing basis.

The Cultural Advisory Committee is developing a Public Art Policy. 14 Community Proud Events were held throughout HRM attracting more than 2000 residents with more than 350 youth directly participating in the community art programs. Staff are in the process of creating 30 new murals for HRM Traffic Control Boxes. In total, 27 new pieces of public art have already been created. The Community Art and Community Proud programs have been successful in advancing a sense of pride and community. Council has also recently approved a recommendation by the committee to apply to the Federal Government for a "Cultural Capitals of Canada Designation."

The Youth Engagement process will continue to plan, develop and deliver youth services to ensure an appropriate range of programs in sport, arts, leisure and leadership are available. An increased focus will continue to be placed on disengaged or marginalised youth and pre-teens.

A Youth Advisory Committee has been formed. The next steps include continuing to evaluate gaps and opportunities in programs for 10-12 year olds and adjust accordingly.

In April 2007, Council established a Regional Plan Advisory Committee (RPAC) to advise them on the progress of major projects undertaken under the Regional Plan (RP); a document that provides the framework for monitoring growth and change. The RPAC will forward their first annual report to Regional Council in December 2007 and will include a detailed implementation schedule on functional plans.



Councillors Bill Karsten and Andrew Younger get in the Holiday Spirit by helping with the IWK Miracle Kids Day Fundraiser at a local Swiss Chalet restaurant. \$1 from each Festive Special or Quarter Chicken Dinner was donated to the Children's Miracle Network.

Contact Numbers

Emergency (Police/Fire/Ambulance) 911

Police - Non Emergency 490-5020

HRM Call Centre - Open seven days a week
(7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m) 490-4000

Call Centre TTY/TDD 490-6645

HRM Homepage: www.halifax.ca

Animal Control 468-9219

Community Council Information Line 490-6080

Councillors' Office, City Hall 490-4050

Mayor's Office 490-4010

MLA, Dartmouth South - Portland Valley,
Marilyn More 463-6673

MLA, Dartmouth East, Joan Massey 464-3805

MLA, Cole Harbour, Darrell Dexter 462-5300

MP, Dartmouth - Cole Harbour,
Michael Savage 462-6453

School Board, Howard Windsor 464-2000 ext. 4445

Water Commission -
General Inquiries and Billing Info. 490-4820

Public Works, after hours 490-6203

Please Recycle



Due to Canada Post mailing zones, some residences that are not in District 7, may receive this newsletter. I apologize for any confusion caused and hope you still find the information useful.