

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

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

DATE: February 14, 2022

SUBJECT: Africville Visioning Process Update

ORIGIN

Item 11.4.3 of the April 6, 2021 Regional Council meeting.

MOVED by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Stoddard

THAT Halifax Regional Council request a staff report that will look at developing a collaborative process that will ultimately create an Africville Visioning Process. Africville Visioning process should include, but will not be limited to:

1. Determine a cooperative working partnership between HRM and community partners and organizations that are working on behalf of the interest of descendants.
2. Engage with other organizations, businesses, and levels of Government whose interest could potentially impact Africville lands and/or Africville descendants to determine how they can support the Africville Visioning Process and its outcomes.
3. Reviewing the 2010 Africville Agreement and determining which commitments have been met, where further action is required, and whether these past commitments address the current desires of the community
4. Identifying all municipal led or partnered projects and initiatives that have a direct impact on the lands at Africville, lands surrounding Africville, and its users (current/future) to understand the full effect they will have on the Africville lands.
5. Developing a comprehensive, co-facilitated public engagement process in partnership with Africville descendants, Africville focused organizations, and community partners that will inform the outcomes of the visioning process.
6. Re-visiting the 2003 Bayne Street Master Plan, and work with partners to collaborate to reimagine the Master Plan that would include land specifically dedicated to descendants of Africville and/or uses that would be supported by descendants, community members or organizations who broadly represent the interest of Africville descendants.
7. Examine the possibility of using the Africville Visioning Process to address the ongoing class action court proceedings against HRM and working with claimants and descendants to address their concerns outside of the court system.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

RECOMMENDATION ON PAGE 2

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 38, s. 2 provides:

s. 2 The purpose of this Act is to

- (a) give broad authority to the Council, including broad authority to pass by-laws, and respect its right to govern the Municipality in whatever ways the Council considers appropriate within the jurisdiction given to it.
- (b) enhance the ability of the Council to respond to present and future issues in the Municipality; and
- (c) recognize that the functions of the Municipality are to
 - (i) provide good government,
 - (ii) provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality, and
 - (iii) develop and maintain safe and viable communities

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer, through the Office of Diversity and Inclusion/African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office (D&I/ANSAIO), to work with community partners to conduct phase one of an Africville visioning process. The recommendation is to conduct phase one of a three phased process.

BACKGROUND

Visioning will help proactively address historic wrongs, and establish a long-term vision for Africville, rather than engaging the African Nova Scotian (ANS) community only when other project priorities arise in the area. Proactively working with the ANS community to address impacts of the Africville expropriation, beyond the apology and commitments made in 2010 and earlier; this will assist with addressing long-standing discrimination and fostering positive working relationships between the ANS community, specifically Africville, and the Municipality.

Developing a comprehensive master plan for the use and development of the former Africville lands and surrounding area, including potential changes to the transportation network, park spaces and new development opportunities (non-profit and private), with input from the Africville community, will demonstrate the Municipality's commitment to continuing to work with the ANS community.

DISCUSSION

The following is a brief update on activities of the Africville visioning process up to and including February 2022.

1. Determine a cooperative working partnership between HRM and community partners and organizations that are working on behalf of the interest of descendants.

To date, D&I/ANSAIO has been meeting with Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and Africville organizations to discuss how we may move the visioning process forward. This partnership would be designed to include a variety of community partners.

2. Engage with other organizations, businesses, and levels of government whose interest could potentially impact Africville lands and/or Africville descendants to determine how they can support the Africville visioning process and its outcomes.

D&I/ANSAIO has identified a variety of external organizations and business that we would engage in this work including ACOA, the provincial Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs, African Nova Scotian Decade for People of African Descent (ANSDPAD), those working on the Windsor Street exchange project and the Africville transportation project. This would also include drawing in representatives from the Federal government (e.g., Transportation Canada, Port Authority). Key to this work will be identifying what the community sees as actions or initiatives that may impact the Africville lands.

3. Reviewing the 2010 Africville Agreement and determining which commitments have been met, where further action is required, and whether these past commitments address the current desires of the community.

D&I/ANSAIO staff have reviewed the agreement and have determined that all commitments identified have been met or are on-going.

- Apology – this was delivered to the community on February 24, 2010 by former Mayor Peter Kelly for the acknowledgement of loss to the Africville Community.

Municipal contribution Funds from the Africville Trust account and the Self Insurance Reserve were transferred to Africville Heritage Trust.

- Conveyance of 2.5 acres of land adjacent to and west of Seaview Park-two parcels of land owned by HRM (\$276,270) and Transport Canada/HPA (\$165,000) were transferred.
 - Park Maintenance Agreement between the Africville Heritage Trust Board and HRM for the lands formerly known as Seaview Park. Staff worked with the Africville Heritage Trust and stakeholders and established a maintenance agreement for the lands. Renaming of Seaview Park to Africville - HRM staff worked with the Africville Genealogy Society, the Africville Heritage Trust Board, and community stakeholders, to officially rename Seaview Park. – Seaview Park was officially renamed “Africville” at a ceremony held on July 29, 2011.
 - Community Development - the establishment of an African Nova Scotia Affairs Office or function within HRM was requested that would enable the municipality to better engage with the African HRM community. The African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office (ANSAIO) was created in 2015 to provide leadership and strategic direction in matters concerning the African Nova Scotian community to all parts of the organization.
 - Settlement of Litigation- the terms of the agreement were approved by the Africville Genealogy Society. The individual plaintiffs to the litigation were invited to a community meeting on Saturday, February 20, 2010 and many individuals agreed to the settlement. However, there remains several individuals who did not agree with the settlement and as such, the litigation is still on-going. As the matter is still before the Courts and is being handled by HRM Legal Services, there will be no further comment on the litigation at this time.
4. Identifying all municipal led or partnered projects and initiatives that have a direct impact on the lands at Africville, lands surrounding Africville, and its users (current/future) to understand the full effect they will have on the Africville lands.

To date (February 2022) the following are a list of significant projects that HRM has partnered with or lead that impact Africville:

- Africville Active Transportation Project – creating a formal safe and comfortable way to access the Africville museum by walking, cycling, or rolling. Opening it up as a triple A connection where people of all ages and abilities can connect. There will be a series of community engagement sessions held for the transportation project once Public Health restrictions have eased to allow for larger public gatherings.

- Windsor Street Exchange– project team is holding virtual community meetings to identify community benefits that could be included as part of the preferred design configuration. Consideration for community benefits will be included in the Functional Plan (30% design). Access to Africville consultation with the Africville community has been held in response to a petition submitted by the Africville Heritage Trust expressing concern regarding access to Africville. The community meetings include the Africville Active Transportation project team, the Windsor Street Exchange project team, and Halifax Transit. Engagement was held virtually due to public health concerns in Nov/Dec 2020, but feedback from the Africville community was that in-person meetings were important for discussing options and providing feedback. Community meetings will be held once it can be held within public health guidelines, to discuss access to the Africville community through on-going transportation projects and Halifax Transit
- Africville Heritage Trust (AHT) is pursuing the concept of developing a marina –in support of and adjacent to the Africville Museum. Underlying this endeavour, is AHT’s request of HRM to convey the most easterly portion of Lot H-3, which is situated immediately west of the Museum property. It is anticipated that public input will take the form of Council deliberation, including a public hearing, and the requirements of the Community Interest Category pursuant to Administrative Order 50 (Respecting the Disposal of Surplus Real Property), which lays out the requirements to permit disposal of municipal property at below-market value.
- HRM is in the midst of negotiating a market-value based easement agreement with the Halifax Port Authority (HPA), in support of Canada Border Services Agency’s (CBSA) new Marine Container Examination Facility to adjoin the CERES container pier on HPA infill lands. Construction of this federally funded project is anticipated to begin later this year. HRM’s approximate 4700 sq. m. (~50,000 sq. ft.) easement will permit construction of a driveway to access the facility from Africville Road and a septic field (there are no sewer lines servicing Africville Road.) The CBSA facility will be situated approximately 250-300 metres (~750-900 feet) southwest of the Africville Museum.
- The Halifax Port Authority has proposed the concept of land exchange with HRM, whereby HRM’s Lot H-3 (~14 acres along Africville Road) would be conveyed to HPA in exchange for HPA’s new landmass (Bedford Basin infill lands). The future use of the new landmass may be a good subject for this visioning exercise, and by extension, would engage Africville Heritage Trust (Africville Museum) and the broader Africville community in determining potential future uses of the landmass, regardless of ownership. In addition to visioning, several other factors of consideration will be necessary for Council to consider about whether exchange is favourable, for example: limitations imposed by HPA about future uses of the infill landmass; environmental implications on use and valuation; market valuation of lands proposed for exchange and achieving congruence of values; future strategic and opportunity costs of municipal services related to moving road operations from the area.
- Halifax Harbour Bridges announced that between 2040 and 2050, a replacement for the A. Murray MacKay Bridge will be necessary. The options include reconstruction of the existing span and constructing a parallel bridge immediately north of the existing structure. The options presume that land requirements on both sides of the harbour will be a critical component to explore.

Other projects that the municipality has completed that impact Africville include:

- Africville Interpretive Enhancement Project- five corten steel interpretive panels have been installed in Africville Park, showing the history, families, and daily lives of the former residents of Africville which was completed May 2021 [New Interpretive Panels! – Africville Museum](#)

- Signage at the entrance to Africville and the Africville park were erected in 2019 and 2020.
 - Municipal Archives Africville Outreach project -the Municipal Archives had been working with Africville residents to bring awareness to records the Archives have related to Africville and encourage the community to consider donating historical records, photographs, videos, etc. to the Archives for preservation and availability to the public. The Archives staff hope to offer a Community photo-scanning day at the Africville picnic or other events as appropriate where community bring in photos that could be scanned/recorded.
 - Met with Africville Museum staff, Russell Grosse from the Black Cultural Centre, and a group of former residents, but with COVID-19 restrictions and some uncertainty from Access & Privacy, no further progress has been made to date. The project will continue when safe for continued community engagement and access and privacy concerns have been addressed.
 - Digitized all historical content related to Africville and made it available in the Africville Source Guide.
 - Worked with Legal and Access & Privacy to make closed records related to Africville as fully available as possible.
 - Provided tours with staff/interns of the Africville Museum
 - Grounds service agreement to allow Africville staff to hire staff (former descendants) to maintain the grounds. This agreement has been in effect for two years, originating from the 2010 agreement with HRM. HRM continues to maintain garbage removal, the upkeep of the picnic tables and maintenance of the playground. HRM has recently replaced some of the benches with new sturdy, colorful units which are very pleasing to the eye and extremely welcoming. The continued maintenance and beautification of the Africville Museum and Park by descendants of Africville creates pride of place and history.
5. Developing a comprehensive, co-facilitated public engagement process in partnership with Africville descendants, Africville focused organizations, and community partners that will inform the outcomes of the visioning process.

An external facilitator will be hired and be responsible to arrange the engagement sessions, manage the collection of information and provide a comprehensive report on the findings of the consultation sessions. Community consultations will be held with Africville descendants, Africville focused organizations, as well as community partners. These consultations will provide participants with an opportunity to identify what they envision as the future for Africville, how they see the various levels of government playing a role, what role the community will play, and to begin to identify and initiate those community priorities. Staff from D&I/ANSAIO will work closely with the external facilitator to identify participants, questions, ensure accessibility (for example sign language interpretation, Computer Assisted Real Time Services (CART), locations for sessions and other resources as needed. To ensure as fulsome a participation as possible, a variety of tools will be used including in-person sessions, virtual sessions, and online surveys. In some cases, one-on-one meetings may be necessary to reach out to those who are unable to attend group sessions. The information gathered from the sessions will result in an initial report that will contain community priorities for moving the work forward.

6. Re-visiting the 2003 Bayne Street Land Use Study, and work with partners to collaborate to reimagine the Master Plan that would include land specifically dedicated to descendants of Africville and/or uses that would be supported by descendants, community members or organizations who broadly represent the interest of Africville descendants.

The 2003 Bayne Street Land Use Study will be revisited by staff to consider its content and recommendations in light of current land uses and policies and is expected to inform future land use studies for the Africville area.

7. Examine the possibility of using the Africville visioning process to address the ongoing class action court proceedings against HRM and working with claimants and descendants to address their concerns outside of the court system.

D&I/ANSAIO has explored this recommendation and consulted with HRM Legal Services. , In light of the nature of the claims, the 2010 Settlement, the history of community and the expected outcomes of this process, addressing them in this manner at this stage of their proceedings would be beyond the scope of the visioning process.

To move the motion forward, we envision a phased in process:

- **Phase one** would consist of a public engagement process in partnership with Africville descendants, Africville-focused organizations and community partners that will inform the outcomes of the visioning process. Once this is completed, a report will be presented to Regional Council.
- **Phase two** will entail developing an action plan to support the visioning, based on what has been learned through the engagement process.
- **Phase three** will be an analysis and review of the process and the identification of any further actions that may need to be taken by all those engaged in the overall visioning exercise. This may include re-engagement with Phase One public participants.

A comprehensive visioning process will be a multi-year endeavor. D&I/ANSAIO staff commit to bi-annual reporting back to Regional Council on this project.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

D&I/ANSAIO has been working with ACOA to identify funds to support phase one (community facilitation/consultation). Financial supports related to facilitation and consultation sessions will be covered by D&I/ANSAIO and are included in its 2022/23 proposed budget.

RISK CONSIDERATION

If phase one would not proceed, we would lose access to ACOA partnership funding and an opportunity to work with the community to begin actioning an Africville visioning process.

However, there are no significant measured risks associated with the recommendations in this report. The risks considered rate Low.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement will be a pivotal part of the community facilitated consultations in Phase 1.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified as related to visioning, however, some lands in the Africville area are known to be contaminated due to their historic uses. Environmental due diligence will be considered as part of any land development or conveyance proposal as may be recommended and subject to Regional Council approval.

ALTERNATIVES

Halifax Regional Council may choose to deny the request to proceed with a consultant and therefore the Africville Visioning process would not move forward.

ATTACHMENTS

No attachments.

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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