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Item No. 13.1.1
Harbour East Marine Drive
Community Council Meeting
October 5, 2017

TO: Chair and Members of Harbour East Marine Drive Community Council

SUBMITTED BY: ORIGINAL SIGNED

Angela Green, Acting Director, Parks and Recreation

DATE: September 5, 2017

SUBJECT: **Eastern Passage High School Enhancements**

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

ORIGIN

- January 15, 2013 Regional Council motion:
MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Walker that Halifax Regional Council:
 1. Approve entering into a joint partnership with the Province to add 2,100 square feet of gymnasium space, at an estimated net cost of \$630,000, as a community enhancement to the Eastern Passage Additional and Alterations Project provided the site can accommodate the expansion;
 2. Request the addition of required funding to the 2014-15 project budget as outlined in the Financial implications section of this report; and
 3. Approve entering into a Joint Use Agreement with the Halifax Regional School Board to ensure appropriate community access to the gymnasium as a condition of municipal funding to the Project. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED**
- May 14, 2015 Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council motion:
MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Fisher, that Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council request a staff report in regard to proposed upgrades to the construction of the Eastern Passage High School; specifically, in relation to a proposed artificial turf and multi-purpose arts and culture space. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED**
- November 12, 2015 Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council motion:
MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee that: Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council (HEMDCC) request a supplementary staff report including by not limited to the following:
Clarification as to the assumption that Seaside field will be the field chosen for use, clarification on the cost of construction of an artificial turf field, consultation with the Province to determine possible partnerships, consultation with CEEP and responses to other questions. As well, that the supplementary report be in the form of a recommendation report that could be forwarded to Regional Council for consideration if so directed by HEMDCC. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

.....RECOMMENDATION ON PAGE 2

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter Section 79(1) (k) and (x):

Halifax Regional Council may expend money required by the Municipality for (k) recreational programs and (x) lands and buildings required for a municipal purpose.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council:

Take no further action with regards to the development of an artificial turf field or other community enhancements associated with the Eastern Passage high school, beyond those that have already been committed to by HRM.

BACKGROUND

In April 2012, the Province announced the construction of a high school in Eastern Passage. As a result, Regional Council directed staff to complete a Recreation Needs Assessment for that area to determine whether HRM should invest in enhancements to the school for community use. The assessment addressed a variety of recreation subject matters such as the adequacy of playing fields, gymnasias, and other facilities. Based on its findings, on January 15, 2013 Regional Council approved the motion to:

1. Approve entering into a joint partnership with the Province to add 2,100 square feet of gymnasium space, at an estimated net cost of \$630,000, as a community enhancement to the Eastern Passage Additional and Alterations Project provided the site can accommodate the expansion;
2. Request the addition of required funding to the 2014-15 project budget as outlined in the Financial implications section of this report; and
3. Approve entering into a Joint Use Agreement with the Halifax Regional School Board to ensure appropriate community access to the gymnasium as a condition of municipal funding to the Project.

As the planning for the school project progressed, a community group, Community Education Enhancement Project (CEEP) advocated for further enhancements to the school, including an artificial turf field. CEEP presented its proposal to Harbour East Marine Drive Community Council (HEMDCC) on May 14, 2015. Subsequently, HEMDCC requested a staff report on the CEEP proposal. An information report was presented to HEMDCC on November 12, 2015, at which time HEMDCC requested a supplementary report. However, with the updating of the Community Facility Master Plan containing information that was relevant to the requested recommendation report, it was completed prior to this report being prepared.

DISCUSSION

With the construction of the school underway, many of the points raised by CEEP have been addressed through that project. Therefore, while this report responds to the questions raised by HEMDCC in its November 12, 2015 motion, it concentrates on the proposal for an artificial turf field.

Artificial Turf Field

The Province's original intent with regards to the new high school was to renovate Seaside Elementary School (Map 1). As a result of design challenges and escalating costs associated with the scope of work to convert the existing elementary school into a high school, the Province subsequently decided to construct a new stand-alone building. The school is currently under construction and expected to be completed for September 2018. With this change, the adjoining Seaside Elementary Field will not be repurposed as a high school field. Rather, the existing Tallahassee Community School sports field will be used by the high school. For improved access, a sidewalk is being constructed along Oceanview School Road between the new school site and the field, this is included in the school construction budget.

The Eastern Passage Recreation Needs Assessment addressed the need for playing fields in Eastern Passage area. Through the assessment's survey, some community members identified a desire for improved facilities. However, this type of community enhancement was not viewed as being warranted by staff and Regional Council. Eastern Passage has four 'class B' playing fields, a classification that means that they are suitable for games and practices, are monitored weekly, and lined every two weeks. The Needs Assessment further demonstrates that, based on the sport field supply by population for Eastern Passage, the community is sufficiently served, not only in terms of availability, but also in terms of quality.

At a typical cost of \$1,000,000 (not including lighting, parking, or other related infrastructure), artificial turf fields are expensive and are generally reserved for regional recreational facilities such as:

- Mainland Common;
- Bedford Hammonds Plains Artificial Turf Facility;
- Harbour East Dartmouth Recreation Campus;
- Cole Harbour Common; and
- Weir Field.

The Community Facility Master Plan 2 (CFMP2), that was adopted by Regional Council on February 7, 2017, recommends lights, bleachers, fencing, and ensuring that a field meets FIFA and CFL standards are included with the establishment of artificial turf fields in HRM. The lights are to ensure the field can be used after sunset in the shoulder seasons and fencing is to ensure the field is used strictly for the expressed purpose of recreation and athletics. The most recent example of converting a natural turf field into an artificial turf field cost approximately \$3 million, in Cole Harbour. Initial cost estimates for resurfacing the Tallahassee sports field is in the range of \$2 to 2.5 million.

On basis of the regional nature of such facilities, an artificial turf field is not warranted at this time for Eastern Passage. However, the CFMP2 also calls for the development of a Playing Field Strategy that would include a review of where and when artificial turf fields should be constructed including consideration of opportunities for replacement of local natural fields with artificial turf fields. An accompanying staff report, that was approved by Regional Council, classified the development of that strategy as a short-term initiative to be initiated after current projects are completed.

Consultation/Partnerships

Pursuant to the November 12, 2015 Community Council motion, a meeting was held between HRM staff, the local Councillor and representatives of CEEP. The meeting assisted in defining CEEP's primary interest in realizing the establishment of an artificial turf field.

In addition, aside from the artificial turf field initiative, it is important to note that HRM is a partner with the Province as a result of Regional Council's approval of the enhancement of the gymnasium from 8,400 square feet to 10,500 square feet. In addition, staff will continue consultations with the Province in order to maximize community access to the school's facilities.

Conclusion

An artificial turf playing field is not warranted at this time given they are regional in scope and have already been established in a regional distribution. While this regional emphasis may continue in the future for such facilities, opportunities for replacement of local natural turf fields with artificial turf fields can be a consideration in the upcoming Playing Field Strategy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications to the recommendation within this report. The province has not identified a need or funding for an artificial turf field. Should HEMDCC choose to recommend additional community enhancements to the Eastern Passage school project to Regional Council, the cost of any such enhancements would need to be determined.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report. The risks considered rate Low. To reach this conclusion, consideration was given to financial and strategic risks.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement occurred through the Eastern Passage Recreation Needs Assessment, which included stakeholder consultation, community meetings, and a survey with residents. Staff have also consulted with CEEP as per HEMDCC direction.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no known environmental implications associated with the recommendation within this report.

ALTERNATIVES

- Alternative 1. HEMDCC could recommend that Regional Council direct staff to undertake additional analysis of the recreational needs of Eastern Passage. This is not recommended as a comprehensive Recreation Needs Assessment occurred in 2012.

- Alternative 2. HEMDCC could recommend that Regional Council direct staff to include funds in a future capital budget for construction of an artificial turf field without completion of the future Playing Field Strategy.

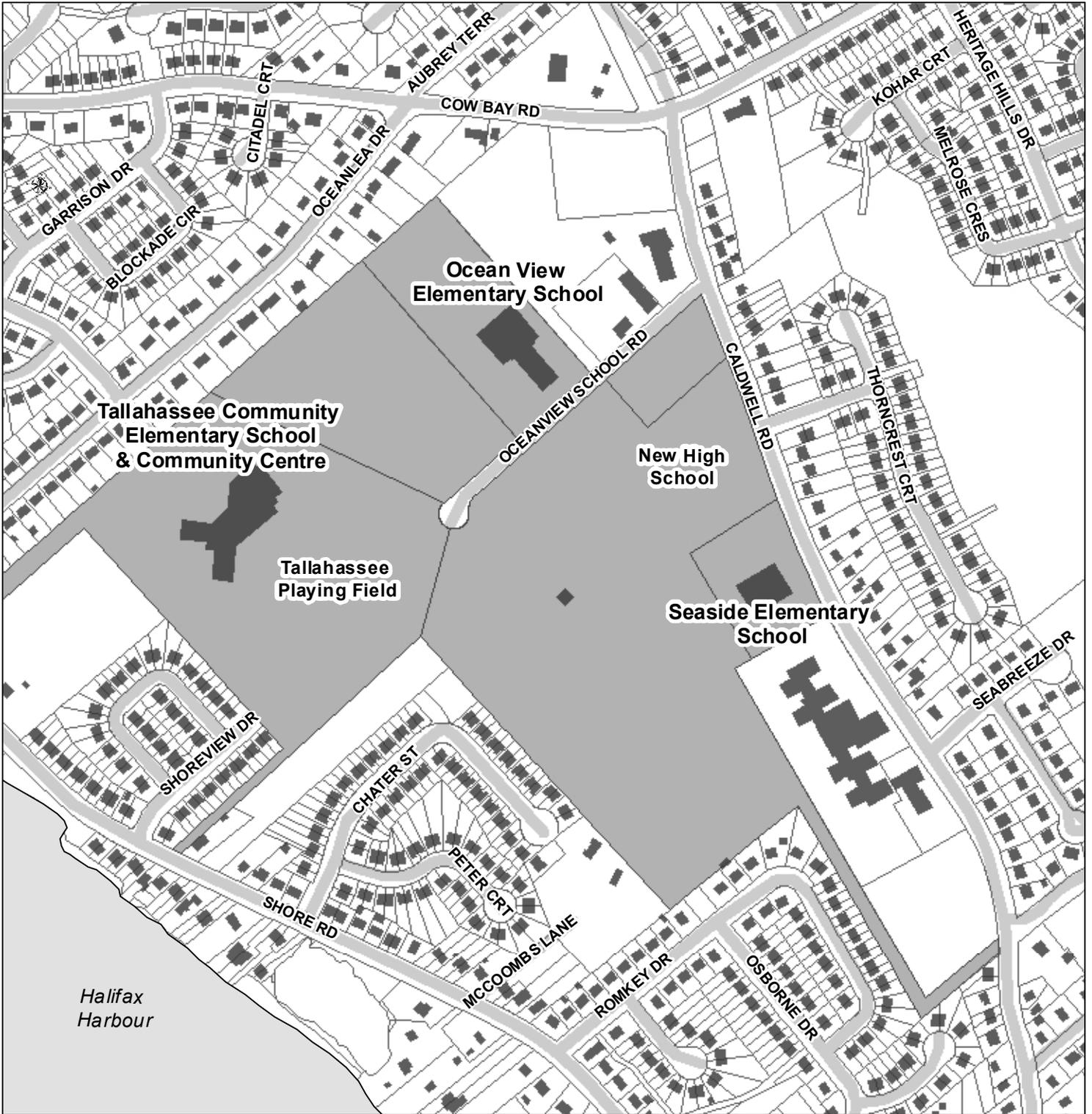
ATTACHMENTS

Map 1 Reference Map

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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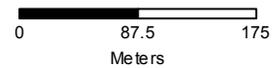
Map 1 Reference Map

-  Eastern Passage Common
-  Parcels
-  Buildings



Produced by Parks and Recreation
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The accuracy of any representation on
this plan is not guaranteed.