

# HALIFAX

**Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward  
Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration  
of Indigenous History**

Report, recommendations and municipal response

July 21, 2020

# Origin

April 25, 2017 THAT Halifax Regional Council, in the spirit of the Council-adopted Statement of Reconciliation of December 8, 2015, request a staff report with terms of reference and a recommended composition for an expert panel to review and advise Council regarding any changes to the commemoration of Edward Cornwallis on municipal assets, including Cornwallis Park and Cornwallis Street, and recommendations to recognize and commemorate the indigenous history in the lands now known as Halifax Regional Municipality.



# Origin

October 3, 2017, motion of Council to establish a “Special Advisory Committee” that would report to Council on the commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the recognition and commemoration of Indigenous history.

January 30, 2018, motion that the statue of Edward Cornwallis situated in the south end of Halifax should be removed to temporary storage pending an eventual decision of Council on its future.

October 30, 2018, motion that Halifax Regional Council authorize the establishment of a joint committee that will reflect an equal partnership between Halifax Regional Council and the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq Chiefs and further the joint committee, constituted with the existing members of the Commemoration Committee, will be responsible for its own determination of the process and procedures by which it will fulfill the existing mandate, and the funding will be a joint and equal responsibility of HRM and the Assembly of Chiefs.



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# Task Force

- As outlined in the report, the Task Force:
  - met 16 times (once a month) not including public engagement sessions for discussion and deliberation,
  - conducted research,
  - held two series of public engagement sessions
    - close to 100 people participated,
    - written submissions from 55 correspondents.



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# Task Force Report

- Report addresses:
  - Process
  - Historical background
  - Current background
  - The statue
  - Other assets bearing Cornwallis's name
  - Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous history in K'jipuktuk
  - Principles and public engagement
  - Recommendations and rationale
  - Financial implications
  - Overall rationale and vision
- Touches on key concepts, such as:
  - history versus commemoration
  - Need for public Mi'kmaw commemoration



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# Task Force Recommendations

- Task Force has made recommendations on:
  - Statue, street name and park name, including prioritization of a civic museum
  - Opportunities for indigenous commemoration including,
    - virtual museum, Point Pleasant Park plan, broader outdoor commemoration including memorializing survivors of Schubenacadie Residential school and missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, Cosgwell redevelopment and community enhancements, street names, signage, welcoming displays.
  - Educational opportunities within HRM mandate
  - Support of youth activities, major events
  - HRM nurturing relationships with Mi'kmaw organizations



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# HRM Responses

- Proposed response is agreement or agreement in principle with each recommendation
- HRM has already begun work in some areas
- In some cases HRM's proposed response is qualified with respect to how recommendations can be implemented
- Relevant initiatives, policies and considerations or qualifications include:
  - HRM Museum strategy
  - Application process and policy amendment required for street and park renaming
  - Complete of Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan
  - Additional outreach and engagement with partners and community



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# Recommendation

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

- 1) Accept the attached report of the Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History (Attachment 1),
- 2) Approve the proposed HRM responses to the recommendations of the Task Force report (Attachment 2), and
- 3) Direct the CAO to return to Council annually to report on progress addressing the recommendations.



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