

HRM & NS PROPERTY TAX PROGRAMS

The municipality has a variety of programs to aid homeowners with their property tax obligations. There are various options for payment plans, property tax rebates, or deferral of property taxes (payment is put off to a later date). A homeowner with a LIC (Local Improvement Charge) can also apply for a deferral of these charges. It is important that you know what choices exist. Some of these programs are available to homeowners with a combined household income of \$34,000 or less a year. Deadline to apply is December 31. The application form can be found at www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/about-halifax/AffordableAccessApplicationForm_2.pdf.

Furthermore, seniors should know that there is a NS Provincial Property Tax Rebate for Seniors Program. This program is for those who have been received the Guaranteed Income Supplement in January of the application year. Criteria requires you to have paid your property taxes from the prior year in full. A receipt from HRM showing property taxes are paid in full is required. Applicants to this program can receive a rebate on half of their taxes paid to a maximum of \$800. More details about this provincial program can be found by calling (902) 424-5200 or 211 or toll-free at 1-800-670-4357 or by visiting <https://novascotia.ca/sns/access/individuals/consumer-awareness/property-tax-rebate-for-seniors.asp>. The deadline to apply is also December 31. Application form can be downloaded from <https://beta.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/documents/2-1781/property-tax-rebate-seniors-application-form-en.pdf>.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF NS

There are many groups, individuals, and organizations whose purpose is beneficial to the community but who are not registered as charities or qualified donees with the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA). Charities and non-charities often partner to increase their community impact. The Community Foundation of Nova Scotia (CFNS) is an action centre for philanthropy. The CFNS plays a crucial role in helping people give back to their community in meaningful ways by connecting individuals, families and companies with causes that inspire them. CFNS pool resources, knowledge, and expertise, working with others for even greater impact.

If you're interested in working with CFNS to grow your charity, honour a loved one, or simply give back to your community, call 902-490-9916, email infocfns@cfns-fcne.ca, or visit their website <https://cfns-fcne.ca/> to learn more about the opportunities they provide. For example, there is the Eastern Shore Community Fund that provides an opportunity to help organizations that are vital to building stronger, more inclusive Eastern Shore communities, visit <https://cfns-fcne.ca/easternshorecommunityfund/>.

You can also support the various CFNS campaigns directly through CanadaHelps at www.canadahelps.org/en/explore/campaigns/region/AC/. Your contribution will help them continue to build strong, vibrant, and diverse communities throughout Nova Scotia. For another example, there is the Eastern Shore Heritage Preservation Fund www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/community-foundation-of-nova-scotia/campaign/eastern-shore-heritage-preservation-fund/.

INT'L HUMAN RIGHTS DAY - DEC. 10

We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. Human rights are inherent to all human beings, no matter our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. Learn what your human rights are, as well as your responsibilities. It has now been 75 years since the United Nations made the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Learn more at www.standup4humanrights.org.

PERFORMING & VISUAL ARTS STUDY

The municipality is seeking public input on the Performing & Visual Arts Venues Study. The study will help improve the municipality's understanding of professional art venue operations, identify challenges facing existing art venues, identify the needs of the local arts and culture community and inform the municipality's long-term approach to supporting, renewing and investing in professional arts venues.

As part of the Performing & Visual Arts Venues Study's engagement program, Happy Cities, the firm conducting the study, is seeking feedback from users of performing and arts venues on their experience with these facilities. Happy Cities is also releasing a second survey to collect input from Indigenous peoples and artists. There are two surveys available: a Public Survey and an Indigenous Residents Survey. Take them by visiting the following links:

<https://www.shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/embeds/projects/39370/survey-tools/42633>

<https://www.shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/embeds/projects/39370/survey-tools/42631>

The surveys will remain open until Friday, December 15. The Performing & Visual Arts Venues Study is expected to be completed by June 2024, and may lead to the creation of a Professional Arts Venues Plan.

HRM COUNCIL VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION

The municipality has introduced virtual public participation for in-person meetings held in Council Chambers. This came into effect as of November 14. This option will be available for any meetings taking place in Halifax City Hall Council Chamber where there is an opportunity for the public to speak, including during meetings of Budget Committee. This is in addition to a livestream of all meetings, which is available on the municipality's YouTube channel. Those who wish to participate virtually must register in advance by 4:30 p.m. the business day before the meeting. For more information, visit <https://www.halifax.ca/city-hall/agendas-meetings-reports> or email: clerks@halifax.ca or call 311 or 902-490-4210.

HFXGO TRANSIT MOBILE PHONE APP

HRM has launched a new Halifax Transit mobile fare payment application, allowing customers to purchase and use fare products from the convenience of their smartphones. The app is provided by Masabi smart ticketing and fare payment solutions, HFXGO is a Halifax Transit branded version of Masabi's JustRide app, which has been implemented by transit agencies of all

sizes worldwide. HFXGO is now available at the App Store for iOS and Google/Android devices. Users of the app simply need to purchase their desired ticket or pass, activate the ticket or pass, and show it to the Transit Operator or ferry security staff just prior to boarding. Passengers can still purchase paper tickets and passes or use cash fare. This project involves two phases, phase 1 being the mobile app, and phase 2 being the installation of onboard validators. For more information, visit www.halifax.ca/transportation/halifax-transit/fares-tickets-passes/hfxgo.

HRM TO APPOINT ESLC ARCHITECT

Back in August, HRM issued a RFP "Request For Proposals" #23-182 for Design Consulting Services for the Eastern Shore Life Styles Centre, to replace the old Lions Centre in Sheet Harbour. 13 architectural firms submitted bids for consideration. After careful review, one firm is being recommended to do the work. HRM will soon be announcing the award winner. Residents will have the opportunity to review and share their thoughts on the design concept through multiple in-person public engagements sessions that will take place in early 2024. Construction is expected to break ground in the Spring of 2025. More details can be found at www.halifax.ca/parks-recreation/programs-activities/recreation-centres-your-community/sheet-harbour-recreation.

AFFORDABLE EVENT INSURANCE

Organizers of community events have had to either scale back or cancel events because they couldn't afford appropriate insurance. To address this issue, the municipality reached out to its insurance broker; AON Risk Solutions, to create the Citizen Event Insurance Program (CEIP) which provides affordable access to a \$2-million commercial general liability policy with additional coverage for event organizers. Community groups or associations can also purchase insurance through this program for liability coverage of annual activities, operations and programming. For more information about the CEIP and how to purchase this insurance option, visit <https://halifax.instantriskcoverage.com> or contact AON Risk Solutions directly by calling 1-800-517-1390.

GOODWILL & PEACE ON EARTH

My wife Susan and I want to wish everyone the very best this holiday season. During this joyful time of year there are many types of spiritual and cultural celebrations: Merry Christmas, Joyeux Noel, Season's Greetings, Happy Hanukkah, Al Hijra, and Kwanza. The message of 'Peace on Earth and Goodwill to All' is universal. Have yourself a blessed time with family, friends and neighbours. May we all strive to have peace, tranquillity and harmony in our daily lives. Remember those who may be less fortunate or are experiencing hardship and despair. Please give to your local food bank or give the gift of life and donate blood. May we all be blessed with good health and happiness throughout the New Year ahead!



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