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**Item No. 8**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**April 11, 2017**

**TO:** Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original Signed by Director  
Brad Anguish, Director, Parks & Recreation

**DATE:** March 28, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Canada Day Festival 2017, "We Are Canadian - Nous Sommes Canadiens"

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**INFORMATION REPORT**

**ORIGIN**

Halifax was invited to apply to Canadian Heritage for funding for Canada Day 2017. Halifax has been identified by Canadian Heritage as one of the 19 landmarks cities recognized as epicentres for Canada 150 celebrations. On February 1, 2017 staff received confirmation that a significant grant had been awarded to Halifax to enhance the program.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*

79(1) The Council may expend money required by the Municipality for  
...  
(k) recreational programs;

**BACKGROUND**

Canada will be celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017. As a result, Canada Day 2017 provides HRM with a unique opportunity to commemorate its past, while collectively celebrating its future. The Sesquicentennial Canada Day Festival program will be used to:

- promote citizenship;
- identity and belonging;
- celebrate national and local history;
- support economic development and tourism; and
- showcase national and local achievements in a multitude of areas: arts and culture, diversity and inclusion, heritage, technology, and innovation.

In order to commemorate and celebrate the sesquicentennial, an enhanced Canada Day event is being planned. As noted, HRM has been awarded funding from Canadian Heritage. While the amount will remain confidential until official announcements are made, staff is preparing the program for an enhanced event.

## **DISCUSSION**

The plan for the celebration of Canada Day 2017 is to deliver a collage of color, sounds and tastes that capture the diverse culture that has been established throughout Canada over the last 150 years and before. The Halifax Central Common has been selected as the site for the Canada Day Festival “We Are Canadian - Nous Sommes Canadiens 2017”. This site has proven to be the best location that can safely accommodate estimated crowds of 40,000+ attendees during peak event time.

The newly designed festival event will begin at noon and last until midnight at the Halifax Central Common. There will be one main stage for the evening concert featuring a line-up of nationally recognized Canadian talent, and a second stage programmed during the day showcasing local multi-cultural performances as well as enhanced family and children areas. A major component of the evening will be the fireworks show planned to be released over Halifax’s National Historic Site – Citadel Hill. The view planes from the Commons make it possible to see the entire fireworks show without having to leave the event site and move to the waterfront. This event plan provides something new and exciting to commemorate Canada 150 and maximizes the audience experience on site and in the surrounding areas. With four fireworks shows currently planned for the Halifax Waterfront during the summer, including the Natal Day Harbor Fireworks Show, citizens will have many other opportunities to enjoy the popular harbour location.

The successful history of delivering large scale events at the Commons was a determining factor, as staff considered the safest and most accessible site to hold an event of this significance and audience numbers. It is also aligned with the Canada 150 funding pillars that encourage the use of outdoor communal spaces to hold free festivities available to the maximum audience. There is no other municipally owned, centrally located urban green space that can accommodate 40,000+ people for an event. In addition, it is an accessible venue for tourists with its close proximity to all major hotels, direct walking access to downtown Halifax and easy access to downtown Dartmouth. The nearby transportation service provides connections to the rest of the city, and concert shuttle buses can run directly to and from the Commons from various locations with ease.

Under the Canada 150 program, Canadian Heritage is producing a National CBC broadcast and elements of the Halifax program will be profiled. Currently all major cities are confirming national headliners for the main stage. Similar to the New Year’s Eve enhanced program in Halifax, the additional one-time funding has provided access to artists that until now that have been out of reach within the annual budget.

In addition to the festival site at the Commons, other Canada Day programs will take place across the region. Bedford Days, Sackville Patriot Days and countless other community festivals are planned. The Annual Dartmouth Canada Day Pancake Breakfast and the Concert at the Sullivan’s Pond will continue in Dartmouth for 2017, and it is anticipated that the annual Canada Day programing including the free concert at Alderney Landing and the harbour fireworks will return to that location in 2018.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The total budget for the Canada Day event will be able to be accommodated from annual operating funds and sponsorship from Canadian Heritage through the Canada 150 funding program.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Canada Day volunteer committee includes members of the public.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

None.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.php> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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