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Info Item No. 2
Community Planning & Economic Development
Standing Committee
October 26, 2017

TO: Chair and Members of Community Planning & Economic Development
Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: _____ **ORIGINAL SIGNED** _____
Angela Green, Acting Director, Parks & Recreation

DATE: August 16, 2017

SUBJECT: 100th Anniversary of the Halifax Explosion – Update on Municipal Program

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

- June 10, 2014 Halifax Regional Council motion:
MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Craig that Halifax Regional Council:
Adopt Administrative Order 2014-005-GOV providing the Terms of Reference for the Halifax
Explosion 100th Anniversary Advisory Committee as outlined in Attachment 1 of the April 10,
2014 staff report.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Administrative Order 2014-005-GOV, Respecting the Special Advisory Committee on the 100th Anniversary of the Halifax Explosion, section 12:

Municipal staff shall, with the assistance of the Committee, submit a written report to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee on the status of the Municipal Commemorative Program at least twice annually.

BACKGROUND

In 2013, Regional Council approved a plan to commemorate the 100th anniversary through three specific project streams:

1. An enhanced civic commemoration event on Dec. 6, 2017;
2. A legacy capital project; and
3. A grants program to support non-profit organizations and charities in their commemoration of the event.

Regional Council also appointed a Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Special Advisory Committee (HEAAC) to advise staff on the development and implementation of the commemorative program. The Committee held their initial meeting on August 27, 2014, and have been meeting monthly with staff members from Culture & Events, Planning and Policy, and Grants & Contributions. They have established guiding principles and created a vision statement which has in turn influenced the development of the three

Municipal program streams. The most recent information report outlining the staff and Committee's activities to-date was presented to Regional Council on December 15, 2016 and can be found at <http://legacycontent.halifax.ca/boardscom/SCcped/documents/161215cpedinfo2.pdf>. This report provides the final updates prior to the December 6, 2017 Anniversary Event.

DISCUSSION

The following information reflects the status of the three specific project areas.

1. Civic Commemorative Event

During the HEAAC deliberations, it was determined by the Committee that to properly commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Halifax Explosion, support should be provided for a series of events leading up to the civic commemorative event on December 6, 2017. As such, the committee requested that the enhanced civic commemoration event be divided into two sub-components:

- a. The December 6, 2017, Expanded Commemorative Ceremony; and
- b. The 100th Anniversary Commemorative Program

a. Expanded Commemorative Ceremony December 6, 2017 Memorial Service

- The Memorial Service will follow the annual event program with additional speakers as determined by the presence of dignitaries and special guests. Seating, staging, lighting, and sound will be adjusted based on final numbers and weather conditions. It is estimated that there may be between 1000 – 1500 people in attendance. The event will take place in the new memorial plaza of Fort Needham Memorial Park. Members of the public and relevant organizations with special ties to the Anniversary will be invited to lay wreaths after the formal wreath laying;
- Music will be provided by the Royal Canadian Navy Stadacona Band;
- First mail out of the official invitations were sent on June 1, 2017 with the second mail out scheduled for September 1, 2107;
- A post event reception will be held at St. Joseph's-Alexander McKay Elementary School. Staff are working with the school's Principal and Vice-Principal on planning and the reception is open to the public;
- At the request of the Advisory Committee, the Office of the Municipal Clerk issued a Call for Survivors and 19 survivors have self-identified to date. A Letter of Acknowledgement will be sent to those persons in recognition of the Anniversary; and
- A Book of Remembrance will be available for the public to sign at the Reception, City Hall and Halifax Central Library on December 6, 2017.

b. 100th Anniversary Commemorative Program

There are a number of components included in the commemorative program, which are outlined below.

i) Markers, Website and Mobile App

Since the December 2016 Information report, HRM has received funding in the amount of \$450,000 from Canadian Heritage through the Commemorate Canada program for the creation of a series of interpretive markers, a companion interactive website and mobile app. The Municipality also applied for funding from the Halifax Foundation for the marker project but that application was unsuccessful.

The markers are sculptural elements inscribed with interpretive information and are being designed by Rayleen Hill Architecture and Design. Three large markers (15' in height) will be installed in the Fort Needham Memorial Park consistent with the overall Master Plan Implementation. Outside of the Park, approximately nine-to-ten slightly smaller markers (10' in height) markers will be installed at selected sites related to the explosion throughout Halifax through spring 2018. The markers will feature passages excerpted from literary texts, research and first hand accounts, connecting them to the Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary program and site. This is an element that was identified as a 'Phase 3' deliverable of the Fort Needham Master Plan.

The interactive companion website will provide additional interpretive information and a specific marker narrative, but also to provide information to those who are unable to visit the sites. A secondary and related project is the development of a mobile app in association with the multidisciplinary research group, Narratives in Space and Time Society. The content of the app is derived from research walks that have been conducted by the group over the past several years relative to the Halifax Explosion. The app and website will be launched in October and is being developed by MindSea Development Inc.

These two projects allow interested parties to engage with the legacy of the Halifax Explosion in the context of the present day, in both physical and virtual space. Institutions such as the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic and the Nova Scotia Archives will be linked along with the 100years100stories website to connect people to appropriate and additional sources.

ii) The Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Commemorative Emblem
The Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Emblem is currently applied to all Halifax Explosion related communications. As well, Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary grant recipients are encouraged to include the emblem in their event and program promotional material.

iii) Partnerships and Promotion
HRM Corporate Communications meets regularly with the Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Staff Working Group and has developed a communications plan to support the communication and promotion of the campaign website - 100years100stories.ca, created by the Province.

The plan highlights how the municipality can leverage its own communications channels; specifically, the halifax.ca website, the digital screen network throughout many HRM facilities, and free advertising on Halifax Transit buses, as well as promoting all related information through HRM social media channels.

Since the last update to the CPED Standing Committee, staff has completed and/or facilitated the following:

- Parks Canada, through the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, have finalized text for the National Historic Event plaque, which will be installed at the Union St. entrance of Fort Needham Memorial Park. Installation date to be determined;
- The application to Commemorate Canada Program (Canadian Heritage) for \$450,000 in funds related to the development of a Commemorative Markers Program and an Interactive Website and App was successful, with funding announced in January 2017;
- Coordination on the development of a centralized web presence continues with the soft launch of 100years100stories.ca website in December 2016 and full launch in May 2017;
- Ongoing coordination with Communications Nova Scotia (CNS) and other Provincial Government stakeholders on the development of a collaborative web-presence (Campaign Page) to include curated stories related to Explosion information and resources, as well as an updated calendar of events related to the 100th Anniversary;
- Ongoing assistance in the development of a coordinated Marketing Campaign with CNS staff and HRM Communications' staff to drive interest in the 100th Anniversary;
- The Parliamentary Poet Laureate George Elliott Clarke accepted the commission to compose a Halifax Explosion commemorative poem with an anticipated completion date in October 2017. Mr. Clarke will attend the December 6, 2017 service and will deliver a reading of the poem;
- Halifax Poet Laureate Rebecca Thomas has composed a poem to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Halifax Explosion and will deliver a reading of the poem in association with the event;
- The Municipality has partnered with CBC in the development of a Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Documentary which will enable the municipality to provide screenings of the documentary in HRSB schools and Halifax Public Libraries; and

- Google Cardboard units will be purchased to be used with the CBC web-based virtual reality experience on the immediate before-and-after of the Explosion and HRM will host opportunities to showcase that experience in mid November 2017.

Next Steps:

- Issue tenders for the Commemorative Marker Program
- Finalize interpretive information to be included on Markers and the associated website;
- Finalize Interactive Website and Mobile App, with anticipated launch in mid-September 2017;
- Continue to work on the launch of the communication and marketing strategies; and
- Continue to work a calendar of events related to the Explosion Anniversary. The calendar will be hosted on the 100Years100Stories.ca website and the Nova Scotia Tourism portal.

iv) Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Advisory Committee

- At the request of the Advisory Committee, a 100th Anniversary Commemorative Coin is being produced and will include the Halifax Explosion 100 Year Emblem; and
- As their legacy project, the Advisory Committee is creating a new time capsule for the Memorial Bell Tower with the contents developed by the Committee. Staff will facilitate the preservation of the contents, with planned internment in the Memorial Bell Tower after December 6, 2017. The original 1985 Time Capsule will be opened in August 2017, as per the instructions of the original 1985 Memorial Bell Tower Committee, with those contents preserved through the Municipal Archives.

2. Legacy Capital Project

A total of \$500,000 has been funded by Canadian Heritage through the Legacy Fund toward the Fort Needham Masterplan Implementation project. Funding is being applied to the design and construction of the Bell Tower Memorial Plaza and Interpretive Program at Fort Needham Park. A request for sponsorship was submitted to Irving Shipbuilding towards the construction of the playground in Fort Needham Memorial Park. That request was unsuccessful.

Fort Needham Master Plan Implementation

As per the direction of Regional Council, the Fort Needham Master Plan will be implemented in phases and will reinforce the site as the physical memorial to the victims and the legacy of impact of the Halifax Explosion, in addition to being a community park. The design includes physical/geographical ties to the Halifax Explosion, restored and new interpretive and commemorative elements, improved infrastructure for commemorative events, as well as passive and active activities.

Since the last update to CPED Standing Committee, staff has completed the following tasks:

- Completed design development and tender documents for Phase 1 of the Master Plan;
- Issued and awarded Tender 17- 001 'Fort Needham Improvements – Fort Needham Memorial Park' in February 2017; and:
- Completed the Interpretive Plan for Fort Needham Memorial Park including an interpretive framework for future phases of park upgrades. The initial interpretive elements have been designed and incorporated into the current construction project.

Next Steps:

- Finalize construction of the Fort Needham Memorial Park prior to December 2017.

Memorial Bell Tower Restoration Project

In November 2016, the Explosion Memorial Bell Tower structure's surface was cleaned and minor repairs to the concrete completed. Work on the bells was also initiated in November of 2016 through RFP 16-182R 'Design-Build Upgrades to Fort Needham Bells'. Through that tender, the bells were removed; the underside of canopies painted to uniform colour; new mechanisms installed; the electrical system was updated with new wiring and increased power; and new bird screens were installed. A new electronic control

system was installed to provide an improved level of control. Major work was completed by the end of June 2017 and the Memorial Bells are in working order.

As part of the Fort Needham Interpretive plan, a new lighting system will be installed to up-light the Tower. The lighting is an LED, computer-based system with programable functions that includes control of colour, sequencing and light levels in addition to static monument lighting. An interpretive light-program has been designed that respectfully illustrates the events of the day of the Halifax Explosion.

3. Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Grant Program

The centennial grant program, Administrative Order 2015-003-ADM, was intended to broaden public participation in recognizing the 100th Anniversary of the Halifax Explosion through assistance to projects undertaken by non-profit organizations and charities. Project-specific awards of up to \$10,000 were available to assist in the development of educational or interpretive projects, ethno-cultural research and/or presentation, and ceremonial or dedication events. The first call for applications was in fiscal year 2015 and the second and final call in fiscal year 2016. Staff will return to Council to repeal the Administrative Order upon completion of the program.

Highlights:

The 2015 call for applications received a total of eighteen (18) one-time applications for a combined total of \$145,223.70 in requests. Ten (10) awards were granted for a combined total of \$90,760.

The 2016 call for applications received a total of twenty-four (24) applications for a combined total of \$213,523. Eleven (11) awards were granted for a combined total of \$76,480.

In addition to awards issued under the *Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Grant Program*, centennial-related grants were also issued under the *Community Grants Program* and the *Grants to Professional Arts Organizations Program* as follows:

Community Grants Program (2015-2017): six (6) awards for a combined total of \$27,500.

Grants to professional Arts Organizations (2017): two (2) awards for a combined total of \$12,000.

Over a 3-year period, a total of thirty-six (36) grants were issued for projects commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Halifax Explosion for a combined total of \$206,240. The thirty-three (33) recipient organizations¹ represent a range of interests, from community-based/volunteer initiatives to professional productions, and vary in scale, complexity and content.

Next Steps:

- Progress Report – information report to the Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Special Advisory Committee and HRM Grants Committee;
- Receipt of final reports and confirmation of expenditures in accordance with the terms and conditions of funding; and
- Evaluation of designated grant program and final report.

¹ Dalhousie University Art Gallery, Neptune Theatre/Eastern Front Theatre, and the Calvin Presbyterian Church received two grants, one in each of two fiscal years.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This is an information report only with no funding implications.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Advisory Committee is comprised of volunteer members of the community. The Committee regularly meets monthly, and all meetings are open to the public, unless stated otherwise on the agenda. Agendas, reports, and minutes are available online.

ATTACHMENTS

None

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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