



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Information Item No. 2
Halifax and West Community Council
October 10, 2017

TO: Chair and Members of Halifax and West Community Council

SUBMITTED BY: **Original Signed**

Brad Anguish, Director, Parks & Recreation

DATE: September 28, 2017

SUBJECT: Unauthorized Removal of Vegetation

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

March 22, 2017 Motion of Halifax & West Community Council:

Moved by Councillor Mason seconded by Councillor Walker:

That Halifax and West Community Council request a staff report to consider the creation and implementation of a public awareness campaign regarding unauthorized removal of vegetation from Point Pleasant Park including the installation of 'Do Not Pick the Plants' signs, as well as print and online advertising and any other form of advertising and public awareness recommended by staff. It is further recommended that the report consider how the by-laws governing this matter can be enforced.

Motion Put and Passed.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, R.S.N.S 2008, c. 39, clause 188(1)(c):

- (1) The Council may make by-laws, for municipal purposes, respecting
 - (c) persons, activities and things in, on or near a public place or place that is open to the public

By-law P-600, Respecting Municipal Parks, section 3

Protection of Park

3(1) While in any park, no person shall do, cause or permit any of the following:

- (a) add to, remove, destroy, defile, or damage any fauna or flora, or any park facility, structure, equipment, or sign;

BACKGROUND

The Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee (PPPAC) considered possible remedies to the unauthorized removal of vegetation from Point Pleasant Park at a meeting held on March 2, 2017. Several Committee members commented that they had witnessed, on multiple occasions, park users removing large quantities of plants such as lady's slipper orchids. For ecological reasons, the Committee passed a motion to request that the Halifax and West Community Council ask for a staff report to address this matter. The Committee further suggested that staff consider the motto "Take Nothing; Leave Nothing."

DISCUSSION

Ecological Consequences

Point Pleasant Park is culturally significant and ecologically sensitive. As the park is still in its recovery phase from Hurricane Juan, the protection of all flora and fauna is imperative to its long-term success.

The ecological consequences to the removal of plants are:

- Digging up, picking or collecting the seed will reduce their ability to reproduce and can adversely affect their long-term survival in that location;
- Removing these plants from the wild can adversely affect pollinators and other animals that depend on that species for food and cover;
- Removal prevents other visitors from their enjoyment; and,
- Most wildflowers when dug from their natural habitat do not survive being transplanted.

Enforcement/Education

In accordance with By-Law P-600, removal of plant material is prohibited:

Section 3: Protection of Park

3(1) While in any park, no person shall do, cause or permit any of the following:

- (a) add to, remove, destroy, defile, or damage any fauna or flora, or any park facility, structure, equipment, or sign;

Proactive enforcement of this issue will remain a challenge due to limited resources. As a result, staff take a mostly reactive approach to enforcing the Parks By-Law until a particular issue becomes more frequent and complaint driven. At that point, staff has typically increased communication/education and engaged Compliance Officers to patrol the area(s) in question. As always, residents are encouraged to contact 311 with concerns or complaints.

Staff currently intend to allocate funds in the 2018/2019 budget for the creation and implementation of a public awareness campaign regarding unauthorized removal of vegetation from Point Pleasant Park (and parks in general), including the installation of park signs as suggested in the motion. Signs will be placed in strategic locations throughout Point Pleasant Park where the removal of vegetation has been reported.

The Point Pleasant Park campaign will be launched in conjunction with the revised Parks By-Law which is on track to be completed by March 31, 2018. A communication strategy will accompany the revised By-Law and be delivered through the HRM website and municipal social media accounts.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications at this time.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

None required.

ATTACHMENTS

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Ray Walsh, Manager, Parks 902.490.6591
