

Media Room

For the Record

HRM Not Invited to Africville News Conference

(Tuesday, March 30/2004)-- A number of news reports from many media outlets last evening and today may have left the impression with the public that officials of Halifax Regional Municipality declined to attend a news conference at the Community YMCA regarding Africville.

For the record, no one in the Office of the Mayor, the Chief Administrative Office, the Councillors Support Office nor any other HRM office to our knowledge received an invitation from African Nova Scotian Affairs Minister Barry Barnett, the Africville Genealogy Society, New Democrat MP Alexa McDonough, New Democrat MLA Maureen MacDonald or anyone else involved to attend the news conference.

Also, for the record, HRM staff (at the direction of Halifax Regional Council) has been involved in discussions for more than two years with a representative of the Africville Genealogy Society and descendants of some Africville residents with a view to further commemorating the historical significance of the former African-Nova Scotian community on the shores of Bedford Basin.

HRM has made an official offer to those parties, contingent on participation by the federal and Nova Scotia governments, and is awaiting formal reply.

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John O'Brien
Corporate Communications Officer
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News Release

Talks Continuing on Proposed Memorial to Africville

(Monday, June 21/04)- Halifax Regional Municipality is working with the federal and provincial governments to establish a fitting memorial for the former community of Africville.

Mayor Peter Kelly, speaking on behalf of Regional Council, said today that HRM's offer of land and services on the site of the former Africville in north end Halifax would form the basis of the memorial project.

"Council will be discussing some further details of this proposal tomorrow and we are hopeful there could be a joint government announcement on this issue before the end of the summer," he said.

In a recent letter to African-Nova Scotia Affairs Minister Barry Barnett, Mayor Kelly advised the province that HRM extended the offer to the Africville Genealogical Society in 2002 . HRM has not received a formal response to the offer yet. (The letter was also copied to Fisheries and Oceans Minister Geoff Regan, MP for Halifax West).

The framework for resolution includes:

some land zoned Park and Institutional at the former Africville site (adjoining Seaview Park). This could be used to construct a church/interpretive centre.

environmental remediation for the site

water and on-site septic for the site

seed funds towards construction of a church/interpretive centre

some funds towards Legal Counsel for the Africville Genealogy Society, based on docketed time for resolution participation

Mayor Kelly said Regional Council established the framework for the offer and it was also very clear that there would be no personal compensation, no dwellings on the land, and no funding for entrepreneurial purposes.

Minister Regan said today that he has discussed the proposed Africville project with some of his colleagues in the federal Cabinet and he is hopeful that some funding will be made available for this very important matter.

"The former Africville church was both the spiritual soul and the heart of that community. A replica of the original church, as well as a genealogical/interpretative centre, would be a very special memorial to the community of Africville,"he said.

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Honourable Geoff Regan
Minister, Fisheries and Oceans
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Corporate Communications Officer
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News Release

Mayor Invites Premier to Join Africville Talks

(HALIFAX, Tuesday, May 17, 2005)- Mayor Peter Kelly today invited Premier John Hamm to become personally involved in a tri-level government action plan to memorialize the historic community of Africville.

He was commenting on a Bill tabled by the New Democratic Party in the Legislature yesterday, calling on the Province to establish a trust fund for an Africville interpretive centre and other infrastructure. Based on media reports, the Bill was greeted positively by the Liberals, by African Nova Scotian Affairs Minister Barry Barnet and by Premier Hamm.

Mayor Kelly said Halifax Regional Council approved an offer of land and services on the site of the former Africville community in Halifax's north end in 2002. Since that time, it has been trying to encourage the federal and provincial governments to work with the municipality to develop a tripartite approach.

The Mayor said HRM met as recently as December with Minister Barnet and Fisheries Minister Geoff Regan, one of two Nova Scotia members in the federal Cabinet, to discuss this approach. HRM staff is now preparing a costing document for the project. It could be presented to federal and provincial officials as early as mid-June.

"We believe HRM's offer would form the basis of the project. A replica of the original church, which formed the spiritual backbone of the community, would be a very special memorial to the community of Africville," he said. "It could also house an interpretive centre to guarantee that the history of the former residents and the Africville community would not be lost."

The HRM offer, which was presented to the Africville Genealogical Society in 2002, included:

- ? Some land zoned Park and Institutional on the former Africville site (adjoining Seaview Park). This could be used to construct a church/interpretive centre.
- ? environmental remediation of the site
- ? water and on-site septic for the site
- ? seed funds towards construction of a church/interpretive centre

The framework for the offer made it clear there would be no personal compensation, no dwellings on the land, and no funding for entrepreneurial purposes.

Mayor Kelly said "If there are any other issues that the Premier or Minister Barnet would like to raise, we invite them to bring them to the table for discussion."

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John O'Brien
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Media Advisory

A new name in recognition of a historic community

(Thursday, July 30, 2009) - A North End Halifax road will receive a significant honour on July 31 when it is renamed in recognition of the historic community of Africville.

In a July 31 ceremony during the opening day of the annual Africville celebrations, Service Road will receive its new name, Africville Road

Africville Geneological Society spokesman Irvine Carvery, who spent his early boyhood in Africville, said the event holds national significance.

“The name Africville speaks to the former residents and their descendants about home, a place where their ancestors celebrated life in a close-knit community that remains an indelible part of the city’s history,” said Mr. Carvery. “The renaming of the road that once led to Africville will allow generations to come to feel a tangible connection to their roots and a sense of belonging.”

Mayor Kelly, members of Halifax Regional Council, and other special guests will join former Africville residents and their descendants for the name change ceremony.

“I look forward to marking this special day, which represents a small but significant step toward appropriate recognition of Africville, a community that once stood on the shores of Bedford Basin and still remain in the hearts of many.”

Date: Friday, July 31, 2009

Time: 5 pm

Location: Seaview Park, 5399 Africville Rd. (formerly Service Road)

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Contact:

Irvine Carvery

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Shaune MacKinlay

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Media Advisory

HRM and the Africville Genealogy Society to hold community announcement

(Tuesday, February 23, 2010) - Mayor Peter Kelly and Irvine Carvery, President of the Africville Genealogy Society will host an event in recognition of Africville on Wednesday, February 24, 2010 at 11 a.m.

Mayor Kelly will offer an official apology to former Africville residents and their descendants on behalf of Halifax Regional Council and Halifax Regional Municipality.

The announcement will also include details of an agreement reached between HRM and the Africville Genealogy Society to commemorate the past and take positive steps for the future. Premier Darrell Dexter and Hon Percy Paris, Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs will participate by making an announcement in recognition of the historic Africville community.

When: Wednesday, February 24, 2010

Time: 11 a.m.

Where: Community YMCA, 2269 Gottingen Street, Halifax

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Contact:

Mayor Peter Kelly
490-4010

Irvine Carvery
President, Africville Genealogy Society
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Angela Johnson
African Nova Scotian Affairs
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News Release

An Africville apology and an agreement to commemorate the historic community

(Wednesday, February 24, 2010) - Mayor Peter Kelly, on behalf of Halifax Regional Council and Halifax Regional Municipality, apologized today for the loss of the historic Halifax community of Africville in the 1960s.

The Mayor also presented the terms of an agreement reached between the municipality and the Africville Genealogy Society. The agreement, which includes \$3 million toward the reconstruction of the Seaview United Baptist Church to serve as an Africville memorial, is designed to honour the past, take action in the present, and plan for community-based improvements for the future.

"We realize words cannot undo what has been done, but we are profoundly sorry and apologize to all the former residents and their descendants," Mayor Kelly said.

A predominantly African Nova Scotian community, Africville stood on the shores of the Bedford Basin for 150 years before its homes and the Seaview United Baptist Church were removed by the former City of Halifax. Approximately 400 people were relocated throughout the city at that time.

The Africville Genealogy Society, which represents former residents and their descendents, has devoted many years to seeking a fitting recognition of Africville and a way to ensure its history remains a significant part of the fabric of the municipality.

"This announcement with its heartfelt apology is welcomed by the people of Africville," said Africville Genealogy Society President Irvine Carvery. "Today as we open the door to tomorrow, we do it on the sacrifices and struggles of those who came before us. This is truly a new beginning for Africville."

In addition to the official apology delivered today, the agreement includes the following provisions for HRM:

- Contribute \$3 million toward the reconstruction and operation of the Seaview United Baptist Church to serve as a memorial to Africville;
- Provide 2.5 acres of land at Seaview Park to an Africville Heritage Trust Board that is to be established in short order;
- Establish a park maintenance agreement between Africville Heritage Trust and HRM for the lands known as Seaview Park;
- And, establish an African Nova Scotian Affairs function within HRM, which is to be included in business plans for the upcoming 2010/11 fiscal year.

The agreement is the result of the hard work of a tripartite committee struck in 2005 with representation from the three levels of government and the Africville Genealogy Society.

"Our history cannot be rewritten but, thankfully, the future is a blank page and, starting today, we hold the pen with which we can write a shared tomorrow," said Mayor Kelly.

For additional information, including background information, audio files from today's announcement, and archival materials, please visit the HRM website at www.halifax.ca and click on the link from the home page.

For more information about the history of Africville please visit the Africville Genealogy Society website at www.africville.ca .

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Irvine Carvery
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News Release

HRM commitments to Africville near fulfilment

(Halifax, November 26, 2010) – Resurrection of the Seaview United Baptist Church on the former site of Africville is a big step closer, thanks to a cheque for \$2.5 million from the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Mayor Peter Kelly announced today that the money has been transferred to the recently established Africville Heritage Trust Society. The payment honours a commitment which Regional Council made earlier this year to Africville survivors, their descendants and the Africville Genealogy Society.

“Council and I took these pledges to the people of Africville very seriously indeed and we will continue to do so,” the Mayor said.

Irvine Carvery, president of the Africville Genealogy Society, said he was pleased with HRM’s “sincere response.”

“We are looking forward to the Africville Heritage Trust carrying out the necessary steps for the construction of the church and interpretive centre,” Mr. Carvery said.

Mayor Kelly estimated that, by the end of this year, Council will have honoured most of the promises given to the Africville diaspora as part of February’s public apology for the razing of the black community by the-then City of Halifax in the late 1960s.

The \$2.5 million is part of the \$3 million Council promised towards the rebuilding of the Seaview church which had been the heart of Africville. The Mayor said the remaining \$500,000 is earmarked for the installation of services to the new building and a proposed interpretive centre.

“We respect the sensitivities of the black community in general and the Africville survivors in particular, and we are working collectively to the same timetable to restore Africville to its rightful place in our community’s history,” the Mayor said.

Actual construction of the church, which could start as early as next spring, will be the responsibility of the Africville Heritage Trust Society, as will the funding and building of the proposed interpretive centre.

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Irvine Carvery

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