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**Item No. 2**  
**North West Community Council**  
**May 14, 2018**

**TO:** Chair and Members of North West Community Council

Original Signed

**SUBMITTED BY:**

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Brad Anguish, Director, Parks and Recreation

Original Signed

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Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** May 8, 2018

**SUBJECT:** Signage at Public Boat Launches Encouraging Safe Boating  
Speed/Practices

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### **INFORMATION REPORT**

#### **ORIGIN**

September 11, 2017 Motion of North West Community Council:

That North West Community Council request a staff report outlining options to ensure public safety on all HRM lakes, specifically Springfield Lake in District 14, through methods such as posting safe boating signage at public boat launches; enforcement of safe boating speeds/practices and possible monitoring of lake activity.

#### **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*Vessel Operation Restriction Regulations, SOR/2008-120*

By-law P-601, Respecting Municipal Parks

## **BACKGROUND**

In March of 2003, staff submitted an Information Report to North West Community Council in response to a request for staff to investigate the possible relocation of the boat launch, given the close proximity of this boat launch to the beach area.

No alternate sites could be found around Springfield Lake suitable for the relocation for the public boat launch. During this time, the Councillor developed a locked gate system whereby gated access to the public boat launch could only be obtained through down payment for a key to unlock the gate. Up until recently, local residents were granted exclusive access to the public boat launch by way of this system. The lock was removed from the gate during the summer of 2017.

Parks and Aquatics staff agree that the gated access system exclusive to local residents was not ideal. This practice is not consistent with the operational and managed open access approach to other public boat launches throughout HRM. Therefore, the lock was removed and the gate was open and made accessible for public access. Aquatic staff, while onsite, monitored the swimmers and boat launch area without recorded incident from August until the end of September. On a further note, there have been 10 311 service calls and 3 calls directly to the RCMP regarding Springfield Lake Beach Park over the past 3 years, but none of the calls relate to boating and or lake safety.

## **DISCUSSION**

### Springfield Lake

Although there is no record of public concern with safety regarding boating on Springfield Lake, Parks and Aquatic staff do agree the boat launch is in very close proximity to the supervised beach swimming area.

Due to this proximity, it is suggested that a separation area be created between the supervised swimming area and the public boat launch by way of a string of buoys (see Attachment A). This separation area will allow Aquatic Services staff to monitor the designated swim area and help to ensure swimmers are at a safe distance from launching water craft.

Springfield Lake Beach Park is currently without Park Identification ID or Public Boat Launch Rules signage. Signage will be erected at this location in the late spring of 2018 as part of HRM Parks signage renewal program and create a consistent approach throughout HRM (see Attachment B: Lake Charlotte Public Boat Launch Rules Sign). Public boat launch rules signs and park ID signs (additional or renewal) will follow at other locations throughout HRM as Parks continues with the program. Speed limitations, as per s.2(7) of the Transport Canada Safety and Security *Vessel Operation Restriction Regulations*, will also be placed on Public Boat Launch Rules Signs on a go forward basis.

### Safe Boating Regulations

As part of the Transport Canada Safety and Security *Vessel Operation Restriction Regulations*, the following regulations provide a list (section 16) of all the persons who are appointed as enforcement officers under the regulations. They include "A member of any provincial, county or municipal police force" – therefore allowing Halifax Regional Police (HRP) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers to act as enforcement officers under the regulations.

Additionally, section 17 allows an enforcement officer to:

- (a) prohibit the movement of any vessel or direct it to move as specified by the enforcement officer;
- (b) stop and board any vessel at any reasonable time, and
  - (i) direct any person to put into operation or cease operating any equipment on board the vessel,
  - (ii) ask any pertinent questions of, and demand all reasonable assistance from, any person on board the vessel, and

- (iii) require that any person on board the vessel provide to the enforcement officer, for examination, any document or information that is in the person's possession.

The offences under these regulations have also been designated "contraventions" under the federal Contraventions Act and Regulations, meaning that a ticket can be issued. Again, Police officers are authorized to issue these tickets as the Contraventions Act includes any police officer or constable, including a special or auxiliary constable, as an enforcement authority, and the Contraventions Regulations provide that the Nova Scotia Summary Proceedings Act applies as long as the offence occurred in Nova Scotia.

Speed and speed restrictions are noted offences under section 2(7) of the Regulations. It is prohibited to operate a power-driven vessel at a speed in excess of 10km/h within 30m of the shore of any river or lake in Nova Scotia. There are exceptions to this for towing people on water skis or other recreational equipment, so long as the vessel follows a course away from and perpendicular to the shore therefore eliminating wakes in these zones.

#### Enforcement

HRP currently has a contract with MFR Rescue Limited to provide waterside patrol services. Although the contract provides for use of this resource to be deployed as directed by the Chief of Police, it is understood the primary role of the service is for patrol on the waters of Lake Micmac and Lake Banook. Although the contractor takes an approach centered around investigation, education and reporting, they are generally responsible for ensuring that federal regulations are followed. This includes, but is not limited to, controlling the speed of vessels, maintenance of safety for all users of the waters, and aid to persons and vessels in distress. The location of the patrol shall be specified from time to time by the Chief of Police or delegate to the patrol contractor. Hours of patrol operation are from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily from June 29<sup>th</sup> to the Tuesday following Labour Day. The contractor is also available outside of these hours if the need arises.

HRP also operates patrol vessel(s) in the Halifax Harbour supported through a contract with the Halifax Port Authority. The Garrett Cotter remains in the Harbour permanently creating a waterside platform for patrol as required, but the primary function of the contracted unit is to provide waterside and landside policing to Halifax Port Authority property. These assets cannot be redeployed to other areas of the Region.

The Springfield Lake area is under Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) jurisdiction and, as such, would also respond to incidents in this area. The RCMP have 3 calls to the Lower Sackville dispatch over the past 5 years regarding Springfield Lake, but none of the calls were related to boating or lake safety. The RCMP are also equipped with response vessels that can be deployed when applicable.

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

#### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

None

#### ATTACHMENTS

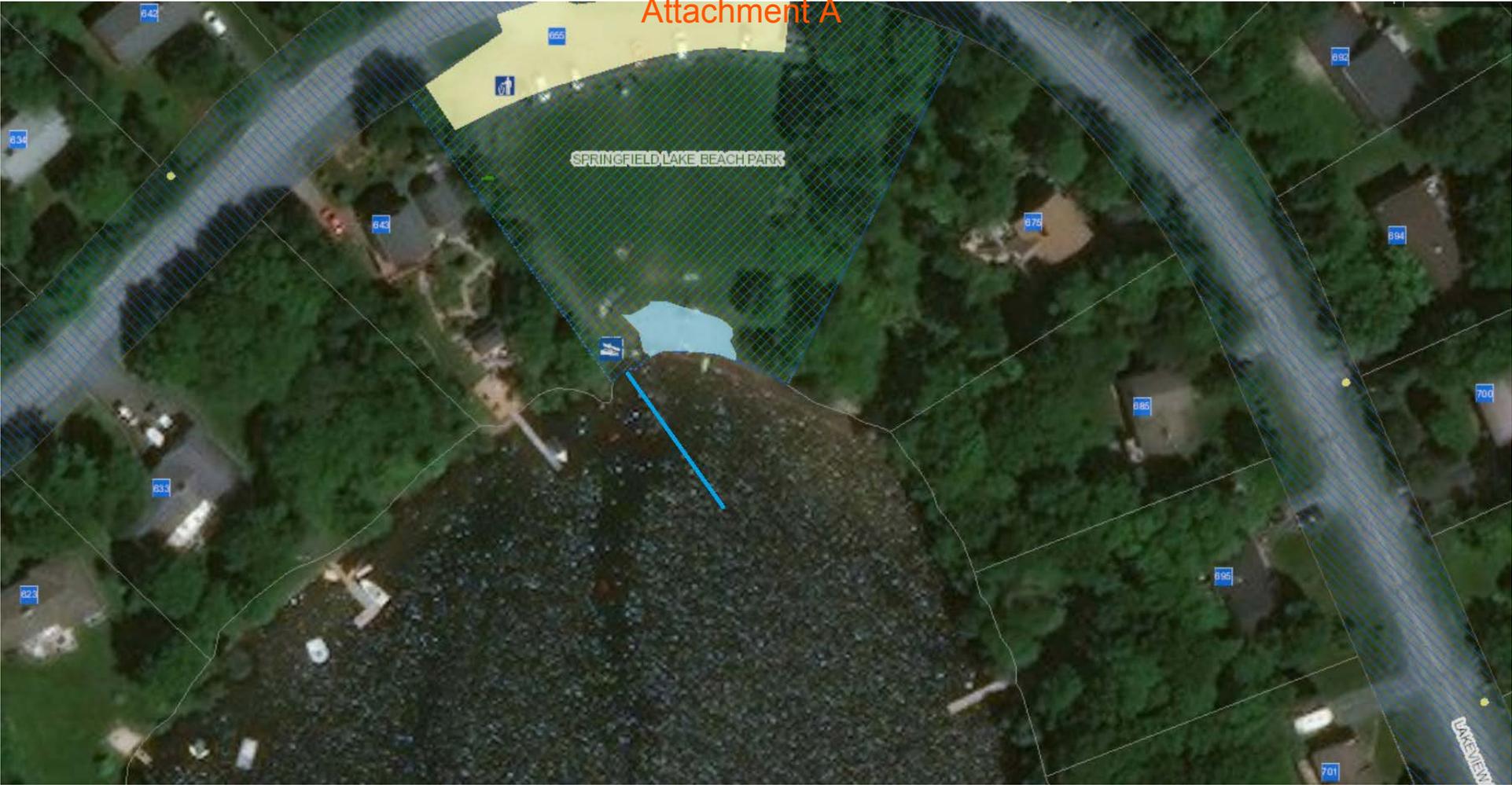
Attachment A: Springfield Lake Beach Park Boat Launch/Beach Separation  
Attachment B: Lake Charlotte Public Boat Launch Rules Sign

A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Rob Mullane, Superintendent Parks East, 902.490.5819

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Attachment A



# Lake Charlotte Boat Launch

## 11465 Highway #7, Lake Charlotte

### USE AT OWN RISK

- Be respectful and mindful that this is a public boat launch and dock
- Park in designated areas only
- Please take all trash with you for proper disposal
- Limit "TIE-UP" at dock to 30 minutes - be respectful of others waiting to use dock facilities
- Use of choc blocks is recommended
- Refueling of watercraft is prohibited on water, on launch, or in parking area
- Shallow water area. Do not start motor until watercraft is on the water
- Is your drain plug in?

### TO ALL USERS OF THIS PARK:

Halifax Regional Municipality is not responsible nor liable for any incident, accident or loss associated with the use of this launch

Report any issues to Halifax Regional Municipality by calling 311

HALIFAX

