

HALIFAX

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Item No. 11.1.8
Halifax Regional Council
December 1, 2020

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

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

DATE: November 25, 2020

SUBJECT: **Public Participation Program- Rapid Housing Initiative – 5853 College Street, Halifax**

ORIGIN

On November 24, 2020 the following motion of Regional Council was put and passed:

“THAT Halifax Regional Council:

- 1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to include an Investment Plan providing funding for the proposed affordable housing developments by the Mi'kmaq Friendship Centre, Adsum Women and Children and the North End Community Health Association, as further discussed in the staff report dated November 20, 2020 into the Rapid Housing Initiative Agreement with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation ("CMHC"); and*
- 2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to accept a request for site-specific amendments for 5853 College Street to consider amendments to the applicable secondary municipal planning strategies, including the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (RMPS) and land-use by-laws (LUB), to allow the development of an emergency shelter, shared housing use and multiple unit residential building at 5853 College Street;”*

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (HRM Charter), Part VIII, Planning & Development.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to follow the public participation program, as set out in the discussion section of this report, for the consideration of amendments to the applicable municipal planning strategies, including the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy and land-use by-laws, to allow the development of an emergency shelter, shared housing use and multiple unit residential building at 5853 College Street, Halifax.

BACKGROUND

On November 17, 2020, Regional Council¹ directed the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to enter into the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) Agreement with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), to accept \$8,659,527 for the creation of a minimum of 28 affordable housing units. On November 24, 2020 Regional Council² further directed the CAO to include an Investment Plan providing funding for the proposed affordable housing developments by the Mi'kmaq Friendship Centre, Adsum Women and Children and the North End Community Health Association.

The Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre is proposing the development of a 30-bed shelter, 10 room shared housing use and 7 individual units at 5853 College Street in Halifax. As the current zoning would not permit the proposed use, Regional Council directed the CAO to accept a request to consider amendments to the applicable secondary municipal planning strategies, including the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (RMPS) and land-use by-laws (LUB), for 5853 College Street.

While the proposed amendment to the planning documents is specific in relation to the site, the development has significant regional impacts as it will provide deeply affordable housing available to indigenous residents throughout HRM. Further, the opportunity to access RHI funding is an extremely unique circumstance to meet Council's strategic priority to support affordable housing. As such this amendment is viewed as regional in nature.

In February of 1997, Regional Council approved a public participation resolution, which provides broad discretion on the consultation process required for MPS amendments that are regional in nature and requires that staff recommend an appropriate public participation program. Accordingly, this report will address the recommended public participation program for the amendments to the applicable secondary municipal planning strategies, including the RMPS and LUBs for 5853 College Street.

DISCUSSION

Staff recommend that Regional Council obtain stakeholder and public feedback through a region wide online survey and sharing information on HRM's website. An online survey would provide residents the ability to provide input to the proposed amendment to RMPS and LUBs at their convenience and would be consistent with other region wide public engagement such as the recent amendments to consider secondary and backyard suites.

In addition to the proposed public participation, the *HRM Charter* requires a public hearing to be held before Regional Council, which can consider approval of any amendments.

To meet the conditions of the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) funding, the development must be completed within a year. While staff will be expedient in their review and preparation of a recommendation report to Council, it is important to note that this will not compromise the intended objectives of the public consultation process.

¹ See staff report online at <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/201117rc1118.pdf>

² See staff report online at <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/201124rc511.pdf>

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

The HRM costs associated with the planning document amendment process can be accommodated within the approved 2020/21 operating budget using existing resources.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations contained within this report. MPS amendments are at the discretion of Regional Council and are not subject to appeal to the N.S. Utility and Review Board.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Please see the Discussion section of this report.

Amendments to the RMPS, SMPs and LUBs will potentially impact the following stakeholders: provincial government, the property owner (Mi'kmaq Friendship Centre) and the general public.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications are identified.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Regional Council may direct the CAO to select an alternative public participation program for the amendments to the applicable secondary municipal planning strategies, including the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy and land-use by-laws for 5853 College Street. Doing this may require a supplementary report and may impact the ability for the proposed development to comply with required time lines for RHI funding.

ATTACHMENTS

None

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.

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