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Item No. 04
Halifax Regional Council
January 24, 2017

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council
Original Signed by Director

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Brad Anguish, Director, Parks & Recreation
Original Signed

DATE: January 12, 2017

SUBJECT: Eastern Shore Recreation Needs Assessment / Sheet Harbour Lions Community Centre

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

1. October 6, 2015 Regional Council motion:

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Whitman that Halifax Regional Council direct staff to:

1. Decline the request from the Province of Nova Scotia, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and Halifax Regional School Board to fund a HRM enhancement or addition to the new Primary - 12 Eastern Shore School; and
2. Engage with the Province of Nova Scotia in the design discussions of the new Primary-12 Eastern Shore School in order to ensure that, as much possible, the design of the new school is able to be used to support recreation uses.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested that it would be premature for Council to make a decision on whether or not to fund an HRM enhancement or addition to the school before the location and design are finalized.

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Outhit

That part 1 of the main motion be deferred pending more information on the site and design aspects of the school. **MOTION TO DEFER PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. September 17, 2015 Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee motion:

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Craig that the Community Planning & Economic Development Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct staff to:

1. Decline the request from the Province of Nova Scotia, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and Halifax Regional School Board to fund a HRM enhancement or addition to the new Primary-12 Eastern Shore School; and
2. Engage with the Province of Nova Scotia in the design discussions of the new Primary-12 Eastern Shore School in order to ensure that, as much possible, the design of the new school is able to be used to support recreation uses. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

- *HRM Charter*, Section 79 (1) The Council may expend money required by the Municipality on(k) recreation programs, [...] and, (x) lands and buildings required for a municipal purpose [...]
- Community Facility Master Plan, approved by Regional Council on May 28, 2008

BACKGROUND

In December 2013, the Province of Nova Scotia announced a new Primary to Grade 12 School in the Eastern Shore School Board district. After the announcement of the new school, the Province contacted HRM to determine whether HRM would be looking to provide a community enhancement to the school. 'Community enhancements' are features for public use and that typically exceed what would be included within a school such as an auditorium or a larger gymnasium. Potential community enhancements are not typically defined as part of any request from the Province, but rather considered defined through assessments of recreation needs.

On June 25, 2014, Regional Council requested a staff report, "regarding the Eastern Shore/Sheet Harbour school project including a possible enhancement, potential partnerships with the Province and possible infrastructure funding opportunities." In response to Regional Council's motion, a Recreation Needs Assessment of the Eastern Shore was undertaken. It was presented, through a staff report (dated September 10, 2015), to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee (CPED). It recommended that CPED recommend that Regional Council decline the offer for a community enhancement from the province for reasons that included the following:

- many of the community facilities that provide community and recreation services in the Eastern Shore are comprised of church halls, community halls and local schools, which are seen as a benefit to the overall community and provide a level of access that would not be possible if all programs were concentrated in one centralized facility;
- the low size and wide distribution of population of the Eastern Shore area does not support a single community centre that might compete with existing community facilities;
- there appears to be little interest consolidating within a single facility, with community groups indicating that they favoured retaining their own facilities in order provide services to their respective communities;
- based upon the availability of multi-purpose space that is frequently found in many facilities, there are opportunities for a greater degree of HRM programming to be provided within them; and
- facilities such as the HRM library branch, located within leased space at the Bluewater Building, 22756 Highway No. 7 (Map 1), may benefit from being co-located with recreation facilities, but not necessarily schools, as they need to provide access to a variety of residents at all times of the day.

Further information regarding the Eastern Shore Recreation Needs Assessment may be found in the September 10, 2015 staff report to CPED:

<http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/SCcped/documents/EasternShoreRecreationNeedsStaffReportWeb.pdf>

CPED considered the staff report on September 17, 2015 and recommended that Regional Council decline the offer from the Province to provide a community enhancement to the school. Regional Council received the report on October 6, 2015, but deferred any decision on the matter until more was known about the new school's location.

Since then, the Province has confirmed that the new school site will be built at 481 Church Point Road, Sheet Harbour, which is the same location of the existing Sheet Harbour Consolidated Elementary School and Duncan MacMillan High School (Map 1). As a result, Regional Council could now consider the deferred October 6, 2015 motion: "Decline the request from the Province of Nova Scotia, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and Halifax Regional School Board to fund a HRM enhancement or addition to the new Primary - 12 Eastern Shore School."

DISCUSSION

This report reviews the information related to the capabilities and challenges of the new school site for a proposed community enhancement. It also outlines the alternate process that will be undertaken for replacement of the Sheet Harbour Lions Club facility.

New School

The new school will be a combined school for grades Primary to 12, replacing both of the existing schools, as well as Eastern Consolidated Elementary School (Moser River) and Lakefront Consolidated Elementary School (Tangier). With regard to community use of the existing schools, neither Eastern Consolidated nor Lakefront Consolidated are currently used, while Sheet Harbour Consolidated had 85 hours and Duncan MacMillan had 421.5 hours of community use from September 2015 to September 2016. Approximately 25% of the community usage is summer daycamps, with the remainder primarily sport usage, fitness and general use.

The new school design is underway and the tender has been issued for consulting services, therefore, any proposed changes to the design would need to be coordinated with the Province and their consultant. HRM staff has been participating with the School Steering Team (SST) to have input on the school's design for community use. Based on the projected number of students (270), the school would typically be limited to a junior high school sized gymnasium. However, since it includes grades Primary to 12, the design will include a standard high school gymnasium (8,400 square feet). Based on that size, the gym will be larger than the combined size of the existing gyms and, as a result, will be able to accommodate additional types of programming which is not able to be achieved in the existing gyms in the Sheet Harbour Consolidated Elementary School (3,250 square feet) and Duncan MacMillan High School (4,800 square feet). The SST has also requested that the Province consider including a cafeterium (a cafeteria that may be converted into performance and meeting space) that could also allow for use by the community through the Service Exchange Agreement between HRM and Halifax Regional School Board.

Although the September 2015 staff report did not recommend a community enhancement at the new school site, Regional Council deferred a decision on this matter until additional information was available on the school's location. With the school's location having been confirmed, staff reviewed the capability of the site to accommodate a potential community centre through discussions with the provincial department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (TIR). TIR has indicated that the school site has had substantial on-site water availability issues. Historically, the wells for this site have yielded minimal and poor quality water, resulting in a need to truck in water to the elementary school and provide bottled water to the high school. For the new school, additional measures are being taken to ensure there is adequate water, including rainwater collection, dual piping systems, water storage tanks and the protection of a well. However, additional building areas and uses could compromise the water collection system. In addition, TIR has identified other constraints including parking and driveway limitations that may result from an increased building footprint should a community enhancement be included. Therefore, any community enhancement would be limited in the size and scope of what could be accommodated. Based on this, and coupled with the findings of the Eastern Shore Recreation Needs Assessment, staff had recommended that HRM decline the offer from the Province of Nova Scotia to consider a community enhancement at the school. As noted, Regional Council deferred a decision on that matter but did direct staff to engage with the Province of Nova Scotia to ensure that, as much as possible, the new school is able to be used to support recreation uses.

Community Feedback

HRM's community consultation on recreation needs occurred though completion of the Eastern Shore Recreation Needs Assessment, which identified a preference for service delivery through local existing facilities. In addition, the other factors that were noted above from the Eastern Shore Recreation Needs Assessment are not supportive of such a co-location with the school. With regard to the potential for the school to include a community centre facility, the process of developing the new school has involved a School Steering Team (SST), which has included community members and HRM staff. The SST has placed an emphasis the larger gymnasium and potential cafetorium, rather than a community centre. Since the issue has arisen with the existing community centre, discussions with representatives of the Lions Club and other community members have confirmed the ongoing interest in maintaining a separate community centre, reiterating the findings of the needs assessment.

Sheet Harbour Lions Club Community Centre

Since the Eastern Shore Recreation Needs Assessment and associated staff report were prepared and discussed by Regional Council, structural issues have been uncovered at the Sheet Harbour Lions Club Community Centre. It is an HRM-owned facility which is operated by a volunteer community board, and is used for community events, recreation programs, weddings, funerals, and meetings. The facility was constructed in the mid-1970s as a recreation center with a swimming pool, which was eventually covered with a wood floor system. During a recent roof replacement project, issues with the building structure were discovered, which made the use of the facility during the winter months unsafe, due to potential snow loads on the roof. In addition, there are mechanical, electrical, and building systems which require upgrading to meet National Building Code requirements. As a result, the building was closed to the public on November 15, 2016 and is expected to reopen in April 2017, pending a further structural assessment. The Lions Club has managed to relocate as much of the programming as possible to other locations across the community. The preliminary cost estimate for the repair is between \$1.5 – 2 million which is approximately half the cost to construct a purpose built replacement building.

Therefore, in response to the situation with the existing community centre, staff are determining a scope of work for a replacement facility. In addition, while a preference for retaining the independence of community facilities has been noted from the Eastern Shore Recreation Needs Assessment and through ongoing feedback from the Sheet Harbour Lions Club, there is a benefit in considering the possibility for a limited co-location with entities such as the Sheet Harbour Public Library. Other options for the delivery of community recreation and related services will also be considered. Therefore, the scope of work includes:

- consultation with the Sheet Harbour Lions Club, Halifax Public Libraries, and other stakeholder groups in the community to determine opportunities for co-location;
- findings of the Eastern Shore Recreation Needs Assessment;
- consideration of available facilities and lands within the community, including the site of the existing Lions Club Community Centre; and
- financial implications.

Upon completion of a project scope, staff would return to Council to seek approval of the project scope and funding commitment for the replacement community centre.

Review of Options

In order to determine the best approach to continued recreation service delivery in Sheet Harbour, the benefits and challenges of all options were considered. The following table outlines those benefits and challenges for all the options.

Options	Benefits	Challenges
Repair existing community centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimal benefits due to age and state of building - Central location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential increased costs for repairs due to age and state of building - Lack of opportunity to expand programming options due to restrictions cause by age and state of building
Community Enhancement at new school to replace existing community centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some shared opportunities for programming - Convenient location for youth to access programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Site challenges to accommodate enhancement - requirement to maintain separate library and HRM recreation office - potential restrictions on types of programming due to school policies - reduced flexibility for HRM in use of space and operating costs for provision of programming
Replacement community centre with opportunities for co-location with other services (library, HRM recreation, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to share resources and provide enhanced services to the entire community through a purpose built, accessible building - Increased opportunity for intergenerational experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potentially less central location for services - Partnerships may require additional time to finalize design
No replacement or repair of existing community centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cost savings - possibility for services to be absorbed by other facilities in the area, thereby providing revenue opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reduced recreation opportunities in the community

Based on the benefits and challenges, exploration of a purpose built building to replace the existing aging community centre with potential co-location of existing HRM services (recreation and library) will provide the most opportunity for the community.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report. Initial funding of \$2.5M has been included in the proposed 2018/19 capital budget. The scope of work for a replacement facility would further refine that estimate based on opportunities for co-location and building design. Upon completion of the scope of work, revised budget implications will be outlined for Regional Council's consideration.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In support of the Eastern Shore Recreation Needs Assessment, four public consultations were held: two in Sheet Harbour on September 23 and 24, 2014; one in Moser River on October 6, 2014; and one in Tangier on October 7, 2014. In addition, several stakeholder meetings were conducted throughout the Needs Assessment exercise.

ATTACHMENTS

Map 1 - Context Map

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.php> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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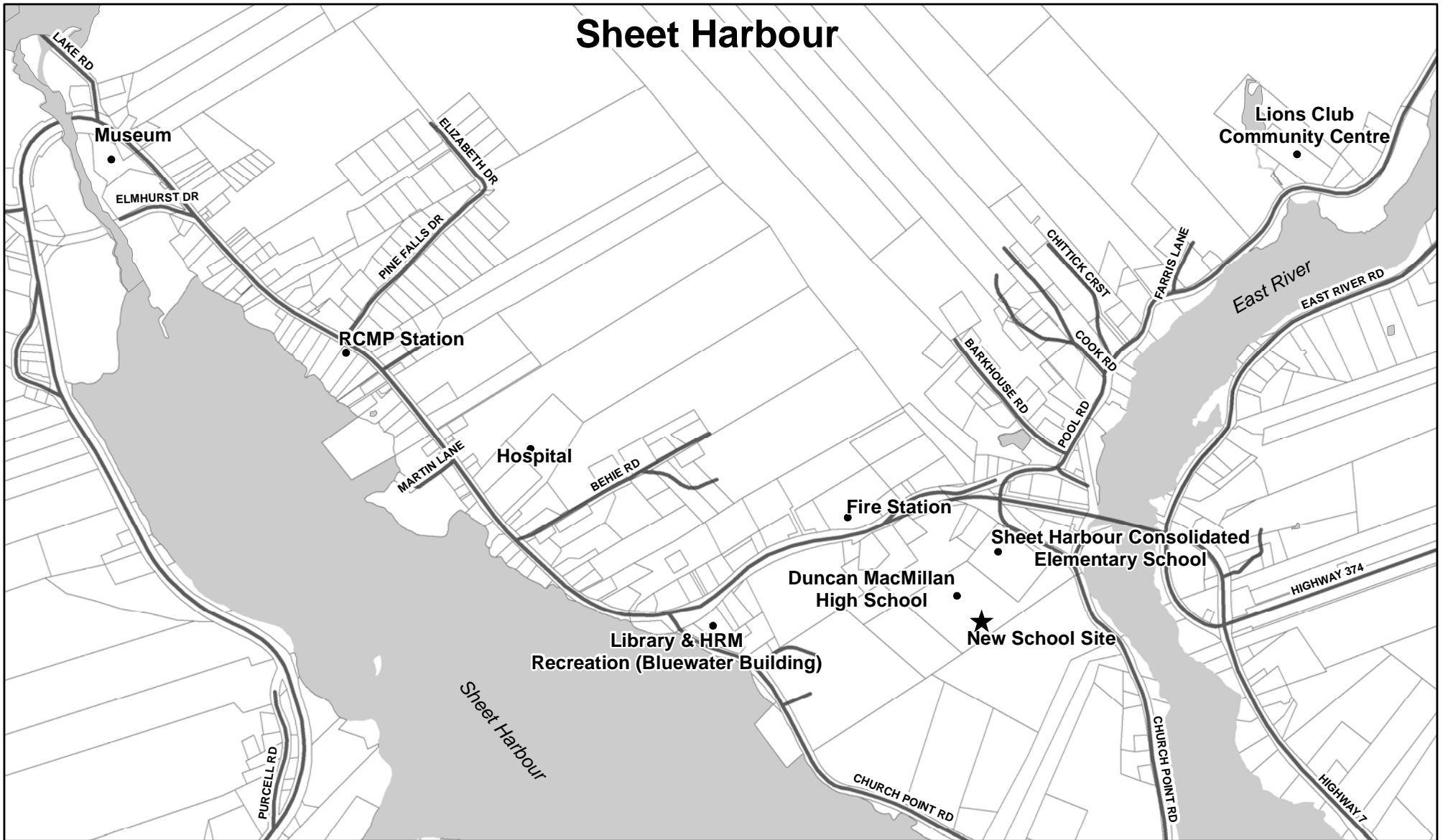
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Original Signed

Sheet Harbour



Map 1 - Context Map

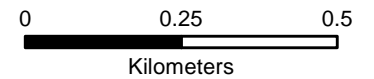
Regional Council Report - Eastern Shore Recreation Assessment / Sheet Harbour Lions Club

-  Parcels
-  Waterbodies
-  Roads



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