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Information item No.4
Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee
June 9, 2016

TO: Chair and Members of the Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Bob Bjerke, Chief Planner and Director, Planning and Development

DATE: May 6, 2016

SUBJECT: Environmental Protection Framework

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

This report was requested by the Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee during their session on June 11, 2015. The following motion was passed: That the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee request a staff report on the approach to implementing management's Environmental Protection Framework.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

HRM Charter, subsection 2 (c) (iii):

Purpose of Act

- 2 The purpose of this Act is to:
- (c) recognize that the functions of the municipality are to
 - (ii) develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

HRM Charter subsection 34(1):

Council and Chief Administrative Officer relationship

- 34 (1) The Chief Administrative Officer is the head of the administrative branch of the government of the Municipality and is responsible to the Council for the proper administration of the affairs of the Municipality in accordance with the by-laws of the Municipality and the policies adopted by the Council.

BACKGROUND

At the April 5, 2016 meeting of Regional Council, Council was advised that future consultation and reporting on HRM's Risk Program will be through the Audit & Finance Standing Committee (AFSC), as per the AFSC's terms of reference. The April 5, 2016 staff report to Council dealt with adding a risk section to Council reports as contemplated in the risk strategy as well ongoing oversight of the risk program development by the Audit and Finance Standing Committee. A presentation and report on Risk Management Governance was provided to AFSC May 11, 2016, detailing progress to date. The Environmental Protection Framework will be aligned with the corporate Risk Program.

DISCUSSION

Environmental protection is part of a wide range of municipal activities spanning the entire organization, it is closely associated with Health and Safety, relates to all four Council Priorities, and is primarily risk based. Staff proposes to develop the environmental protection framework within the broader corporate initiative on risk management. The environmental protection framework will assist staff in considering environmental risk not only in their day to day operations, but also when considering risk in committee and Council reports. This framework can be incorporated into the larger municipal risk management program.

Beginning in 2013/14, staff commenced an evaluation of risk management in HRM, and the development of a risk management program. As discussed in the May 26, 2015 Managing Risk Staff Report and the February 19, 2016 Supplementary Information Report, and presented to the AFSC May 11, 2016, staff have been developing a risk program for HRM that includes five key elements:

1. An inventory of existing risk practices
2. A strategic risk assessment for the municipality
3. Adding a risk section to Council Reports
4. Developing a Risk Strategy
5. Staff Training

The inventory of risk practices resulted in the finding that increased consistency in the evaluation of risks is required, as well as improved guidelines for the reporting and escalation of these risks. These findings will be addressed with the adoption of the Risk Strategy, anticipated in fiscal 2016/17. At the April 5, 2016 meeting of Regional Council, Council was informed via an Information Report that a Risk Consideration section will be included in all reports to Committees and Council. This is an essential step in the evolution of HRM's risk program implementation and may:

- Further integrate risk into organizational processes (ISO 31000 4.3.4)
- Formally advise Council of risks associated with the subject in question (transparency)
- Heighten staff attention to risks associated with recommendations (culture)
- Assure the public that HRM is proactively considering risks (credibility)

From a risk management perspective, HRM's environmental protection practices are primarily operational issues that deal with how we impact the environment through day to day operations such as fuel management, construction, roadwork and building maintenance. In addition, HRM implements land use policy and regulation aimed at protecting the environment. Under a fully mature risk management program, should any of those activities be deemed insufficient to adequately protect the environment, the resulting risks may be escalated to the strategic/corporate level for heightened attention.

In addition to operational activities that present risk to the environment, HRM considers how the environment may impact operations and long term sustainability for the community. These types of risks are generally strategic in nature and stem from considerations such as changing weather patterns and rising sea levels.

The planned environmental protection framework would consist of the following steps:

1. Create an inventory of municipal activities that can significantly and adversely impact the environment
2. Identify existing controls for these activities
3. Evaluate whether the residual risk is acceptable
4. Develop additional mitigation actions, where required
5. Implement a process for ongoing monitoring and reporting.

This inventory work would require collaboration between HRM business units. Each business unit, with the help of Energy & Environment staff, would be required to compile their environmental risks for the inventory. In working through this approach, staff may identify a need for additional financial and human resources necessary to complete the initiative that are not currently in scope. Staff could provide periodic updates to the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee as the framework progresses.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report. The Environmental Protection Framework can be carried out within current funding and resources.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement was not required for the completion of this report.

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.

Original Signed

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