

HALIFAX

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Item No. 15.1.2
Halifax Regional Council
April 2, 2019

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by 
Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: March 20, 2019

SUBJECT: Sullivan's Pond Aquatic Weed

ORIGIN

- January 11, 2018 Harbour East - Marine Drive Community Council motion:

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee

THAT Harbour East – Marine Drive Community Council request a staff report regarding possible options for cutting or reducing the aquatic weeds in Sullivan's Pond in the Halifax and Area Model Yacht Club course. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

- July 5, 2018 Harbour East – Marine Drive Community Council motion:

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Karsten

THAT Harbour East Marine Drive Community Council recommend that Halifax Regional Council:
1. Request that staff consider the inclusion of aquatic plant control at the Sullivan's Pond model boat racing course in the 2019/2020 budget; and
2. That staff explore aquatic plant control as a potential partnership with the Halifax and Area Model Yacht Club. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

- July 17, 2018 Regional Council motion:

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Nicoll

THAT Halifax Regional Council:

1. Request that staff consider the inclusion of aquatic plant control at the Sullivan's Pond model boat racing course in the 2019/2020 budget; and
2. That staff explore aquatic plant control as a potential partnership with the Halifax and Area Model Yacht Club. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Section 79(1) of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c.39* provides that Council may expend money required by the Municipality for:

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(z) acquisition of equipment, materials, vehicles, machinery, apparatus, implements and plant for a municipal purpose;

(ah) playgrounds, trails, including trails developed, operated or maintained pursuant to an agreement made under clause 73(c), bicycle paths, swimming pools, ice arenas and other recreational facilities;

(av) a grant or contribution to ... (v) any charitable, nursing, medical, athletic, educational, environmental, cultural, community, fraternal, recreational, religious, sporting or social organization within the Province,

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to decline entering into a partnership with the Halifax and Area Model Yacht Club to conduct harvesting of aquatic weeds in Sullivan's Pond.

BACKGROUND

At the November 2, 2017 Harbour East – Marine Drive Community Council meeting a presentation was given by the Halifax and Area Model Yacht Club regarding the Club's activities at Sullivan's Pond. The Club races two types of model boats on a course situated on the west side of the Pond at approximately ¼ of the Pond's total area (see Attachment A). The Club races Tuesday and Thursday evenings, and Saturday and Sunday afternoons. The Club indicates that Sullivan's Pond is one of the best courses in North America due to the prevailing winds, its layout, urban setting, and the shore walls that allow participants to easily get their boats in and out of the Pond. The Club also attracts a steady stream of spectators, adding to the vitality of the park.

The Club does not book, schedule, or pay any user fees for the use of the Sullivan's Pond Park for their activities since it is not exclusive use of the space and occurs concurrently with all other public use of the space. The Pond itself is a watercourse subject to Provincial jurisdiction, therefore, the Province of Nova Scotia holds authority over maintenance and changes to the pond.

The issue facing the Club is the aquatic weeds as they can tangle up the model boats once they reach the surface. For several weeks each year the Club is prevented from using Sullivan's Pond due to plant growth. The weed growth is a relatively new change in the environmental conditions at Sullivan's Pond, having only arisen as an issue over the last few years.

The Club has proven to be very successful and has produced national and international champions. The Club would like to be in the position to host regattas in Dartmouth, but they currently cannot because there are no guarantees as to when the weeds will shut down their activities.

As a result of these concerns, the following motions were put forth in an attempt to address the issue:

- On January 11, 2018, the Harbour East – Marine Drive Community Council passed a motion requesting a staff report regarding possible options for cutting or reducing the aquatic weeds in Sullivan's Pond in the Halifax and Area Model Yacht Club course. The Community Council was provided with an information report which responded to this request at its June 7, 2018 meeting.
- On July 5, 2018, Harbour East – Marine Drive Community Council passed a motion recommending that Halifax Regional Council request that staff consider the inclusion of aquatic plant control at the Sullivan's Pond model boat racing course in the 2019/2020 budget; and that staff explore aquatic plant control as a potential partnership with the Halifax and Area Model Yacht Club.

- On July 17, 2018, Regional Council passed a motion requesting that staff consider the inclusion of aquatic plant control at the Sullivan's Pond model boat racing course in the 2019/2020 budget; and that staff explore aquatic plant control as a potential partnership with the Halifax and Area Model Yacht Club.

DISCUSSION

A similar problem occurred on Lake Banook and Lake Micmac where aquatic weeds were impacting safe boating operations for pleasure craft and canoe/kayaks on and around the Municipally-owned designated race course. In that case, consultants hired to study weed management options recommended weed harvesting, rather than pesticide application, dredging, or other treatments.

Early in 2018, Parks Operations staff held a site meeting with the Contractor that performed the weed harvesting in Lake Banook/Lake Charles and a representative from the model yacht club to review the area of the pond that is impacted by the weeds. The purpose of the meeting was to identify the area of concern and how the Contractor would perform the weed harvesting.

The use of this pond for this activity starts in April and goes to the end of October. Typically, the weeds at Sullivan's Pond have impacted the group anytime between July and September. If any early intervention to address this problem was to happen, it should be considered in the month of June. It is important that any harvesting be conducted while the pond is at optimal height levels to prevent gouging of shallow areas.

Options

There are 2 options that can be considered for cutting or reducing the aquatic weeds in Sullivan's Pond:

- 1) Dredge the pond to void it of all weeds in the Halifax and Area Model Yacht Club course route.
- 2) Harvest the weeds in the Halifax and Area Model Yacht Club course route.

The most favourable option at this location is to harvest the weeds from the pond in a similar approach to the operation in Lake Banook and Lake Micmac. By utilising special harvesting equipment, this option is the most environmentally friendly approach as removing the weeds through dredging could potentially upset the spawning cycles of aquatic life and overall pond ecosystem dynamics. Provincial approvals may be required before conducting any work in Sullivan's Pond.

2018 was the third and final year of the weed harvesting project in Lake Banook and Lake Micmac. The results of the weed harvesting and associated report has indicated, that while although operationally successful, the harvesting approach did not yield a sustainable year over year reduction in the standing weed crop. Lake Micmac and Lake Banook are in a sub-watershed of the Shubenacadie River system that originates with Lake Charles and is shared with Red Bridge Pond and Sullivan's Pond. Findings from the study did not shed light on the entire river system's nuisance weed germination factors as it relates to Sullivan's Pond.

Funding of Work

Staff has received a quote of approximately \$3,000 to harvest the weeds in the pond. This service is not currently budgeted in the proposed 2019/20 Budget & Business Plan for Parks & Recreation and staff do not recommend including it to advance through Parks Operating or State of Good Repair budgets.

The Halifax and Area Model Yacht Club is the sole beneficiary of any weed harvesting program at Sullivan's Pond. HRM's interest in weed management practices in Lake Banook and Lake Micmac is due to the significance of the venue for regional, national and international attention and multiple level events and competitions. Therefore, there was broader community impact in the clearing of those weeds, leading to the work being completed by HRM. Where the Club would be the sole beneficiary of the proposed weed harvesting at Sullivan's Pond, it is recommended that the Club be responsible for seeking any necessary Provincial approvals and conducting any such weed harvesting at its own expense. The Club may wish to investigate whether there are any available grant programs to offset their costs. HRM Parks will grant

access through Sullivan's Pond to conduct the harvesting, provided the date of the operation does not impact the community or conflict with other park events.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendation in this report.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There is probability that the mobilization of harvesting equipment to and from Sullivan's Pond could negatively impact the surrounding ground which the Area Model Yacht Club would be responsible for remediation. This risk is considered low.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Halifax and Area Model Yacht Club was engaged for the purposes of weed harvesting information and location in Sullivan's Pond model boat course route.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Potential weed harvesting at Sullivan's Pond is similar to Lake Banook and Lake Micmac where consultants hired to study weed management options recommended weed harvesting, rather than pesticide application, dredging, or other treatments.

ALTERNATIVES

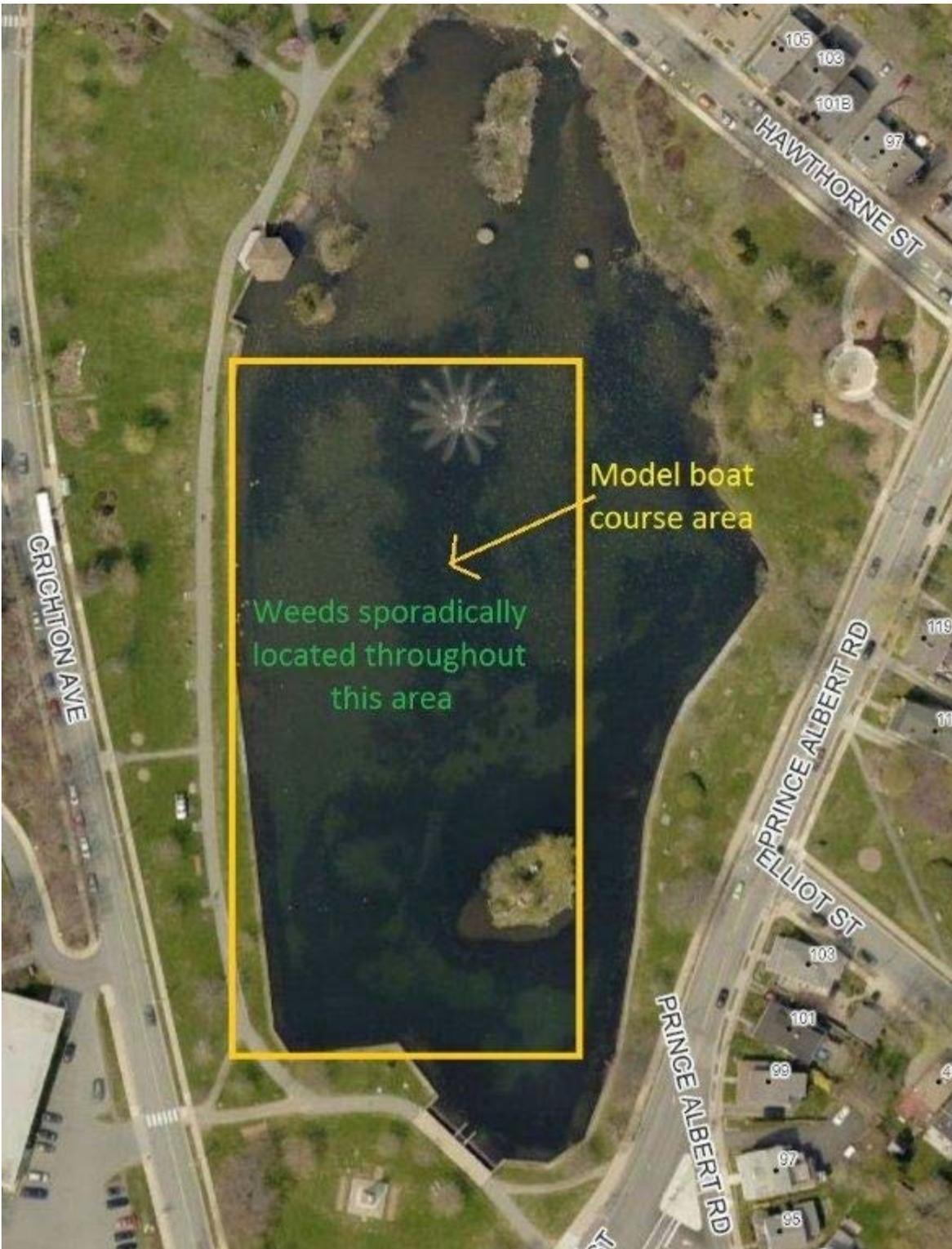
1. Halifax Regional Council could direct the Chief Administrative Officer to enter into a partnership agreement with the Halifax and Area Model Yacht Club to share in the cost of conducting aquatic plant control at the Sullivan's Pond model boat racing course, subject to any provincial approvals that may be required. This alternative would require the identification and approval of a funding source through the Audit & Finance Standing Committee.
2. Halifax Regional Council could direct the Chief Administrative Officer to direct staff to fund the total cost of conducting aquatic plant control at the Sullivan's Pond model boat racing course, subject to any provincial approvals that may be required. This alternative would require the identification and approval of a funding source through the Audit & Finance Standing Committee.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Halifax and Area Model Yacht Club Course Route

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.

Report Prepared by: Rob Mullane, Superintendent Parks & Recreation, 902.490.5819



Attachment A: Halifax and Area Model Yacht Club Course Route