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Item No. 01
Halifax Regional Council
March 28, 2017

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council
Original Signed by Director

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Brad Anguish, Director, Parks and Recreation

DATE: March 6, 2017

SUBJECT: Sale of 90 Alderney Drive / Regional Museum Update

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

- September 6, 2016 Regional Council Motion:
MOVED by Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councillor Karsten that Halifax Regional Council request a staff report following the September 30th closing of the sale of Dartmouth City Hall building with information about the plans for the new museum in Dartmouth. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**
- November 22, 2016 Regional Council Motion:
MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Nicoll that Attachment B Ordinary Properties be further amended to remove PID 40506875 & PID 40938110, North Street at this time, and that staff be directed to prepare a report regarding the feasibility of the subject properties being a potential site for a municipal museum and to investigate whether transferring money realized from the potential sale from the subject properties should be deposited to Q606 Strategic Capital Reserve, and subsequently committed against Reserve Q526 to be contribute toward the establishment of a municipal museum in Dartmouth as part of a cultural cluster. Staff was asked to look at the implications of funding these types of projects in the future. **MOTION TO AMEND PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Section 79 (1)

The Council may expend money required by the Municipality for

...

(k) recreational programs;

...

(x) lands and buildings required for a municipal purpose;

...

(ai) public grounds, squares, halls, museums, parks, tourist information centres and community centres;

BACKGROUND

On November 10, 2009, Regional Council passed a motion which directed that the Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society (DHMS) be given exclusive right to the use of the former Dartmouth City Hall building (90 Alderney Drive) for the purpose of a permanent museum and the creation of a Cultural Cluster.

In January 2014, Regional Council declared that the building at 90 Alderney Drive was unsuitable for a museum and directed 90 Alderney Drive be declared surplus to the needs of HRM. Regional Council's motion further directed that an equivalent amount of money from the sale of the property was to be put aside to be used toward the establishment of a municipal museum in Dartmouth as part of a cultural cluster. Staff was further directed to consider HRM's support and investment in community museums, regional museums, and collection of heritage artifacts as part of the Cultural Heritage Priorities Plan (CHPP) and return to Council with recommendations for an HRM regional museum consistent with the direction outlined in the CHPP.

Regional Council requested an update on the sale and related plan for a regional museum at the September 6, 2016 meeting. Subsequently, on November 22, 2016, Regional Council passed a motion related to the properties on North Street as a potential site for a municipal museum, therefore this information report has been updated accordingly.

DISCUSSION

Regional Museum Strategy

Sale of 90 Alderney Drive

At the October 4, 2016 in-camera session of Regional Council, a report titled "Property Disposal – 90 Alderney Drive, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia" was submitted. Regional Council approved the sale and the property closing is expected by the end of April, 2017. Revenue from the sale will be directed to Q526, Capital Fund Reserve and be allocated towards the future museum project.

The determination of the size and scope of a municipal museum is a complex process and will be undertaken through the development of a Museum Strategy by Parks & Recreation. It requires a detailed inventory of all artifacts and a thorough understanding of any specialized storage and display requirements of the collection. As noted in the March 22, 2016 staff report to Regional Council, titled "Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society Request for Management Agreement and Funding", HRM has identified the actions necessary to assess the size and scope of the artifact collection for a municipal museum. Subsequently, on March 22, 2016, Regional Council directed staff to "incorporate development of a regional museum strategy with supporting regional collection rationale".

The following is an update on the project components associated with the development of the Regional Museum Strategy. The Regional Museum Strategy requires several parallel actions and phases to be conducted. For example, there will be an in-depth curatorial review of the existing collections with continued inventory process of artifacts, broad stakeholder consultation, and the eventual feasibility study.

Database Migration Project (2016-2017)

In order to establish ongoing consultation with other government partners, HRM has re-joined the Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) as an organizational member and will attend the Central Regional Group meetings. ANSM is the non-profit umbrella organization dedicated to the support of community museums in Nova Scotia. A main function of ANSM is the Advisory Service, which provides a secure collection management database system, training, site visits, migration of data and IT support. Pursuant to Regional Council's March 22, 2016 direction, staff has authorized ANSM to initiate work to complete migration of HRM's collection database. In total, approximately 59,000 digital records will be

migrated to a single and secure database which will enable HRM to manage its collection. For a project of this size, ANSM has indicated the work is expected to be completed by mid-March.

Phase Two Inventory Project: 2016-2018

HRM's collection includes: (1) the Civic, Fire & Emergency Services and Halifax Regional Police collections; (2) the artwork currently located in municipal offices and facilities under the Art Loan program and (3) the artifact collection specific to the Dartmouth community, the majority of which is located in a warehouse facility. Phase One of the Inventory project included the cleaning and assessment of the artifacts housed in the warehouse. An update on that work was presented to Regional Council on March 22, 2016. As outlined in that report, a work plan is now in place to reset the appropriate conditions in the warehouse, including upgrades to the warehouse security and cleaning.

With the completion of Phase One work, staff has undertaken inventory work on the other components of the collection. Reconciliation of the Art Loan project is substantially complete. To date, the artifacts and paintings have been inventoried in City Hall, Duke Tower and Alderney Gate, and staff is beginning to reconcile the information by reviewing hundreds of paper based files. Most of the current records are paper based, the information on location is outdated or inaccurate, and there is no single searchable, secure database. The process that HRM has undertaken to inventory the artifacts has highlighted the need to create and reconcile an accurate collections database.

With the recruitment of the Cultural Asset Manager position, staff has also reviewed the current measures in place regarding the care and control of the entire collection. A curatorial review and rationalization of the complete collection is ongoing and, as collection management processes on accessioning and deaccessioning are adopted by HRM, opportunities to present artifacts in a more public setting will be considered. It is premature to determine storage or facility plans until this work is complete. Only when the rationalization of the collection is complete, can the requirements for potential storage and the built museum (size, infrastructure, location) be determined. A Civic Collection policy will be developed in conjunction with HRM Archives.

Heritage and Museum Stakeholders Groups

Regional Council requested that staff work with stakeholders to assist in determining the size and scope of a municipal museum. An important objective in establishing stakeholder groups is to determine the interpretive stories and themes told through the existing museums in HRM. Both provincial and community museums use exhibitions and programming to tell their stories and discussions with stakeholders will allow HRM to further consider how these institutions exist under the Regional museum model. On a broader scale projects conducted in this field by the Province of NS and Parks Canada are also important to include in any rationalisation of a municipal museum. Future exhibits such as the planned renewal of the 'Tides of History' exhibit at Citadel Hill, the recent redevelopments of Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, and the Discovery Centre, will be considered to avoid duplication of museum practices and programming.

An HRM led working group of heritage and provincial museum staff is currently being established to determine short and long-range projects; plans for future and shared site considerations; and to investigate opportunities for collaboration and partnership. Included on the working group are representatives from the following organisations: the NS Department of Community, Culture and Heritage Department (Art Gallery of NS, Nova Scotia Museum, Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management); the Department of Canadian Heritage (Parks Canada, Citadel Hill); the Association of Nova Scotia Museums; and the HRM Archives. The initial meeting is planned for June 2017.

While the working group referred to above is composed of staff from both federal and provincial agencies, HRM has also established a working group of community museums to assist in determining the size and scope of a municipal museum. This HRM led working group consists of representatives from community museums across HRM and provides an opportunity for staff to work collaboratively with the museum community to assess programming, artifacts conservation needs, volunteer structure and what if any changes may be considered in their relationship with HRM. The community museums are leaders in

community storytelling and redefining what role(s) the Municipality plays will help inform the regional museum requirements. Staff continues active communication, and the initial meeting of the HRM led Community Museum working group was held in November 2016. There were representatives from 17 museum and heritage sites that included the Atlantic Canada Aviation Museum; Canadian Museum of Immigration Pier 21; Canadian Naval Memorial HMSC Sackville; Cole Harbour Heritage Farm; Dartmouth Heritage Museum; Fultz House Museum; Hooked Rug Museum of North America; Memory Lane Heritage Village; Moose River Gold Mines Museum; Shearwater Aviation Museum; Scott Manor House; Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame; SS Atlantic Heritage Park; Urban Farm Museum Society of Spryfield; Waverley Heritage Museum; Naval Museum of Halifax; and the Nova Scotia Museum.

Feasibility Study: 2018 – 2020

The Regional Museum Plan will require a needs assessment, a feasibility study, and identification of potential partners and service delivery models that may include new cultural spaces and/or recapitalization of existing facilities and sites. Operating a museum requires specialized staff to develop, programme, and maintain the site and the collection. The feasibility study will inform capital and operational costs, and the analysis of potential sites will be considered through the feasibility study. In advance of the formal study, staff is currently reviewing models and museum practices from several cities that have recently faced similar issues with heritage and museum practices and collection management.

Feasibility of PID 40506875 & PID 40938110, North Street as a potential site for a municipal museum

At the November 22, 2016 Council meeting, a staff recommendation report “Administrative Order 50 – Disposal of Surplus Real Property – Package 05.16” was presented (see Attachment A). Included in that report were two parcels, PID 40506875 & PID 40938110, North Street, Dartmouth. These parcels of land are currently used for HRM fleet vehicle parking, generating net parking revenue of approximately \$29,000 annually. Council discussed the risks and benefits of retaining the parcels as a potential site for a regional museum. The parcels were removed from Attachment B, Ordinary Properties, and the matter was referred to staff for a report regarding “the feasibility of the subject properties being a potential site for a municipal museum and to investigate whether transferring money realized from the potential sale from the subject properties should be deposited to Q606 Strategic Capital Reserve, and subsequently committed against Reserve Q526 to contribute toward the establishment of a municipal museum in Dartmouth as part of a cultural cluster”.

While there are social and accessible benefits in creating an enhanced “cultural cluster” of buildings adjacent to the Dartmouth Ferry Terminal and Alderney Landing, it is premature to commit a specific parcel of land as the location for the regional museum building until completion of the feasibility study. However, the land has been informally regarded as a potential location over the past few years since the 90 Alderney site was declared inappropriate. As noted, the work on the regional museum strategy will include assessment of various sites to determine their feasibility for hosting a municipal museum once the necessary scope and size of a facility is confirmed. Therefore, it is premature to be able to comment on the feasibility of the indicated sites for a museum at this time. However, retaining ownership of the land would be of benefit for consideration under the feasibility study when prospective sites are analysed. Should the site be determined inappropriate for the museum location, the properties could be relisted as surplus to municipal requirements for Council’s decision. A further report on the real estate considerations will follow this report and is expected before Regional Council in summer 2017.

Allocating proceeds from the potential sale of the North Street subject properties to Q606 Strategic Capital Reserve has already been determined and is expressed in the Reserve’s business case. While Regional Council has directed that an equivalent value received from the sale of 90 Alderney Drive be allocated to the development of a regional municipal museum in Dartmouth, typically, funding realized from the sale of land is allocated to Q526 Capital Fund Reserve. The proposed ten year capital budget has allocated \$12 million to this project. There are multiple options for funding projects in the capital budget, including use of reserves. With the project proposed in 2020, the best funding option will be determined as future capital budgets are refined. Allocating funding from a sale of property at this time would restrict HRM’s use of that funding, eliminating the flexibility to allocate funding to the necessary

priorities in the short term. Therefore, should Council choose to sell the properties at this time, the revenue realized should be allocated to the Strategic Capital Reserve as previously approved by Council on July 29, 2014 with the presentation of the Strategic Capital Funding Strategy. Further funding for the regional museum would be allocated appropriately in future capital budgets.

Next Steps

It is expected that the sale of 90 Alderney Drive will be finalized prior to the end of the fiscal year. There is currently a commitment allocated to the future regional museum project as approved in a motion of Council in January 2014. Due to the amount of time needed to complete Phase Two of the collection inventory and associated plans for the collection rationale required for a regional museum strategy, Regional Council directed staff to enter into an interim three-year management agreement with DHMS while that work is completed. A new agreement incorporating Council's direction was approved by DHMS Board in January.

Completion of the inventory of remaining pieces of HRM's collection, as well as the database migration, are critical to determine the appropriate scope and necessary scale for a regional museum, and will in turn inform the necessary capital funding and resulting operating costs for a museum. Primary pieces of work that will be completed in the short term include continued negotiation of the management agreement with DHMS and completion of the work by ANSM on the database migration. Staff will also continue with on-going work between HRM and the Province of Nova Scotia related to the cultural inventories and continuation of Phase Two collection tasks. These critical pieces of work will be completed on different timelines but will all inform the future municipal museum.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding in the amount of \$150,000 has been allocated in Capital Project CD990003 Cultural Spaces, to fund Phase Two of the Inventory and Conservation project. In addition to the former Dartmouth Heritage Museum records, the Civic Collection and Public Art Collection records will also be migrated to the singular database and funding in the amount of \$24,800 has also been approved from that account.

Funding equal to the amount of the anticipated sales revenue has been allocated towards the future regional museum capital project. As well, estimated funding in the amount of \$12 million has been allocated in the proposed 10 year capital budget. The overall estimated cost for the museum will be determined through work on the regional museum strategy, which will enable the budget amount to be refined in future capital budgets.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Members of the HRM led Community Museum Working Group include members of the public.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Administrative Order 50 – Disposal of Surplus Real Property– Package 05.16

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/agenda.php> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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