

Request for Council's Consideration

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda Item
(Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon Thursday) | <input type="checkbox"/> Added Item
(Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon Monday) | <input type="checkbox"/> Request from the Floor |
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Date of Meeting: Tuesday, November 9, 2021

Subject: Sandy Lake

Motion for Council to Consider:

That Halifax Regional Council:

1. Suspend the Rules of Procedure under section 17 of Administrative Order One, the Procedures of the Council Administrative Order; and
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to direct staff to retain an independent consultant to assist with expediting the preparation of a staff report and recommendation for the purpose of identifying an optimal conceptual boundary for an expanded Sandy Lake Regional Park based on environmental information about the area considering:
 - a) The natural vegetation buffers required to protect the water quality and reduce downstream flooding of Sandy Lake, Sackville River, associated tributaries and wetlands.
 - b) The size of park needed to protect the multi-aged and old growth Acadian Forest in the area and documenting the habitats at Sandy Lake for their potential to support species at risk.
 - c) The locations of wildlife corridors that should be established to protect wildlife both within the park and movement through the area between the Chebucto Peninsula and mainland Nova Scotia.
 - d) Identification of a secondary, western trailhead.

Reason:

Expansion of Sandy Lake Park goes back to 1971 when it was tagged in a joint Provincial-Municipal project aiming to preserve seven important areas in HRM as Regional Parks. To date, 1000 acres have been protected, but the 2006 Regional Plan also identified the area as one of the next in line for housing development. Studies to determine the ecological ramifications of developing this area have not been done. The area is thought to be a biodiversity hot spot with 11 distinct habitats, 15 species-at-risk and 99 different bird species nesting areas.

The information this study will bring forward is important as we move forward with the new Provincial Task Force on Development.

Although there is some of the necessary expertise in house, this report needs an ecological lens which is why I am proposing an independent consultant. It's also thought going to an outside expert will get the report back sooner, recognizing Planning and Development are extra busy at this time.

Page 2

The Halifax Green Network Plan identifies the area as having overlapping values that need to be resolved. It's zoned for housing yet is also recognized as a valuable greenspace (Map 9 of HGNP). This study takes a huge step forward to resolving that.

Outcome Sought:

That HRM retain an independent consultant for the purpose of identifying an optimal boundary for an expanded Sandy Lake Regional Park based on environmental information about the area and provide a report to Regional Council.

<p style="text-align: center;">Original Signed</p> <p><i>Councillor Blackburn</i></p>	<p><i>District 14</i></p>
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