

**Aoyama, Haruka**

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HALIFAX REGIONAL  
MUNICIPALITY

DEC 21 2020

MUNICIPAL CLERK

**Municipal Clerks Office**

**Date Distributed:** February 12, 2021

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**From:** Friends of Blue Mountain - Birch Cove Lakes

**Sent:** Monday, December 21, 2020 12:54 PM

**To:** Office, Clerks <clerks@halifax.ca>

**Cc:** Morse, Kathryn <morsek@halifax.ca>; Iona Stoddard

**Subject:** [External Email] Request to present to the Environment and Sustainability Committee

*[This email has been received from an external person or system]*

Dear Haruka,

The Friends of Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Society recently had a meeting with Councillors Morse and Stoddard. Councillor Morse suggested that our work on behalf of the BMBCL Regional Park would be of interest to the Environment Committee and that we should approach you to get our society on the agenda for an upcoming meeting in 2021.

There has been a lot of Council attention on this area in the last six months. The Nature Trust lands were supported by Council and have been acquired!

There are also three outstanding staff reports expected back to Council in the new year.

Our society was established in 2018 to focus on advocacy and stewardship in the Wilderness area that is intended to be the BMBCL Regional Park. You can see more about our mission and efforts on our website: [bluemountainfriends.ca](http://bluemountainfriends.ca)

We would like to update the Committee on the challenges and opportunities that are emerging quickly as a result of the pace of development around the perimeter of the proposed park. The area has 22 lakes, and is 33 kilometers in circumference. It encompasses a large area that is protected by the province under the Wilderness Protection Act. When our Regional Park is established properly, it will be one of the largest urban wilderness parks in Canada!

I look forward to hearing back from you about a possible date for us to present to the Committee.

Thank you for your help.

Diana Whalen,

On behalf of the Board of Friends of  
Blue Mountain - Birch Cove Lakes Society

## Aoyama, Haruka

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**From:** Friends of Blue Mountain - >  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 12, 2021 2:01 PM  
**To:** Aoyama, Haruka  
**Cc:** Iona Stoddard; Morse, Kathryn; Mark Young  
**Subject:** [External Email] Request to present to the Environment and Sustainability Committee

*[This email has been received from an external person or system]*

Dear Haruka,

Thank you for your help today.

In December 2020, Councillor Morse and Councillor Stoddard, met with the Friends of Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes. They suggested that we contact you to request the opportunity to present to the HRM Environment and Sustainability Committee.

We understand that there are a number of organizations that are waiting to present to the Committee and that COVID 19 impacted the scheduling of presenters. It is good to see that the Committee met in December 2020 and I hope that our request can be accommodated soon.

Our Society was formed to advocate for the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Regional Park that was promised in the 2006 HRM Regional Plan. We were formed in 2018 and currently have approximately 700 members. Since our formation there has been progress on the BMBCL file with land purchases by the City and by the NS Nature Trust. The Federal government has helped with funding through the Nature Fund and there has been a significant amount of public interest and media coverage of the area.

In 2019 and 2020 there were a number of times that Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes was on the Council agenda. At present there are three requests that will be coming back from staff to the Council in the form of a staff report.

- 1) June 9th, 2020 Council requested a broad based report for a "plan for the creation of a park at the Blue Mountain Birch Cove wilderness". The motion was passed unanimously.
- 2) On August 18, 2020 there was another motion to clarify the intended extent of the the regional park boundary. That motion was also passed unanimously.
- 3) Finally, on September 1, 2020, there was a request for a staff report "considering that a senior level coordinating committee, led by HRM staff, be established for the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Regional Wilderness Park". This motion also received unanimous support from Council.

The Friends of BMBCL are very aware of these outstanding Council requests and we believe that the Environment and Sustainability Committee would find a presentation from our group very relevant to these upcoming staff reports. Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Regional Park is a unique opportunity for the municipality. It lies fully within the urban core of HRM and encompasses a designated provincial wilderness area. The area is 33 kilometers in circumference and has 22 lakes and wetlands. There are canoe loops as well as many informal hiking trails. This could be one of the largest urban wilderness parks in Canada.

Development is happening at a very fast pace in communities on the border of the wilderness and there are many pressure points that our group has identified.

We hope that you will consider hearing from us as soon as you are able. Our mission is relevant to the Regional Plan update that is currently underway and certainly relates directly to the three council reports that are expected soon.

If there are any questions that we can answer or information that we can provide, we are happy to do so. We can be reached at this email and my cell number is if you need to reach me by phone. We are ready to present whenever you can accommodate our request.

Sincerely,

Diana Whalen,

Board Member, Friends of Blue  
Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Society