

HALIFAX REGIONAL
MUNICIPALITY

JUNE 25, 2021

MUNICIPAL CLERK

Aoyama, Haruka

From: Richmond Campbell [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 25, 2021 2:14 PM
To: Aoyama, Haruka
Cc: Morse, Kathryn; Meredith Baldwin; Paul Berry; Mike Lancaster; David Patriquin; Mason, Wayne; Cuttell, Patty; Lovelace, Pam; Stoddard, Iona
Subject: [External Email] Community Based Wilderness Stewardship in HRM
Attachments: Climate Action and Environment in HRM(2).docx

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Dear Hanuka Aoyama,

I respectfully request permission to present to the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee a Community Based Wilderness Stewardship program for HRM that is designed to enhance HRM environmental protection and climate action.

The program and its rationale are outlined in the attached 1.5-page document. It has been endorsed by all 62 members of Our HRM Alliance (whose chair Meredith Baldwin is copied here) and tested in the HRM trail system over a period of four years. See the links within the attachment for more details.

Thank you for considering this request.

Richmond Campbell
Co-founder of the Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization and member since 1995.
302-1540 Summer Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 4R9
[REDACTED]

Environmental Protection and Climate Action in HRM

Themes 8 and 9 of Regional Plan Review (shapeyourcityhalifax.ca)

HRM possesses a major asset to fight climate change and to enhance its natural environment. This asset is its green space that covers more than 80% of HRM with almost 20% of it provincially protected wilderness. Green space and particularly wilderness constitute an invaluable asset in reducing climate warming through carbon sequestration and in improving biodiversity and the general health of our ecosystems. They are invaluable also to the physical and mental health of our citizens who use the green space and the wilderness within it for recreation.

This major asset of HRM, however, is beset with a serious problem. The green space and the wilderness within HRM are deteriorating through public use, undermining their value for climate action and for the health and enjoyment of HRM citizens. The reason for the deterioration is that HRM citizens lack training in how to steward their wilderness and green space. This problem can be corrected at low cost, as demonstrated in the four-year steward-training program developed on The Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail with ongoing collaboration between the Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization and the St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association. See the following link for details.

<https://wrweo.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2020-BTSP-Year-In-Review-Report-Final-1.pdf>

This solution can be extended to cover all provincially protected wilderness areas. Notably, Regional Council just unanimously passed a motion to have HRM staff look into the feasibility of a steward program for municipal parks (Motion 11.7.2). Isn't there a problem of jurisdiction, however, when we match themes for the Regional Plan Review with stewardship of land protected by the Province? Regional Council has no jurisdiction over provincial land. It cannot tell the Province what to do. One might wonder if HRM has any responsibility for lands not municipally owned? In any case, the provincial lands are already protected legally, aren't they?

These provincial lands are legally protected but not protected against the harm that is now before us. To address this issue, we need to think outside the boxes of who has legal jurisdiction. That is not difficult, however, since HRM and the Province have already provided us a clear precedent. From the 1990s to the present they have coordinated in the development of trail systems through the Halifax Regional Trails Association. Many public trails were built on provincial land through this municipal organization with provincial "letters of authority" permitting trail construction with funding and environmental assessments from all three levels of government. All this coordination has been done at comparatively low cost. What is being proposed now is no different in principle. The proposal is to create a large

program to train citizen volunteers to be stewards of the land. The program would be similar to The Bluff Trail steward training program cited above. The overall proposal is detailed in the link just below. In January sixty-two community groups within Our HRM Alliance endorsed the proposed program (see Alliance membership list in the link).

<https://wrweo.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/CBWS-2021-04-29.pdf>

On this proposal some steward training will take place on municipal land and some on provincial land. All training would be within HRM and all to the ultimate benefit of HRM citizens. These citizens have a vital interest in preserving the health of their HRM environment and in helping to fight climate change.

Citizens who live in HRM are, after all, not divided into two categories: municipal and provincial. Levels of government are so divided, not citizens. The citizens who are relevant are simply the ones who live in HRM. For the sake of those citizens, HRM needs to address Themes 8 and 9 in the Regional Plan Review by coordinating with the Province in preserving the vital asset of green space and wilderness that is currently under threat. A low-cost solution is for HRM to develop a coordinated, HRM-wide volunteer steward program.

Richmond Campbell
Co-founder of Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization (WRWEO)
302-1540 Summer Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 4R9
902-489-0457

In addition to the sixty-two community groups listed in the last link, this steward program is endorsed by the WRWEO Board and Paul Berry, WRWEO Board chair and treasurer, David Patriquin, ecologist and member of WRWEO, Mike Lancaster, stewardship coordinator for WRWEO and for the St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association (as listed in the last link above).

Municipal Clerks Office

Date Distributed: June 30, 2021

ESSC Members, STAFF, Solicitor

Other: