

HALIFAX

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Item No. 14.1.5
Halifax Regional Council
January 16, 2018

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by 

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: June 28, 2017

SUBJECT: Update and Next Steps - HRM Activity Related to Indigenous Affairs

ORIGIN

May 24, 2016 Council Motion: That Halifax Regional Council request a staff report on the status of the municipal strategy to engage with First Nations community on actions identified through the Truth and Reconciliation process and our commitment to partnership as passed in the Dec. 8, 2015 motion of Regional Council. The report is requested to provide an overall framework for engagement, steps to move forward on development of a strategy with a timeline for implementation, and a reporting framework to the Executive Committee.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter,

s. 2 The purpose of this Act is to

(a) give broad authority to the Council, including broad authority to pass by-laws, and respect its right to govern the Municipality in whatever ways the Council considers appropriate within the jurisdiction given to it;

s. 35(1) The Chief Administrative Officer shall

...
(e) carry out such additional duties and exercise such additional responsibilities as the Council may, from time to time, direct.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council direct the CAO to continue to develop a Municipal Strategy to engage First Nations that is in alignment with the action summary set out in this report.

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council, with support of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, initiate a dialogue with Indigenous governing organizations with a view to developing relationships with them.

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council designate a Councillor as a representative to act on behalf of the Mayor, when requested by the Mayor, as principal representative, for government to government interactions requiring a political representative as Regional Council's Indigenous community liaison.

BACKGROUND

The term "urban Aboriginal people" refers primarily to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit residing in urban areas. Census data from 2016 indicate that 15,815 persons, or around 3.9% of the Halifax Regional Municipality population, self-identified as Aboriginal. Of this population, around 50% indicated a First Nations identity and 44% identified as Métis.¹

Halifax has had various interactions with Aboriginal and First Nations persons and communities, including the urban Aboriginal community. These interactions have tended to be on an issue-by-issue basis. For example, HRM has service agreements in place with two First Nation groups that have reserve lands within HRM boundaries: Indian Brook First Nation (signed 2004) and Acadia First Nation (signed 2010). The two identical agreements govern the provision of municipal services to land acquired by the First Nation Councils to establish reserve lands in the Hammonds Plains area.

In 2008, the federal government requested HRM's participation in the development of an Urban Aboriginal Strategy. HRM appointed a staff person from Community & Recreation Services to join the Halifax Aboriginal Peoples Network (HAPN) steering committee which oversaw that initiative. HAPN was a multi-stakeholder organization that undertook grassroots level outreach.

In 2014, the federal government announced changes to the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. Funding was transferred from HAPN to a new Urban Partnership program that focused on increasing urban Aboriginal participation in the economy. A multi-stakeholder strategic planning session for the new program was held in February 2015 of which HRM was also a participant.

DISCUSSION

The office of Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) was established in June 2015. Since its inception, the office has led and supported a number of internal and external initiatives to advance diversity and inclusion and better position the municipality as an inclusive employer and as a provider of services to the community. The Office's draft Diversity and Inclusion Framework references Aboriginal persons in the context of the four designated groups in the HRM *Employment Equity Policy* and the implementation plan anticipates, through engagement with the community, the development of an action plan to support the municipality's work with urban Aboriginal communities.

Status of the Municipal Strategy:

In preparation for the development of a municipal strategy, the Manager, Diversity and Inclusion, has worked with various external partners to identify what resources are available and what needs have been previously identified. This has included extensive meetings with the Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre, meetings with individual community members and a "document scan" of various initiatives across Canada.

¹ <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/dt-td/Rp-eng.cfm?LANG=E&APATH=5&DETAIL=0&DIM=0&FL=A&FREE=0&GC=1209034&GID=0&GK=3&GRP=0&PID=107504&PRID=0&PTYPE=105277&S=0&SHOWALL=0&SUB=0&Temporal=2013&THEME=94&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=>

Most recently, the Office received funding in the 2017/18 municipal budget to hire an Urban Indigenous Community Engagement Advisor. This position will be responsible to develop the strategy through extensive internal and external engagement, support the Special Committee on the commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History, and develop and implement corporate training to support the cultural proficiency of HRM staff and council.

Other actions that support the strategy include:

- First Nations Clean Water Initiative – Atlantic Region (FNCWI-AR) which aims to ensure safe drinking water for First Nations communities. In April 2017, the executive team from Halifax Water, Mayor Mike Savage, HRM Diversity Manager, Chiefs and First Nation water operators met to talk about this initiative.
- The Municipality has committed to establishing a legacy room in partnership with the Gord Downie Chanie Wenjack fund.
- HRFE Outreach Committee on employment engaged the Urban Indigenous community during its first year in operation in 2015. Initial contact was made to the Executive Director of the Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Center to foster relationship building and exchange resource and networking information. HRFE established a contact resource list of key members in the Urban Indigenous community and adjacent communities and continued their engagement to promote the fire service. During the month of October, HRFE distributed historical information to staff via the online e-learning center to acknowledge and celebrate Mi'kmaq History Month.
- In October 2017, HRFE were invited and have since conducted an information session at the LSK School (Mi'kmaq school in Sipekne'katik (Indian Brook First Nation) on outreach and recruitment targeted towards grades 9-12. Since then, HRFE has met with the Aboriginal Youth Support Worker at the East Hants Rural High School to maximize their presence in this community and further spread the message of diversity, inclusion and community with respect to municipal fire services.
- Halifax Police Services have created the Police Diversity Working Group at which the Friendship centre has representation. Halifax police also partnered with the Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre to bring a cultural training and orientation perspectives to officers during block training.
- Halifax Public Libraries have a number of initiatives that will help to inform a municipal strategy.

Partnerships:

Mi'kmaq Friendship Centre

As a first step towards an enhanced relationship with Indigenous persons in Halifax, representatives from the Office met with representatives from the Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre to open a dialogue about ways in which the municipality and Mi'kmaq community can work together. Meetings are continuing to identify priority areas for joint action.

Municipal staff from Government Relations & External Affairs and Corporate Real Estate have been meeting with the Mi'kmaq Friendship Centre staff and consultant on their vision for a new centre. HRM staff provided an overview of Administrative Order 50 (AO50), respecting the disposal of surplus real property, and the process by which properties become surplus. Staff also supplied lists of properties that Regional Council have as surplus to municipal requirements since AO50's inception in 2013. Work continues to support the Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre as they move their vision and plan forward.

Halifax Economic Growth Strategy 2016-21

Engagement was also undertaken with the Aboriginal community as a part of Halifax's new Economic Growth Strategy 2016-21. A series of the objectives and actions relate to Halifax's Aboriginal community. These are:

Objective 1.3 – Improve the conditions for innovation and entrepreneurialism

Action: 20 – Increase connectivity with and build capacity of African Nova Scotia and urban aboriginal organizations engaged in economic development

Objective 2.4 – Increase workforce attachment and combat systemic barriers

Action: 46 – In collaboration with provincial partners, BBI, the Mi'kmaq Friendship Centre, and education providers, assess existing programs, services and outcomes related to the workforce attachment of urban aboriginal peoples, African Nova Scotians, and other groups at risk of exclusion.

Action 49 – Review/improve HRM HR policies from a diversity and inclusion perspective.

Action 50 – Explore opportunities to connect newcomers, African Nova Scotians, urban aboriginal peoples, youth and persons with disabilities with employment opportunities at HRM.

Objective 3.6 - Foster Cultural proficiency and social inclusion

Action 67: In accordance with HRM's statement on aboriginal reconciliation, develop a plan to engage urban aboriginal peoples.

The Diversity and Inclusion office and the Senior Advisor, Economic Policy & Development, continue to work together to move these actions forward.

There have also been various political approaches to enhance HRM's relationship with Indigenous persons: Council has taken the lead in the municipality's acknowledgement of Treaty Day (October 1st) and Mi'kmaq History Month (October) through an annual flag raising ceremony; ensures the acknowledgement of Mi'kmaq traditional and ancestral lands during official meetings and ceremonies; members participate in related community events; and have supported council and committee motions including the recent Police Commission motion of October 16, 2017:

That the Halifax Board of Police Commissioners request a staff report that shall outline recommendations regarding:

- 1. entering into dialogue regarding the establishment of more formal relationships regarding possible partnerships for policing, public safety and enforcement with First Nations with reserve lands adjacent to HRM; and*
- 2. improve public safety for Indigenous people in Halifax and ensure police services meet the needs, values and expectations of Indigenous people.*

Actions to support Truth and Reconciliation:

On December 8, 2015, following the report and recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and subsequent responses from various groups, including the Federation of Canadian

Municipalities, Halifax Regional Council endorsed a Statement of Reconciliation. (<http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/151208ca1442.pdf>). Council also sought the following outcome: "As the Office of Diversity & Inclusion develops a work plan, which includes a focussed consultation with Aboriginal people, this motion is to provide a mandate and direction to support the Big City Mayors' Caucus ("BCMC") working group, and to incorporate an urban-Indigenous strategy into the work plan of the Office of Diversity & Inclusion".

Recommendations from the BCMC Aboriginal Partnership Working group to be actioned by municipalities are:

43. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.

The Advisor, Indigenous Community Engagement, will work with provincial government officials to better understand the context of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in Nova Scotia and specifically here in HRM.

47. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius, and to reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts.

Council has approved the establishment of an expert panel to revise and advise Council regarding any changes to the commemoration of Edward Cornwallis on municipal assets. This panel will also make recommendations on how the municipality will recognize and commemorate Indigenous peoples in lands now known as the Halifax Regional Municipality. This work is currently underway and lead by Government Relations and External Affairs.

57. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion has been funded to hire an Advisor for Indigenous Community Engagement. As part of their work, this staff member will work with the office and community to identify training and resources to support staff and council education programs to develop cultural competency with respect to supporting the Indigenous community in HRM.

75. We call upon the federal government to work with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, churches, Aboriginal communities, former residential school students, and current landowners to develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, commemoration, and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried. This is to include the provision of appropriate memorial ceremonies and commemorative markers to honour the deceased children.

This recommendations rests predominantly with the provincial government. HRM is committed to work with the province, community groups and internal business units to move this recommendation forward. This recommendation will also be addressed through the work of the expert panel.

77. We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal, and community archives to work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

In partnership with other levels of government, HRM will support the collections and preservation of records related to truth and reconciliation.

The BCRC released a report in October 2016 entitled Pathways to Reconciliation: Cities respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (http://www.fcm.ca/Documents/tools/BCRC/Pathways_to_reconciliation_EN.pdf).

Ongoing Engagement

Ongoing engagement of the urban Indigenous Community will be instrumental in the success of any strategy. This engagement is complex and involves not only many levels within HRM but also many groups and individuals who represent the community. An example of the variety of groups and organizations that need to be part of the engagement process is attached (Attachment 1). Some of these groups are governing organizations while others are service-providing organizations. The Diversity and Inclusion office will, through Council’s leadership, assist the municipality in establishing more formal relationships with organizations such as the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq Chiefs, with special emphasis on bands that are in or abut HRM including Sipekne’katik (Indian Brook), Acadia and Millbrook and explore a more formal relationship with the Mi’kmaq Native Friendship Centre. Council is also committed, through the Expert Panel, to recognize and commemorate the Indigenous history in the lands now known as HRM. The Diversity and Inclusion office will also continue to work closely with business units to identify appropriate engagement opportunities to bring key stakeholders together to support programs and services to urban Aboriginal community members.

Action Summary Action Item	Comments	Time line
Hire permanent full time Urban Indigenous Community Engagement Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead, both internal and external, engagement to develop the municipal framework. • Enhance internal capacity to understand and engage with the Indigenous community through training • Work closely with the community to develop lasting partnership in relation to the provision of municipal services. 	Staff member hired – work ongoing.

Continue meetings with representatives from the Mi'kmaq Friendship centre to identify areas of potential collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings have been held over the summer months and will continue into the fall • Meetings have focussed on reviewing previous reports where actions related to Aboriginal peoples have been identified • Once all actions have been identified, proposed next steps will be identified • Meetings have been held to discuss future of Mi'kmaq Friendship Centre 	Ongoing
Internal analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with business units, identify what currently is being done to support services and engagement of Urban Aboriginal peoples • Identify opportunities for additional engagement of Urban Aboriginal peoples 	Winter 2018
Working with the Economic Policy and Development team of GREA, continue to move forward the actions in the economic strategy that specifically speak to the Aboriginal community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify next steps, existing actions with Halifax Partnership 	Related to Economic strategy time line.
Community engagement with Aboriginal organizations and individuals to obtain input into the development of a plan that will further support the Municipality's work with urban Aboriginal peoples.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work will be iterative as work with FCM and the community evolves. 	Fall 2017 and ongoing
Urban Aboriginal Framework, as part of the overall Diversity and Inclusion Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework to be developed following community engagement. 	June 2018
Implementation of an Urban Aboriginal Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions identified in the framework may be adjusted through ongoing feedback from stakeholders 	TBD

Once a detailed framework and action plan have been developed, the office of Diversity and Inclusion will provide an annual update to the Executive Standing Committee. Regular updates on urban Aboriginal engagement, plans and initiatives will also be done through reporting on the Diversity and Inclusion Framework.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications from the recommendations in this report.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendation of this report. The risks considered rate low.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Ongoing as part of the framework development.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

ALTERNATIVES

Council could provide additional direction, or amend the direction, as set out in the action summary.

Council could choose not to accept staff's recommendation which would result in stalling the development of an Urban Indigenous framework for the municipality.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Overview of Aboriginal Organizations

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.

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NATIONAL ABORIGINAL ORGANIZATIONS

Assembly of First Nations (AFN)	Native Women's Assoc. of Canada (NWAC)	Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)	Metis National Council (MNC)	Congress of Aboriginal People (CAP)
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ATLANTIC REGION

Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nation Chiefs Secretariat
(APC)

Ulnooweg Development Group
(Financial/Business)

MI'KMAW GOVERNANCE IN NOVA SCOTIA

Mi'kmaq Grand Council

Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative
(KMKNO)

Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs
(13 First Nations)

Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM)

Union of Nova Scotia Indians (UNSI)

Annapolis Valley
Bear River
Glooscap
Millbrook
Paqtnkek
Pictou Landing
Shubenacadie

Acadia
Eskasoni
Membertou
Potlotek
Wagmatcook
We'koqma'q (Waycobah)

ABORIGINAL ORGANIZATIONS IN NOVA SCOTIA

Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey (Education)	Nova Scotia Native Women's Association	Native Council of Nova Scotia (Non-status/off-res.)	Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre (Urban)
Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources	Mi'kmaq Assoc. of Cultural Studies	Mi'kmaq Family & Children's Services (Social)	Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network (Justice)
Native Alcohol & Drug Abuse Counselling Assoc. (Addictions)	Mi'kmaq Employment & Training Secretariat (Employment)		Mi'kmaq Economic Benefits Office (Training/Employment)

MULTILATERAL INITIATIVES

Aboriginal Affairs Working Group
(National: FPT+NAO)

Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum

Made-in-Nova Scotia Process
(Negotiations)

Consultation Terms of Reference
(Consultation)