

HALIFAX

P.O. Box 1749
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Item No. 14.1.7
Halifax Regional Council
February 16, 2016

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

Original Signed by 

SUBMITTED BY:

John Traves, Q.C. Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Original Signed by 

Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: January 25, 2016

SUBJECT: Surplus Municipal Property at 18 Scotia Drive, Bedford

ORIGIN

September 9, 2014 Halifax Regional Council motion:

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Fisher, seconded by Councillor Karsten that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Declare the properties contained in Attachments B, C, D, E and F of this report surplus to municipal purposes and that the properties are declared to be categorized as per Attachment B, C, D, E and F for the purposes of Administrative Order 50, respecting the Disposal of Surplus Real Property, and;

Motion Put and Passed Unanimously.

October 6, 2015 Halifax Regional Council motion:

MOVED by Councillor Outhit seconded by Councillor Johns

That Regional Council direct staff to retain a portion of the property for open space and prepare a report that includes a site plan to articulate the area recommend for retention along with the detailed financial implications. **Motion Put and Passed Unanimously.**

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter:

- Section 61 (1) The Municipality may acquire and own property granted or conveyed to the Municipality either absolutely or in trust for a public or charitable purpose; (3) The property vested in the Municipality, absolutely or in trust, is under the exclusive management and control of the Council, unless an Act of the Legislature provides otherwise; (5) The Municipality may (a) acquire property, including property outside the Municipality, that the Municipality requires for its purposes or for the use of the public; (b) sell property at market value when the property is no longer required for the purposes of the Municipality;

RECOMMENDATION ON PAGE 2

- Section 88 (1) The Council may expend money required by the Municipality for; (k) recreational programs; (x) lands and buildings required for a municipal purpose; (ah) playgrounds, trails, including trails developed, operated or maintained pursuant to an agreement made under clause 82(c), bicycle paths, swimming pools, ice arenas and other recreational facilities;(ai) public grounds, squares, halls, museums, parks, tourist information centres and community centres.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Retain approximately 8,500 square feet of land at the southern end of the former Waverley School property PID# 00428961 for a future pocket park;
2. Retain approximately 51,000 square feet of PID# 00428961 across Highway 1, the Bedford By-pass, as a portion of the Bedford Educational Centre soccer field; and
3. Declare the balance of PID# 00428961 as surplus in accordance with Regional Council's motion of September 9, 2014.

BACKGROUND

Regional Council declared the former Waverly School at 18 Scotia Drive as surplus on September 9, 2014. At the April 28, 2015 meeting of Regional Council, the area councillor asked that the property be re-examined to determine if a portion of it should be retained as a playground as it had not been clear that the playground behind the school would be sold as part of the surplus school property. Regional Council directed staff to carry out the necessary evaluation. Staff provided an assessment in a Council Report on October 6, 2015. Staff found that the community was adequately provided through two existing parks, Oakmount House Park and Nicolas Meagher Park. Nicolas Meagher Park is only partially developed. That report also pointed out that in assessing the property, a remnant portion of the Waverly School property was found across the highway and contains part of a community soccer field (see Attachment 1). That portion of the site was outlined in the original staff report as not surplus to School Board and Municipal needs. Council agreed that those lands should be retained. This is actioned in recommendation 2 of this report.

Council also directed that a small portion of the school be retained to provide a pocket park for the community and that there be details of the potential impact of the retention of the small park on the sale of the school site. This report provides those details.

DISCUSSION

The map on Attachment 1 indicates the recommended portion of the site to be retained as determined in consultation with the area Councillor. The southern portion of land is currently a parking area for the school and would provide a flat, developable area for a pocket park. The size would allow for minor improvements, such as benches, trees and a small play structure. From the perspective of sale of the remainder of the site, removal of the southern triangle from the surplus property is expected to be able to leave a developable portion of land. However, the developability of the property can only be confirmed through an actual application for subdivision or building permit. Further, with the retention of the land by HRM for a future park, any future subdivision and development of the surplus lands would not likely result in a recommendation to acquire additional parkland. However, a walkway connection into adjacent Nicolas Meagher Park from any future development would be a recommended objective (see Attachment 1). Owing to a short steep hill this would be a tertiary level pedestrian access. Primary access to Nicholas Meagher Park from any future development would be through the existing HRM walkway and connect to the park entrance from Duffus Drive (see Attachment 1).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The anticipated financial implications associated with retaining portions of the Waverly School lands for open space are:

- The cost to subdivide the parkland from the original surplus lands is estimated to be \$7,500 plus applicable taxes. Those funds are available under 2015 Approved Capital Budget # CPX01149 Park land Acquisition.
- A Class D order of magnitude cost to improve the south end of the parking area as a pocket park is estimated as \$110,000. This would include site preparation, trees, lawns, street light, play structure and benches. This includes the Councillor's objective of moving one of the existing play pieces to this site. No current capital budgets (2016/17) have been approved for creation of this park and the project would be subject to capital budget allocation through future Capital Budget approval processes.
- It is anticipated that maintenance costs would not be incremental to the costs already associated with the exiting school grounds and carried out by HRM Parks.
- Removal of approximately 8500 sq. feet of lands from the southern portion of surplus property is expected to reduce the market value of the property.
- Removal of the 51,000 sq. feet of lands across Highway 1 associated with the soccer field at Bedford Education Centre will not affect the anticipated market price as this portion of land was not intended to be declared surplus as outlined in the previous Council report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The property has undergone stage one and two environmental reviews and necessary remediation has occurred as part of the school being turned over to the Municipality by the Halifax Regional School Board.

ALTERNATIVES

- Alternative 1: Regional Council could choose to not retain the identified lands at the southern end of the former Waverley School property PID# 00428961 for a future pocket park. In that case, it would still be expected that a walkway connection would be negotiated from any future development of the surplus lands to adjacent Nicolas Meagher Park as an access to that park.
- Alternative 2: Regional Council could choose to not retain the identified lands from PID# 00428961 across Highway 1, the Bedford By-pass, as a portion of the Bedford Educational Centre soccer field. These lands were previously indicated as associated with the Bedford Education Centre and not surplus to School Board and Municipal needs.
- Alternative 3: Regional Council could choose to not declare the balance of PID# 00428961 as surplus in accordance with Regional Council's motion of September 9, 2014. The parcel is not required for municipal purposes.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Site Plan of Waverly School indicating area to be retained for parkland.

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 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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