

Item 10.3.2

From: [Office, Clerks](#)
To:
Cc: [Office, Clerks](#); [Ross-Siegel, Simon](#)
Subject: RE: Request to Present to Regional Council
Date: Tuesday, March 22, 2022 10:54:47 AM
Attachments: [Bylaw P-600 HRM Council.pdf](#)

Hello,

Your request to present to Regional Council was considered by Regional Council Agenda Review.

In this instance, Agenda Review has **referred the request to present to [Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee](#) Agenda Review** for their consideration.

Simon Ross-Siegel is the Legislative Assistant for the Committee and will get back to you on if the Committee has decided to have the presentation and if approved the date and next steps.

Best wishes,

Laura

LAURA LEWIS (SHE, HER)
OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL CLERK

HALIFAX
PO BOX 1749
HALIFAX NS B3J 3A5
halifax.ca

From: Office, Clerks
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2022 11:59 AM
To:
Cc: Office, Clerks <clerks@halifax.ca>
Subject: Request to Present to Regional Council

Hello,

Thank you for your email.

Our office received a copy of your request to present to Regional Council in your attached letter. If this was not your intention please let us know.

All requests to present to Council go to Regional Council Agenda Review for consideration in accordance with [Administrative Order 1](#). Once Agenda Review has reviewed the request I will get back in touch with you.

There are many possible outcomes of a presentation request including: placement on an agenda, referral to a different meeting group, referral to staff, receiving written submission only, and refusal of the request.

More information about requesting to present to Regional Council is available on Halifax.ca [here](#).

Best wishes,

Laura

LAURA LEWIS (SHE, HER)
OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL CLERK

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Dear HRM Councillors,

We write today to request a meeting with you, both individually, and to address Council as a whole, to discuss [Bylaw P-600](#).

P.A.D.S is deeply concerned that HRM's present approach towards unhoused persons is exacerbating harm – and we would like the opportunity to speak with you to move forward with transforming the city's professed empathetic intentions into tangible empathetic outcomes.

We hope that, as a Council, you will seek to uphold the reputation of HRM as a caring, progressive and just place to live and work – and that you actively commit to an approach that seeks to uphold the [National Housing Strategy Act](#).

We understand that staff have already had meetings with Leilani Farha, Global Director, The Shift. This is a great start as the [National Protocol on Encampments in Canada](#) takes a human rights and empathy-based approach. That said, one clear barrier to this approach is HRM Council's inaction around By-law P-600, and HRM Council's failure to grant permission to seek shelters in parks.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss with you how to better create a path forward. Granting permission to seek shelters in parks requires no staff report and assures that HRM is not participating in tactics of violence and criminalization as it responds to a growing humanitarian crisis.

As councillors, you hold a lot of power in determining the treatment of unhoused residents, and so it is vital that you are well educated. We worry that if Council receives its information second-hand, through staff who are not trained or educated to work with unhoused populations, the information, perspectives, positions and proposals advanced to Council may not offer decision makers a fulsome view and understanding. This may be a barrier to allowing Council to make its best decisions and may be contributing to Council members sharing inaccurate information with the public, which in turn increases harm faced by unhoused persons.

And so, we'd like to offer a couple of important clarifications. First, it is important that you understand that there are **not** housing supports for people currently living outside. This was true on August 18, 2021 and has, in fact, only become worse since that time. We have experienced a net loss in the beds available for unhoused persons, as the houseless population has grown. So, while street navigators and outreach workers might provide a connection for unhoused persons, there is very little that they can do to actually help reduce the number of persons who have, within the system, nowhere to go.

Secondly, it is important that you understand the city's obligations regarding the human right to housing. This was declared in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and affirmed by the 1966 United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Canada signed this covenant, and we codified this principle in our own laws in the 2019

National Housing Strategy Act. The right to housing means people have a right to have the means to attain and sustain housing. It also means that they have a right to be free from interference with their enjoyment of the basic human right to shelter. We invite you to read the *SHIFT* report created in conjunction with the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing titled “A National Protocol for Homeless Encampments in Canada” in which a number of very important principles are laid out. As HRM pointed us to this document, we hope that it will become a key resource that can help you understand your obligations.

Two weekends in a row, the HRP violated these rights when they moved into the People’s Park to remove crucial food storage infrastructure- working directly with HRM staff. Please investigate who gave orders, under what authority those orders were given and how HRM’s homelessness response team was or was not involved and notified.

Local bylaws should not be used to trump international human rights law. For months now we’ve been advocating for a moratorium on park evictions of those engaged in subsistence sheltering in tents and box shelters. More recently, we’ve been asking that you consider amending the HRM parks bylaw to ensure it is not used to criminalize and evict those who have no other place to go. Luckily, Bylaw P-600 is already written in such a way that you as councillors have discretion to permit uses of parks that are not officially encompassed within this bylaw. We ask you to read the bylaw carefully, to ask questions of staff, to seek outside counsel to interpret your rights and responsibilities as governing officers, and to consider preparing a notice of motion to bring these important matters to an HRM meeting that will allow you to openly debate and allow for public input to be heard.

We hope to hear from you soon to set up a meeting.

Towards Housing Justice and Human Rights For Us All,

P.A.D.S. Community Advocacy Network

Linked in Letter:

Bylaw P-600: <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/legislation-by-laws/By-law%20P-600.pdf>

National Housing Strategy Act: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/n-11.2/FullText.html>

National Protocol on Encampments in Canada: <https://www.make-the-shift.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/A-National-Protocol-for-Homeless-Encampments-in-Canada.pdf>