

2021-22 MUNICIPAL BUDGET SURVEY

As a part of the 2021/22 business planning and budget process, and to understand if citizen priorities have shifted during the COVID-19 pandemic, HRM is conducting an online survey to gather feedback from residents about their priorities, preferences, and satisfaction with services. The results of this survey will support the development of the multi-year strategic plan and assist with budget and business plan development. The survey runs from Thursday, November 5th until Monday, December 14th, and is available online to all residents in English and French. The survey is being hosted by PRA Inc., an independent research firm. Residents can go to www.halifax.ca/citizensurvey to participate and click on "Complete the Survey".

NS MUNICIPALITIES COVID RELIEF

The Province has announced \$67.5 million in funding relief to the Nova Scotia municipalities as part of a Safe Restart Agreement (SRA). This funding will provide much-needed support for financial pressures based on a survey this past summer of all NS municipalities on the potential lost revenue from the COVID-19 pandemic. HRM will be receiving \$46,091,927 under the SRA. About half of this amount (\$21,500,000.) has been designated for lost transit revenue. Regional Council needs to make some other decisions on how the balance of funding remaining will be used. In the meantime, HRM will continue to implement social distancing and infection prevention and control protocols required to operate facilities, public spaces and effectively deliver services to citizens.

2021 VOLUNTEER AWARD NOMINEES

Each year, HRM recognize, the extraordinary contributions of individuals and groups who volunteer their time and skills to provide services and programs in our communities. Nominations are now being accepted in three categories: adult, youth (ages 13-19) and community group. Successful nominees will be notified in March 2021. An awards ceremony (Covid19 pending) will coincide with National Volunteer Week in April 2021. The deadline for nominations for the 2021 awards is Wednesday, December 16th. To find out more information about the awards, nomination criteria and to nominate someone in your community, go to: www.halifax.ca/about-halifax/volunteering/volunteer-awards-halifax by fax 902-490-4535 or by regular post to PO Box 1749, Halifax, NS B3J 3A5. You can also contact Shawna Shirley by telephone: 902-456-9683 or e-mail: shirles@halifax.ca or send a message to hmvolunteerservices@halifax.ca.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY - DEC.10th

We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. Human rights are inherent to all human beings, no matter our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. Learn what your human rights are, as well as your responsibilities. It has now been 72 years since the United Nations made the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Here are some global campaigns to promote our rights: www.standup4humanrights.org/en/campaigns.html

MINEVILLE ROAD PAVED SHOULDERS

It took some time and significant lobbying with the Province but HRM was able to convince Nova Scotia Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to add 4.5kms of wider paved shoulders on the Mineville Road from Hwy 7 to Candy

Mountain Road. The municipality contributed one-third of the \$348,000 project cost. In the future, with the adoption of the HRM Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) we need to do more of these Active Transportation (AT) enhancements on strategic roadways in our rural areas such as the Crowell Road and Hwy 207. The Province is already committed to paving wider shoulders along Hwy 7 as a part of the Bicycle NS Blue Route plan for a safer provincial Active Transportation network.

HRM & NS PROPERTY TAX PROGRAMS

HRM has a variety of programs to aid homeowners with their property tax obligations. There are various options for payment plans, property tax rebates, or deferral of property taxes (payment is put off to a future date). A homeowner with a LIC (local improvement charge) can also apply for a deferral of these charges. It is important that you know what choices exist. Some of these programs are available to homeowners with a combined household income of \$34,000 or less a year. Deadline to apply is December 31st. The HRM application form can be found at: www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/about-halifax/AffordableAccessApplicationForm_2.pdf

Furthermore, seniors should know that there is a Nova Scotia Provincial Property Tax Rebate for Seniors Program. This program is for those who have been receiving the Guaranteed Income Supplement in January of the application year. Criteria requires you to have paid your property taxes from the prior year in full. A receipt from HRM showing property taxes are paid in full is required. Applicants to this program can receive a rebate on half of their taxes paid to a maximum of \$800. More details about this provincial program can be found by calling (902) 424-5200 or 211 or toll-free at 1-800-670-4357 <https://novascotia.ca/sns/access/individuals/consumer-awareness/property-tax-rebate-for-seniors.asp>. Deadline to apply is also December 31st. Application form can be downloaded from: <https://beta.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/documents/2-1781/property-tax-rebate-seniors-application-form-en.pdf>

BEAR STRAPS & ORGANIC CARTS

HRM Solid Waste Resources, NS Department of Lands & Forestry, and Killam Properties have been assessing the results of the Locking Green Cart demonstration project that was done in the Wonderland / Mountainview Estates Home Park in Lake Echo during the spring & summer of 2020. Initially there were 100 lock straps installed throughout the home park and residents were asked to participate in a survey to track and report bear activities. Now it will be expanded by getting 250 more locking straps to outfit the remaining organic carts in the home park. Halifax Youth Live distributed more information about organic waste management tips and how the locking straps are to be applied, and they have been installing the remaining lock down devices. Special thanks to Mary Boutilier & Killam Properties for providing the funds to pay for these additional locks. When the 2021-22 Municipal Budget is debated in the next year in January, I will be requesting the reinstatement of the weekly collection of organics.

FRENCH DUCK PUBLIC HEARING

The French Duck Farm at 1129 West Petpeswick Road has applied for a Development Agreement to get an intensive agricultural use designation for their farm to have additional animals and to set up an abattoir. The Harbour East Marine Drive Community Council will hold a virtual Public Hearing on Wed. Dec. 16/20 at 6 PM. More details about Case 22519: www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/community-councils/201112hemdccc1311.pdf

UPDATED TRAIL FUNDING CRITERIA

HRM has updated its approach to ongoing promotion of active transportation facilities and recreational trails within the municipality. HRM has redesigned its financial administration approach, and adopted newer policy directions and plans, and how they will work with the many community associations and other trail-users. Various issues and concerns were analysed and now there will be procedures and processes in place to address all trail funding requests, which will now include recreational and multi-use trails that allow equestrian and motorized use. For more details, please refer to: www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/200929rc1112.pdf

MOOSEHEAD TO STAY MOOSEHEAD

The 30 of 49 landowners in the Community of Moosehead participated in a survey held back in August to determine if their community name should remain as it is today or revert to its original historical spelling as Moose Head. This survey was a joint project between HRM and the Provincial Geographic Names department. www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/201117rc1112.pdf

CANADA POST PARCEL BOX PILOT

Canada Post will be launching a new parcel lockbox pilot program in four locations in HRM (West Porters Lake, Tantallon, Williamswood and Bedford). This is in response to the increased demand for parcel service since COVID-19 and the capacity issues at Canada Post offices. There will be 450 sites across the country included in this pilot project before Christmas this year and a possible 4,000 more for next year. The parcel lockboxes will be accessible 24/7 and provide better service to customers as they will no longer have to travel to the nearest post office with a parcel card to pick-up their parcel. The West Porters Lake location is at the community mailbox site on Julien Lane near 968 West Porters Lake Road. Letters have been sent out to the residents to be impacted by the pilot project. If you have questions or comments, please contact Canada Post at 1-800-267-1177 or parcel.locker@canadapost.ca

GOODWILL & PEACE ON EARTH

I want to wish everyone the very best of this holiday season. During this joyful time of year there are many types of spiritual and cultural celebrations: Merry Christmas, Joyeux Noel, Season's Greetings, Happy Hanukkah, Al Hijra, and Kwanza. The message of 'Peace on Earth and Goodwill to All' is universal. Have yourself a blessed time with family, friends and neighbours. May we all strive for peace, tranquility and harmony in our daily lives. Remember those who may be less fortunate or are experiencing hardship and despair. Please give to your local food bank. Or better yet, give the gift of life and donate blood. May we all be blessed with good health and happiness throughout the New Year ahead and be pandemic-free!



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