



THE Mirror

On Business

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SPRYFIELD AND DISTRICT BUSINESS COMMISSION

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AGM a big success

The last year was very busy for the Commission and the AGM that was held in April, informed the members of the commissions activities. After the guest speaker, George McLellan, spoke, there was an election of nine board members as well as minor changes to the wording of the constitution. Reg Horner is now the acting Executive Director of the Commission. He has strong ties to the community and will lead the group over the next year.

Linda MacLaggan spoke on the communications committee activities and the new logo design. It was well received by the membership and further discussions are planned regarding if the logo will be made available for the use of the members. The new newsletter "the Mirror" was also presented. The goals of the communications committee were to better inform membership of the activities of the commission, provide a forum for discussion between the board and the membership, and making the commission more visible within the community.

Allan MacDonald spoke on the website development. It will be interactive, be a database, and have a members log in and information. The web page has the new logo and mission statement that will be recognized by those

outside and within the community. The commission hopes to develop business access through the website. Please go to the website and provide feedback.(www.spryfield.ca).

Gwen Armshaw spoke on the community liaison committee's work toward partnership with community groups. The goal is to promote understanding between the Commission and community groups. Initial meetings have gone well and more are planned. There are several projects in the works.

Litter abatement: Litter is an ongoing problem in Spryfield. The commission is considering adopting a green space at the corner of Dentith and Herring Cove Road. By this action the commission hopes to lead by example within the community.

Graffiti abatement: Aliant has run tests of boxes with murals painted and found that the boxes with murals were graffiti free 3 years later. The cost per box is \$300-400 more so the project is not a priority but Aliant would like to work in partnership with the community.

Reg Horner spoke on the events committee's activities regarding business expos, golf tournaments and award dinners. The commission is attempting to stimulate developments with the community like the Hiring Smart Program will have access through the web site.

The last year has been a productive year for the commission and we hope to have participation from the members to help on the committees over the next years. Remember, many hands make light work.

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Guest Speaker's Address:

George McLellan Chief Administrative Officer for HRM

Mr. McLellan's spoke on the business aspects underpinning the HRM business plan. HRM is supportive of eliminating the multiple on the business tax in metro which is roughly 2.5% higher than cities of comparable size. Federal funding is necessary to prevent a tax slide across to the commercial rate. In HRM 80 cents out of every dollar is generated from property tax. Comparably sized cities have an average of 50-54%. HRM has the lowest level of transfers from other levels of government. Other cities have been better able to share responsibilities with other government levels. Post budget there was a small reduction in the commercial rate.



George McLellan addressed the membership of the Spryfield and District Business Commission at the AGM.

Since amalgamation there has been an 18% increase in the number of dwellings and HRM departments decreased. Eleven percent of the tax rate goes toward reserves of capital programs. Within the next three years debt payments will drastically reduce.

HRM has responsibilities for the harbor, pesticides, water, etc. HRM has a high level of commitment to these programs as a fundamental of their platform despite the difficulties it poses. Other cities have a worse problem dealing with issues such as solid waste and costal water.

- HRM has the highest level of diversion of solid waste.
- Harbor clean up has begun.
- Potable water is the biggest challenge over the next 20 years. HRM has two independent water systems. The Pockwalk system is running at 60% capacity and has good quality. The Lake Major system in Dartmouth is 9 years old and had a leakage problem of 30% that has been reduced to 10-12%.
- Water shed management will protect areas. Approval by the

water commission and council is now required prior to any incursion into watershed areas.

The big issues are how to rebuild communities and reestablish values. Some money issues have been solved but Halifax is still heavily reliant on property tax. How do we rebuild community and infrastructure? The reserve system now has monies allocated for the first phase of the Purcell's Cove project without need to borrow money. This year there will be improvements made to the rotary.

The regional plan has focused on how to establish links between developments and minimize implications for the infrastructure that already exists. HRM is looking for optimal, they are looking at what should and has to be built in any one location (example the harbor). Opportunities for the public must be preserved. HRM is attempting to develop forward to preserve and prevent deterioration.

HRM is looking at settlement patterns to encourage and

nurture opportunities to increase development density. Increased services can be extended from the core or developed individually (better roads, online services). The issue is as development occurs there is an increased need for schools, recreation, health care, essential services. How can opportunities be channeled and decrease cost to proliferate. Connecting communities is cheaper that developing throughout. HRM wants predictable, sustainable, and environmentally responsible development and has allocated \$250 million over a 20 year period.

To grow communities HRM is promoting the cost effective rebuilding of the business districts, rebuilding the communities, and make communities take responsibilities for development.

Up-Coming Schedule of Events

- Golf tournament** Sept. 11
- Business clean up** Sept.

Ravenscraig receives HRM Council approval after adjustments

After a bit of jockeying of the proposed development plan and some negotiating between staff at Halifax Regional Municipality and the owners of the Polygon Group of Companies during a public hearing recess in June, Regional Council gave final approval to a 70 unit single family home development called Ravenscraig in Fleming Heights.

The proposal, called the "Fleming Park Lands" situated between the Williams Lake Road and the end of Joyce Avenue and Whimsical Lake, had been the subject of a community based plan review process approved in principle in 2000. Among other things the project includes 70 single family upscale homes, some targeted for the "empty-nester" market, a sprinklered soccer field in the area known as "the quarry," walking trails to connect the area to the Frog Pond and Sir Sandford Fleming Park and open passive recreation space.

The proposal calls for an exchange of land between HRM and the developer. In return for the land the developer has agreed to the construction of a sports field and development of the trails and parklands.

But the proposal did not get through Regional Council easily. Some residents in the area were concerned about how close the proposed extension of Joyce Avenue and lots on the new street would be to Whimsical Lake, already facing an endangered environment. Real Property Manager Peter Bigelow told Council that two of the lots were inside the 100 foot preferred setback from the lake and its watercourse. Bigelow suggested that staff, the community and the developer have changed the project several times to try and satisfy all the requirements of environment and to protect and preserve the three watersheds existing on the property. He said all but one issue, the closeness of these two lots to Whimsical Lake, have not yet been solved.

"The extension of Joyce Avenue has been swung away from the lake and two lots have been removed from the project," he told council regarding

changes that have been made along the way. But he cautioned that one lot was within 25 feet of the lake and another was within the 100 foot preferred boundary.

Stella Lord, speaking for Friends of Whimsical Lake (FOWL) was one of several local residents who spoke to "advocate for change in the plan."

She said the 2000 "concept plan" called for a 100 foot buffer from the lake "but there has been no environmental survey or mapping of the lake which makes it difficult to determine exactly where the line should be drawn. As a result," she said, "FOWL is calling for no extension of Joyce Avenue," a part of the proposal required by HRM for snow clearing purposes.

Joyce Avenue resident Alana Kerr questioned if the development would add trouble to an already over capacitated storm sewer system which overflows several times a year. "The sewer floods regularly. This is not acceptable," she said after describing how the sewage runs into both her and her neighbour's yards.

Melanie Dobson, Chair of the Community Based Planning Committee, said the Committee

is also concerned about the buffer from the Whimsical Lake wetland. "The Committee did not endorse the plan but did say we have no strong objections to the plan," she affirmed.

District 17 Councillor Linda Mosher, after listening to concerns raised by Council members, said the development brings a number of positive things to the community. "The request is to downsize the zoning from R-1 to R-2, this is alleviate the fenced off problem of the former quarry, it provides environmental protection for other sensitive areas, will develop a connecting trail system from Armdale to Spryfield, connect this part of the Fleming land to the Sir Sandford Fleming Park and Frog Pond, includes underground wiring and will create a soccer field for recreation."

In the end, staff and Polygon met during recess. Polygon agree to remove one of the offending lots on Joyce Avenue and "to reconfigure the other" to set the building back from the lake a little further. With this accomplished Mosher moved a motion to accept the proposal with changes included. The motion passed and the project will go forward.

Litter abatement

Members of the Business commission participated in the MacIntosh Run Clean up as well as adopted the green space at the corner of Herring cove road and Dentith. It is the hope of the commission that this area will eventually be turned into a park. The commission is in the process of investigation signage for the property. Since litter is an ongoing problem, there are discussions planned with local schools regarding litter programs. Use and maintenance of litter receptacles is also being investigated. The commission is looking into having people hired

during the summer for litter clean up.



The spryfield and district business commission not only helped with the McIntosh run clean-up but some members, including directors Peter Ainslie, Gwen Armshaw, and Linda MacLagan brought family members out to spruce up an empty lot on Herring Cove Road.

Graffiti abatement:

Graffiti is not a random act. It is the result of very a very well organized community of people who call themselves “graffiti artists”. Graffiti artists “attach our buildings” not randomly but based on certain criteria.



The community response team scrubs out graffiti.

Graffiti artists operate on a Hierarchy system. They score “points” within their ranks by leaving their

mark in places which would expose them to being caught (the more public place you tag the more points) and they score points by being adventurous (more points are gained if they put themselves in danger like hanging over an overpass above a highway to mark the overpass).

The community response team is available to Spryfield businesses to help inform on how to best to combat the activity. Information was provided at a meeting in July on how to use their system to begin preventing graffiti in our neighborhood. Gary Martin and his team have been tasked with issues such as graffiti, litter and how a community can best manage and maintain a clean image. They have had success in areas such as Downtown Halifax and the Quinpool Road area.

District Center status gained

The business commission has been working diligently to have HRM define Spryfield as a district center as opposed to a local center. Why is this important? The short answer is simply that the definition will affect future development and funding. The identification of Spryfield as a site for future development is important if we want this community to grow. HRM is completing the master development plan that will determine the allocation of resources, services, and funding given to communities. If the definition is not changed now, this community will miss out on available development dollars.

The business commission supports responsible development that will increase the number of residents, maintain and improve the green spaces for residents and visitors, and provide a healthy business community providing the services that the local residents require. This will eliminate the necessity for residents to have to travel great distances to fulfill all of their shopping, business and recreational needs.

Spryfield already meets the definitions as provided by HRM: a

district center is like a small self-sufficient town. It should have a mix of homes and businesses primarily focused around an existing shopping center. People would travel from the surrounding areas for their shopping and service needs. All new development would receive piped sewer and water. There would be a frequent bus service joining outer areas to the district center and the district center to the regional center. Since Spryfield already meets the definition, the commission’s stand is that the city should alter Spryfield’s designation as a local center.

The business community has invested in the area to foster growth to district center status. This area now has a community center, pool, hockey rink, as well as hiking and biking trails to meet recreational desires of the residents. Spryfield has seen a great number of the businesses remodel their stores to update the look of the area. The new Shopper’s Drug Mart, Spryfield Animal Hospital, Ultramar and Sobey’s to name a few. There is a healthy local medical community with several medical clinics, dental and optical care, as well as allied

health services like physiotherapy and occupational therapy. This area has now a constant police presence with the local office on Herring Cove Road. The district school is located here. There are plans to improve the sewage treatment to support the future residential development. The recent Streetscape study has identified Spryfield as a center and has made recommendations regarding the bus services.

For all these reasons the commission has been negotiating with the city to change the designation of Spryfield for a local center to a district center. This has resulted in the change of the wording of a community survey, an abundance of communication, meetings and presentations to the city. The commission is optimistic that it will be successful in having the city re-designate Spryfield as a district center so our community can enjoy the associated funding, responsible development, and growth of services that we deserve.

The commission was told of the positive decision to District Center in July.