



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No.
Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee
July 28, 2016

TO: Chair and Members of Community Planning and Economic Development

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by:
Maggie MacDonald, Managing Director, Government Relations and External Affairs

DATE: July 13, 2016

SUBJECT: International Partnership Update

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Administrative Order 2014-003-GOV Respecting International Partnerships (The International Partnership Policy) was approved by Halifax Regional Council on April 29, 2014.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Section 71 (1) permits the promotion of the Municipality for purposes of business and industrial development.

BACKGROUND

At the April 29, 2014 meeting of Halifax Regional Council, an Administrative Order was approved to manage the process of establishing international partnerships. The Administrative Order, or International Partnership Policy, includes a provision that staff will prepare an annual information report on international partnerships and include partnership requests received that did not satisfy the criteria for approval. The purpose of this report is to fulfill this provision, provide an update on existing relationships, and outline the approach for pursuing new partnerships in the short-term.

DISCUSSION

The International Partnership Policy defines three categories of formal partnerships between HRM and international communities:

- The primary purpose of an **Economic Partnership Agreement** is economic development, including economic exchange, business development, and technological advancement through building business links, increasing HRM's profile, attracting investment, and promoting trade.
- The primary purpose of a **Friendship Partnership Agreement** is facilitating international goodwill through community-level events and public celebrations such as flag raisings, based on cultural or historic relationships between HRM and international communities.
- The primary purpose of a **Historic Partnership** is to recognize a city that was once an Economic or Friendship Partner of HRM. An existing partnership will be re-classified as a Historic Partnership when there is no contact between the partner cities for a period longer than one year and/or when either partner city opts to end the formal agreement.

When the policy was approved, Regional Council agreed to maintain the relationships identified in the staff report (Hakodate, Norfolk, Campeche, and Aberdeen) and categorize Norfolk and Aberdeen as Economic Partnership Agreements, and Hakodate and Campeche as Friendship Partnership Agreements.

Existing Economic Partnerships

The Halifax Partnership manages Economic Partnership Agreements on behalf of the Municipality. As noted above, Halifax currently has approved economic partnerships with Aberdeen, Scotland and Norfolk, Virginia, both of which are governed by Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs). In the past year the Partnership has undertaken the following activities with these partners:

Aberdeen: Halifax and Aberdeen have a long-standing relationship focused on developing mutually beneficial economic and cultural ties and partnerships. This relationship was formalized in an MOU signed in 2014. Halifax's international partnership with Aberdeen has opened up opportunities for business development and collaboration in various areas including the ocean, energy, and services sectors, as well as cultural and educational exchanges. In June, 2015, the Partnership designed the program and agenda for a three-day mission initiated and led by the Aberdeen City Council Economic Development. Six companies visited Halifax -- the Partnership delivered individualized meeting agendas for each visiting company with local business. In total, over 20 meetings were held, as well as group sessions with Department of Energy, and the Oceans Technology Council of Nova Scotia. In April 2016, Halifax led a mission to Aberdeen as the Presidential city of the World Energy Cities Partnership (WECP). A number of leads and opportunities resulted from these missions, one of which has the potential for 20 jobs if successful.

Norfolk: Halifax and Norfolk have been "Sister Cities" since signing an MOU in 2006. The relationship with Norfolk is fostered through collaboration with economic development partners, the Navy and industry stakeholders. The Halifax Partnership has assumed more of a direct management role and has focused on building a solid relationship with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), its counterpart in the Virginia region. In September, the Partnership hosted a VEDP business mission to Halifax during the Canadian Defence Security and Aerospace Exhibition Atlantic (DEFSEC). Delegation members included representatives from Virginia Economic Development, the American Chamber of Commerce in Canada, the US Consul General, and business. On September 10th, the Partnership, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the American Chamber of Commerce in Canada, and Partnership sponsor, Stewart McKelvey, hosted a networking reception at Canadian Forces Base Stadacona with Halifax and Virginia companies in the defense and security sector. Mayor Savage attended the reception and spoke to the importance of the municipality's relationship with Norfolk and of opportunities for business and economic development.

World Energy Cities Partnership

In addition to coordinating the Municipality's economic partnerships, the Halifax Partnership manages the Municipality's membership in the World Energy Cities Partnership (WECP). The WECP is comprised of 19 cities from around the world with energy activities as a major driver of their economy. The WECP is led by the Mayors of each city with support from economic development staff. In January, Mayor Savage assumed the role of President of the organization for a two-year term. This role will provide opportunities for Halifax to shape the agenda and to allow for maximum exposure for the region and business through various speaking opportunities at major events where WECP is represented – for example, during the Offshore Technology Conference (OTC) in Houston. In April 2016, as the new Presidential city of WECP, Halifax led a business mission to Aberdeen and Stavanger, Norway. The mission focused on companies in the oceans and logistics sectors. The Halifax Partnership is planning to provide a presentation on WECP activity at a future CPED meeting.

Existing Friendship Partnerships

Activity related to Halifax's friendship partnerships with Hakodate and Campeche, established in 1982 and 1996 respectively, continues. Halifax annually sends a Christmas tree to Hakodate as a sign of friendship, and the local Hakodate friendship association participates in the Natal Day parade with a Japanese drum and dancing group. As next year is the 35th anniversary of the relationship, a delegation from Hakodate is planning to visit Halifax. The Campeche relationship is highlighted by annual student exchanges involving high school students from Campeche, as well as students from Dalhousie University and the Autonomous University of Campeche. The Mayor of Campeche is planning a visit to Halifax, possibly as early as next spring.

Potential Partnerships

No formal applications have been received since the International Partnership Policy was approved. However, inquiries have been initiated with other cities by the Halifax Partnership, and several informal requests gauging interest in some degree of partnership have been received. The cities making initial contact with Halifax have included Savannah (USA), Gdynia (Poland), Kiel/Hamburg (Germany) and a number of cities in Korea and China.

To assure that resources are available to adequately support all relationships, the International Partnership Policy states that Council will enter into and carry out no more than five Economic Partnership Agreements at any one time. In addition to the existing two economic partnerships with Norfolk and Aberdeen, the Halifax Partnership is in the early stages of assessing an additional two economic partnerships. The short-term strategy is to pursue one economic partnership in mainland Europe and one in China. Early explorations have focussed on the ocean cities of Kiel / Hamburg (Germany), as well as Qingdao and Zhuhai (China). The Halifax Partnership participated in a trade mission to Kiel 2014 and it has an active MOU with the Qingdao Municipal Bureau of Commerce.

In terms of incoming requests, the City of Gdynia, Poland sent a letter to the Mayor's Office in June 2016 expressing interest in establishing a potential programme of cooperation with Halifax. Partnerships are being explored between Gdynia's Museum of Emigration and Halifax's Pier 21 Museum of Immigration, as well as the cities' library systems. The focus on this relationship is primarily cultural at this stage, and some of the areas of interest (i.e. museums) lie in areas that fall outside of municipal jurisdiction. These bilateral relationships will continue to be pursued, and may result in a proposed Friendship Agreement with Gdynia.

As per the International Partnership Policy (Administrative Order 2014-003-GOV), any potential friendship or economic partnerships will be brought forward to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee and Regional Council for approval once fully vetted.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications as a result of the material in this report. There may be expenses related to international partnership activity in 2017-18. As a detailed program is developed, these expenses will be confirmed and built in to the 2017-18 budget.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

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.

Report Prepared by: Paul Johnston, Coordinator of Corporate Affairs, 902.490.6616
