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**Item No. 2**  
**Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee**  
**November 15, 2018**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Community Planning and Economic Development

Original Signed

**SUBMITTED BY:**

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John Traves, Q.C., Director, Legal, Municipal Clerk, and External Affairs

Original Signed

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Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** June 11, 2018

**SUBJECT:** International Partnership Update

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**INFORMATION REPORT**

**ORIGIN**

Administrative Order 2014-003-GOV Respecting International Partnerships (The International Partnership Policy) was approved by Halifax Regional Council on April 29, 2014.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Section 71 (1) permits the promotion of the Municipality for purposes of business and industrial development.

**BACKGROUND**

At the April 29, 2014 meeting of Halifax Regional Council, an Administrative Order was approved to manage the process of establishing international partnerships. The Administrative Order, or International Partnership Policy, includes a provision that staff will prepare an annual information report on international partnerships and include partnership requests received that did not satisfy the criteria for approval (section 22). The purpose of this report is to fulfill this provision, provide an update on existing relationships, and outline the approach for pursuing new partnerships in the short-term.

## DISCUSSION

The International Partnership Policy defines three categories of formal partnerships between HRM and international communities:

- The primary purpose of an **Economic Partnership Agreement** is economic development, including economic exchange, business development, and technological advancement through building business links, increasing HRM's profile, attracting investment, and promoting trade.
- The primary purpose of a **Friendship Partnership Agreement** is facilitating international good-will through community-level events and public celebrations such as flag raisings, based on cultural or historic relationships between HRM and international communities.
- The primary purpose of a **Historic Partnership** is to recognize a city that was once an Economic or Friendship Partner of HRM. An existing partnership will be re-classified as a Historic Partnership when there is no contact between the partner cities for a period longer than one year and/or when either partner city opts to end the formal agreement.

When the policy was approved, Regional Council agreed to maintain the relationships identified in the staff report (Hakodate, Norfolk, Campeche, and Aberdeen) and categorize Norfolk and Aberdeen as Economic Partnership Agreements, and Hakodate and Campeche as Friendship Partnership Agreements. In the past year, two new international partnerships have been approved by Regional Council – and Economic Partnership with Zhuhai, China and a Friendship Partnership with Gdynia, Poland.

### Existing Economic Partnerships

The Halifax Partnership manages Economic Partnership Agreements on behalf of the Municipality. As noted above, Halifax currently has approved economic partnerships with Aberdeen, Scotland and Norfolk, Virginia, both of which are governed by Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs). In June 2018, Regional Council approved a third Economic Partnership with Zhuhai, China. In the past year the Partnership has undertaken the following activities with these partners:

**Aberdeen:** Halifax and Aberdeen have a long-standing relationship focused on developing mutually beneficial economic and cultural ties and partnerships. This relationship was formalized in an MOU signed in 2014 and renewed in September 2017 during the World Energy Cities Partnership (WECP) Annual General Meeting hosted in Halifax. Halifax's international partnership with Aberdeen has opened up opportunities for business development and collaboration in various areas including the ocean, energy, and services sectors, as well as cultural and educational exchanges. Halifax has been invited to take a business delegation to Aberdeen in 2018/2019, but as of the writing of this report, no firm commitments have been made.

**Norfolk:** Halifax and Norfolk have been "Sister Cities" since signing an MOU in 2006. The relationship with Norfolk is fostered through collaboration with economic development partners, the Navy and industry stakeholders. The Halifax Partnership has assumed a direct management role and has focused on building a solid relationship with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), its counterpart in the that region. In September 2015, the Partnership hosted a VEDP business mission to Halifax during the Canadian Defence Security and Aerospace Exhibition Atlantic (DEFSEC). Delegation members included representatives from Virginia Economic Development, the American Chamber of Commerce in Canada, the US Consul General, and business. During this mission, the Halifax Partnership, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the American Chamber of Commerce in Canada, and Partnership sponsor Stewart McKelvey hosted a networking reception with Halifax and Virginia companies in the defense and security sector. The long-term Chair in Norfolk of the Halifax/Norfolk Sister City Committee retired and the city of Norfolk is looking for a replacement to lead ongoing activity and planning.

**Zhuhai:** In August 2016, Halifax and Zhuhai signed a letter of "Intent to Cooperate". On May 9, 2017 Regional Council authorized the Mayor to begin the process of establishing an economic partnership with

Zhuhai. Building on that first step, Mayor Savage led a trade delegation to Zhuhai and other areas of China in June 2017 during which a joint work plan of activity was signed between Halifax and Zhuhai. As this relationship is based on economic development, the work plan was signed between the Halifax Partnership and the Zhuhai People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (ZPAFFC). The process to establish an economic relationship in China is a lengthy undertaking, and was not completed until Spring 2018. As a result, Regional Council approved moving forward with the relationship in June 2018, and the Mayor signed an agreement during a trip to Zhuhai later in the same month. This agreement supports the work Saint Mary's University has been doing in the area, and is aligned with the Nova Scotia China Engagement Strategy. A delegation from Zhuhai is intending to visit Halifax in October 2018 to meet with HRM officials, the Halifax Partnership, and local businesses with the intention to discuss cooperation. The Halifax Partnership will be leading the delegation visit with the support and involvement of HRM, Saint Mary's University, the Nova Scotia Department of Intergovernmental Affairs, Nova Scotia Business Inc., and Global Affairs Canada.

#### World Energy Cities Partnership

In addition to coordinating the Municipality's economic partnerships, the Halifax Partnership manages the Municipality's membership in the WECP. The WECP is comprised of 19 cities from around the world with energy activities as a major driver of their economy and is led by the Mayors of each city with support from economic development staff. In January 2016, Mayor Savage assumed the role of President of the organization for a two-year term and this role was renewed for a 2<sup>nd</sup> term ending in 2019. This role is providing opportunities for Halifax to shape the agenda and to allow for maximum exposure for the region and business through various speaking opportunities at major events where WECP is represented.

In September 2017, Halifax hosted the AGM of the WECP. The Halifax Partnership assumed the lead on the organization of this event, which took place September 30 to October 4<sup>th</sup> and the event coincided with the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the CORE Energy Conference. Many WECP cities brought companies with them to participate in the AGM and CORE conference, and to meet with local businesses (with a sector focus on Ocean Technology and Energy, including renewables). There was significant private sector sponsorship and engagement in support of the WECP AGM including JD Irving, Emera, CBRE, Cox and Palmer and Efficiency Nova Scotia, as well as the Halifax Regional Municipality, the Halifax Partnership, NS Department of Energy, ACOA, and the WECP Secretariat. In addition, the AGM had a concurrent art show which took place at the Discovery Center and highlighted a collaborative Art Initiative between Halifax and WECP Member City Esbjerg, Denmark.

#### Existing Friendship Partnerships

Activity related to Halifax's friendship partnerships with Hakodate and Campeche, established in 1982 and 1996 respectively, continues. Halifax annually sends a Christmas tree to Hakodate as a sign of friendship, and the local Hakodate friendship association participates in the Natal Day parade with a Japanese drum and dancing group. As 2017 was the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the relationship, a delegation from Hakodate visited Halifax in July 2017. The Campeche relationship is highlighted by annual student exchanges involving high school students from Campeche, as well as students from Dalhousie University and the Autonomous University of Campeche.

In June 2018, Regional Council approved a third Friendship Agreement with Gdynia, Poland and authorized the Mayor to sign an agreement. A letter has been sent to the Mayor of Gdynia to initiate development of the agreement and a delegation from Gdynia is travelling to Halifax for a monument unveiling on September 16, which may provide an opportunity to further formalize the partnership. Prior to the approval of the relationship, partnerships were being explored between Gdynia's Museum of Emigration and Halifax's Pier 21 Museum of Immigration, as well as the cities' library systems. The focus on this relationship is primarily cultural at this stage, and some of the areas of interest (i.e. museums) lie in areas that fall outside of municipal jurisdiction. These bilateral relationships continue to be pursued and, with recent approval of the Friendship Agreement, opportunities for future economic cooperation will also be explored.

### Potential Partnerships

Since the International Partnership Policy was approved, inquiries have been initiated with other cities by the Halifax Partnership and several informal requests gauging interest in some degree of partnership have been received. Recently, in addition to Zhuhai and Gdynia, cities making initial contact with Halifax have included Savannah (USA), Kiel/Hamburg (Germany), cities in Korea, Lower Manya Krobo (Ghana), and several other cities in China.

To ensure that resources are available to adequately support all relationships, the International Partnership Policy states that Council will manage no more than five Economic Partnership Agreements at any one time. In addition to the existing economic partnerships with Norfolk, Aberdeen, and Zhuhai, the Halifax Partnership is assessing additional economic partnerships, including Gdynia and Lower Manya Krobo. In addition, a delegation from Suzhou, China is scheduled to visit Halifax to discuss timelines for forming a potential relationship between Suzhou and Halifax.

As per the International Partnership Policy (Administrative Order 2014-003-GOV), any potential friendship or economic partnerships will be brought forward to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee and Regional Council for approval once fully vetted.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no new financial implications related to the content of this report. Expenses for international partnership activity in 2018, including the Mayor's trip to Zhuhai, China and WECF activity, have been built in to the 2018-19 budget.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Not applicable.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

None

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

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