

HALIFAX

P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 1

Halifax Regional Council
June 28, 2022

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

Original Signed by 

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: May 13, 2022

SUBJECT: Process to Rename Body of Water

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

May 3, 2022 Regional Council Motion (Item No. 13.2.1):

MOVED by Deputy Lovelace and seconded by Councillor Mason

THAT Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to provide a staff report to rename the body of water currently known as "Coon Pond" in Westwood Hills subdivision in Upper Tantallon, Nova Scotia. The report should include the necessary steps to follow the provincial name change process of a provincial body of water.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Municipality does not have any legislative authority with respect to renaming official geographic names; however, Council support for the proposed name change will be required as part of the Provincial process to add or change an official geographic name.

BACKGROUND

Coon Pond is located at Latitude: 44°43'0.66"; Longitude: -63°53'55.39" in Upper Tantallon, Nova Scotia (see Attachment 3). In May of 2022, a name-change petition, with 87(virtual)¹ signatures, was submitted to Deputy Mayor Lovelace (see Attachment 4). In response to that petition, Regional Council directed staff to return with a report addressing steps to change a physical feature's name.

¹ Virtual petition signatures were gathered using the [Change.org](https://www.change.org) platform. Change.org is a worldwide petition website operated by the San Francisco-based company of the same name, which has over 400 million users and offers the public the ability to promote the petitions to potential signers.

DISCUSSION

Geographic Names

Geographical names, or toponyms, provide a widely recognized and easily understandable reference to a place or location. They serve a range of purposes, from identification of a location in official documents such as passports and birth certificates, to providing an authoritative reference system for on-line search tools, web-based interactive mapping, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Global Positioning System (GPS) devices.

Federal/Provincial Responsibility

In Canada, geographical naming is the responsibility of the province or territory where the physical feature is situated. In the case of federal lands, such as national parks, naming is the joint responsibility of provincial, territorial and federal naming authorities.

The [Geographical Names Board of Canada](#) (GNBC) is Canada's national coordinating body responsible for standards and policies on place names. The GNBC comprises federal, provincial and territorial departments and agencies, each with specific authority and responsibility for their respective jurisdictions.

GNBC members coordinate efforts to ensure that geographical names are consistently managed. The multi-jurisdictional national body creates and promotes the use of geographical naming standards. Names are recorded in a national authoritative register known as the [Canadian Geographical Names Database](#). The GNBC develops and publishes the national geographical naming standard known as the [Geographical Names Principles and Procedures](#). This national standard is in use by all jurisdictions in Canada

Name Change Process

Since geographic names can evolve over time, new names or name changes can be proposed. (Re)naming applications may be submitted by anyone (a committee, resident, municipal contact, etc.). Proposals are reviewed/approved by [GeoNova](#), the Nova Scotia representative on the Geographical Names Board of Canada. Proposed names need to be consistent with the Principles for Geographic Naming in Canada (see Attachment 3). In the case of Coon Pond, a name-change application has already been submitted to GeoNova by HRM residents.

Considering new names (including renaming) may require considerable time, particularly when local investigation is required. GeoNova, as Nova Scotia's provincial authority, investigates a name by consulting area residents, reviewing historical documents and files, and assessing other sources. GeoNova follows a six-stage name-change process (see Attachment 2) that includes securing both MLA and municipal Council support for the proposed name change.²

GeoNova's staff have indicated that review work is underway on the Coon Pond file.³ GeoNova anticipates that public engagement will likely take place in Fall-Winter of 2022. GeoNova staff have expressed interest in partnering with HRM to communicate with, and engage, HRM residents.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications at this time.

² GeoNova-facilitated name-change petition/plebiscites are submitted to Municipal Councils to secure supporting Council-motions.

³ Report author conversation with Colin MacDonald (Director of GeoNova) on May 10, 2022.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required. Community engagement will take place during the name selection process and will be overseen by GeoNova.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Process to Add or Change an Official Geographic Name

Attachment 2 – Principles for Geographic Naming in Canada

Attachment 3 – Aerial Image | Coon Pond – Upper Tantallon

Attachment 4 – Change.Org Petition

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.

Report Prepared by: Scott Sheffield, Government Relations and External Affairs, 902.430.3654

ATTACHMENT 1

Process to Add or Change an Official Geographic Name¹

Step 1 The applicant (a committee, resident, municipal contact, etc.) will propose the change or addition of a name by filling out an [application form](#). The name change or addition must align with the guiding principles. New names or name changes must have strong support and/or long-standing local use of residents in a particular area. Unnamed features without a form in use locally should be named according to Commemorative Naming Guidelines. Along with this submission, the applicant shall include as much background material as possible supporting the name. This could be in the form of old maps, historical documents, old deeds, etc. It is also essential that the extent of the community or feature be identified on a current map to prevent misinterpretation of the location and size.

Submit completed application form

Step 2 The application form will be approved or rejected by The Nova Scotia representative on the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC), after reviewing the submitted application. Further research and field investigation may be completed to ensure the proposed change conforms to the Guiding Principles (see Attachment 2) and General Procedures for Geographical Naming developed by the GNBC.

- Application Rejected – end of process*
- Application approved – proceed to step 3*

Step 3 Once the application has been approved to proceed, the applicant will now ensure community support for the name change or addition. This is indicated through a community petition/plebiscite where residents will provide their signature, address and phone number in support of the proposed name. A map outlining the extent of the feature or community is to accompany the petition and will be provided by GIS. Opposition to a proposed name will also be considered. Completely new names or name changes of a sensitive nature may require Cabinet approval. Please adhere to the following voting procedure to ensure that a fair and accurate measure of the citizens' wishes can be documented.

Eligible voters should:

- live within the boundaries of the community/village;
- live in a home declared as a principle residence;
- live in a principle residence on a permanent basis;
- be over the age of 18 on the date of the plebiscite.

Community Petition Complete

Step 4 The petition/plebiscite is then submitted to the corresponding Municipal Council and is asked to support the proposed name with a motion of Council. A letter of support from the local MLA must also be obtained.

- Municipal Council motion approval letter for the proposed name*
- Letter of support from MLA of the region the proposed name is within*

Step 5 The petition/plebiscite and a copy of the Council minutes, letter of support from the MLA are then sent to the Provincial Member of the Geographical Names Board of Canada at GIS.

Proposal Package submitted:

¹ See Nova Scotia Geographic Naming Process [document](#).

- Petition*
- Council Minutes*
- Letter of Support from MLA*
- Other relevant information*

Step 6 The Nova Scotia representative on the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) reviews the proposal for completeness. In rare circumstances, after approval is given, a Report and Recommendation (R&R) for Cabinet is prepared. In cases where the changes are minor, such as spelling corrections, or small feature name changes, no R&R is required, but rather the decision would be made by the Nova Scotia member to the GNBC. The Gazetteer of Canada and the Nova Scotia Place Names Database are updated to include the new or revised name When Cabinet approval has been received, or a decision made.

- Communication, to all parties involved, of the decision (Approved/Not Approved)*

ATTACHMENT 2

Principles for Geographic Naming in Canada

Principle 1: The names of municipalities, territorial divisions, reserves, parks and other legal entities as created by, or resulting from, legislation by the appropriate government shall be accepted.

Principle 2: First priority shall be given to names with long-standing local usage by the general public. Unless there are good reasons to the contrary, this principle should prevail.

Principle 3: Names for facilities established by postal authorities, railway companies, and major public utilities shall be accepted, if they are in keeping with the other principles. Names established for land divisions by federal, provincial and territorial departments shall also be accepted, if they conform to the other principles. Active encouragement should be given to such agencies to have open communication with the appropriate names authorities

Principle 4: A decision on a name proposal for a physical or cultural feature should specify the geographical limits of the feature to which the name applies. Future approval of different names with the same generic for a part of what is deemed to be the same feature should be avoided.

Principle 5: A personal name should not be given to a geographical feature unless such application is in the public interest. The person commemorated should have contributed significantly to the area where the feature is located; when such a name is applied, it should normally be given posthumously. The adoption of a personal name during the lifetime of the person concerned should only be made in exceptional circumstances. Ownership of land should not in itself be grounds for the application of the owner's name to a geographical feature. However, where names already in common local use are derived from the names of persons, either living or deceased, Principle 2 takes precedence.

Principle 6: In approving names for previously unnamed features for which no local names are found to be in use, the following sources are recommended: descriptive names appropriate to the features; names of pioneers; names of persons who died during war service; names associated with historical events connected with the area; and names from Aboriginal languages formerly identified with the general area.

Principle 7: Geographical names should be recognizable words or acceptable combinations of words and should be in good taste.

Principle 8: A name should be adopted in a single language form, although other forms may be accepted where in use and when sanctioned by the appropriate names authority. A name should, where possible, be written in the Roman alphabet. A name derived from languages other than English or French should be written according to the considered opinion of linguistic specialists and be acceptable to the appropriate names authorities and the language communities concerned. Names of selected geographical entities of pan-Canadian significance, first established by the Treasury Board of Canada in 1983 and later updated by the Geographical Names Board of Canada, are recognized in both English and French for use on federal maps and in federal texts.

Principle 9: The spelling and accenting of names should agree with the rules of the language in which they are written. In English, hyphenation and the genitive apostrophe should be approved only when well established and in current usage.

Principle 10: Names of the same origin applying to various service facilities in a community should conform in spelling with the official name of the community. Names with the same specific for associated features should agree in form and spelling.

Principle 11: Where established names are duplicated or are similar in sound or spelling and tend to cause confusion, local assistance will be obtained to achieve distinction among them. In giving new

names, duplication to the extent that confusion may result in a local community should be avoided.

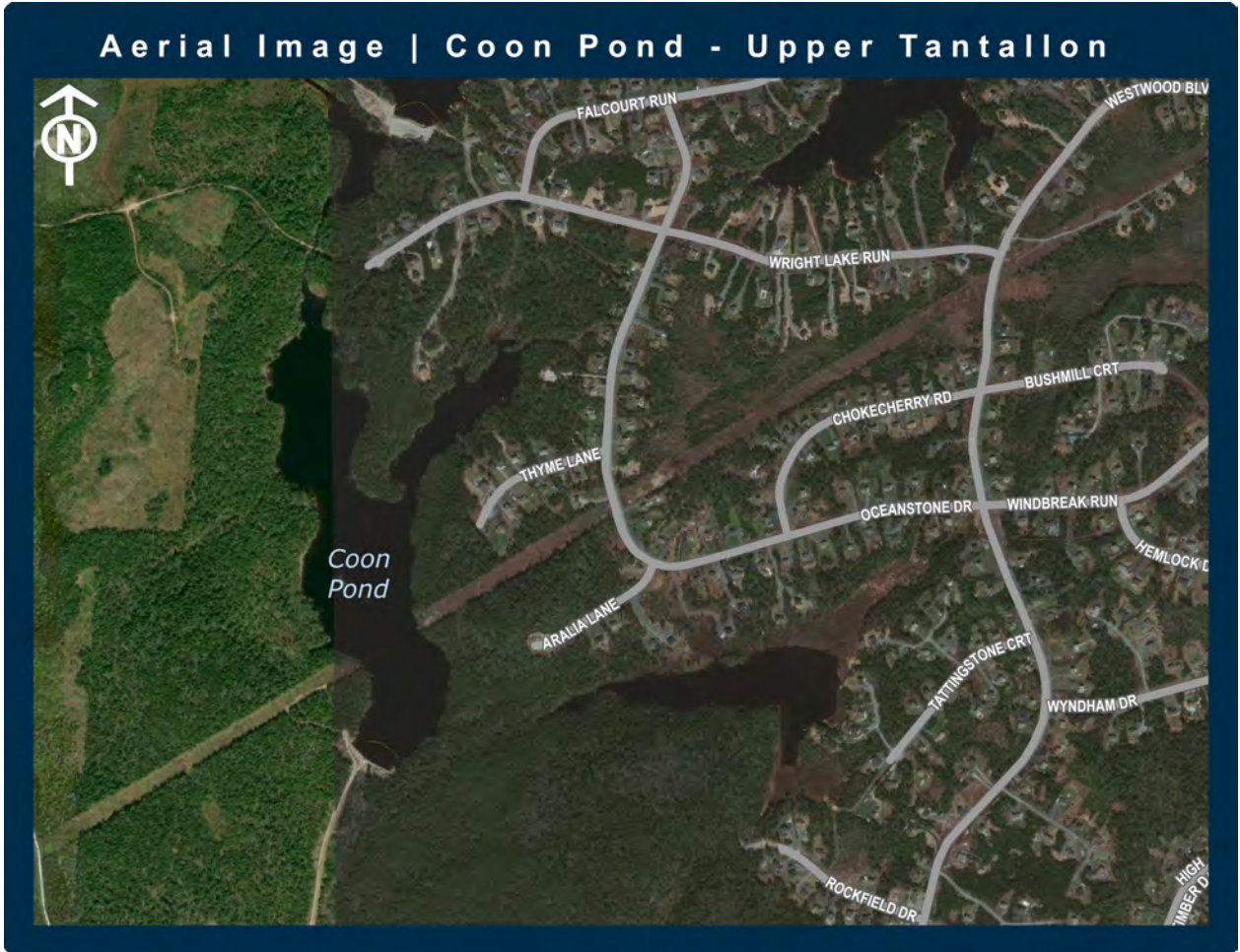
Principle 12: A geographical name usually includes both a specific and a generic element. The generic term in a newly approved geographical name should be appropriate to the nature of the feature. Its position in the name should be dictated by euphony and usage. The generic term will be recorded in English, in French or in an Aboriginal language by the names authority concerned.

Principle 13: Qualifying words may be used to distinguish between two or more similar features with identical specific forms. Such words may be derived from other local names or features, or may be terms such as "upper," "new," "west branch," "nouveau," "petit" and "gros." Whenever possible, however, new names should be distinctive.

Principle 14: Except where local and historic usage dictates, the official approval of a name of a minor feature should be guided by the relative significance of the feature, the familiarity with the name and the scale of mapping available.

ATTACHMENT 3

Aerial Image | Coon Pond – Upper Tantallon



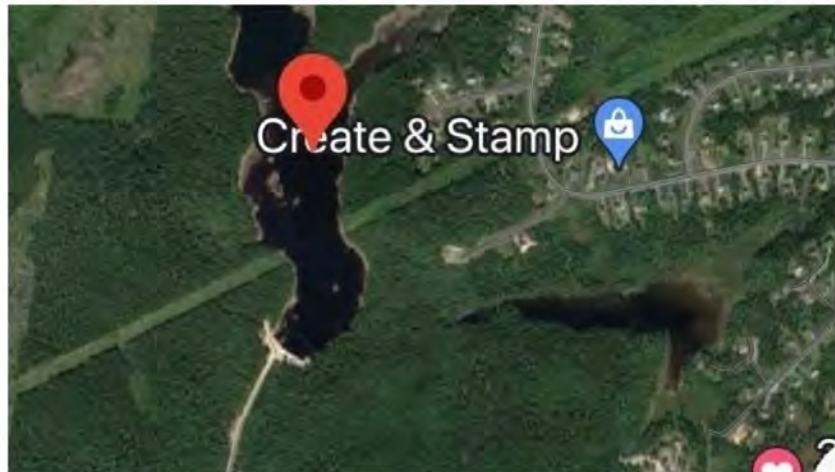
ATTACHMENT 4
Change.Org Petition



Welcome back to Change.org! A new petition wins every hour thanks to signers like you.

What's new Petition details Comments Updates Discover

Change the name of "Coon Pond"



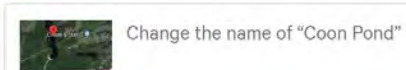
Paul Szego started this petition

Good day,

We have recently purchased land on the shores of the poorly named "Coon Pond" in Westwood Hills subdivision, Upper Tantallon, Nova Scotia. We need the support of our community

Petition Closed

This petition had 87 supporters



Share on Facebook

Send an email to friends

Tweet to your followers

Copy link

to help us rename the body of water to something that isn't a racial slur. As it's a provincial matter we need your help to present this issue to our local MLA, Ben Jessome. By signing this petition we can get the attention of the provincial government and get the process started. Our local City Council member Pam Lovelace has been contacted and is in support of moving forward with this issue. We would like to have enough signatures to make a statement when she tables it at the next regional council meeting in May 2022. Share with your friends and spread the word so we can make our community inclusive and free from derogatory and offensive language. Thank You.



Start a petition of your own

This petition starter stood up and took action.
Will you do the same?

Start a petition

Updates

50 supporters

1 week ago

Paul Szego started this petition

4 weeks ago

Name	City	Province	Postal Code	Country	Signed On
Maria Kennedy	HALIFAX	NS	B3N 0G1	Canada	4/1/2022
Ellen MacLean	Dartmouth	NS	B2Y	Canada	4/1/2022
Sean Pindar	Sydney	NS	B1P	Canada	4/1/2022
Jaimee Barkhouse	Halifax	NS	B3L	Canada	4/1/2022
Ross Mayer	Dartmouth	NS	B2Y	Canada	4/1/2022
Lynsey Davidson	Halifax	NS	B3K	Canada	4/1/2022
Sarah Szego	Halifax	NS	B3K	Canada	4/1/2022
Gail Szego	Toronto	ON	M5R 1R2	Canada	4/1/2022
Joanne Peters	Truro	NS	B2N	Canada	4/1/2022
Billie Sabovitch	Ottawa	ON	K1C	Canada	4/1/2022
Stefanie Sheppard	Halifax	NS	B3L	Canada	4/1/2022
Paul Szego	Dartmouth	NS	B2Y	Canada	4/1/2022
Kevin Shaughnessy	Upper Tantallon	NS	Nova Scotia	Canada	4/1/2022
sophia Donaldson	Toronto	ON	M5A	Canada	4/1/2022
Rebecca Beaton	Aurora, Ontario	ON	L4G-1Z9	Canada	4/1/2022
Terri Szego	Oakville	ON	L6L	Canada	4/1/2022
Candace Gregory	Dartmouth	NS	B2Y	Canada	4/2/2022
Jackie Onions	Halifax	NS	B3K	Canada	4/2/2022
Tim Szego	Toronto	ON	M5A	Canada	4/2/2022
Theresa Hubley	Hammonds Plains	NS	B3Z	Canada	4/2/2022
Christa Peters	Lunenburg	NS	B0J2C0	Canada	4/2/2022
Melanie Wagner	Cochrane	AB	T4c	Canada	4/3/2022
Lenore Black	Markham	ON	L3R	Canada	4/3/2022
Jeff Range	Vancouver	BC	V6H	Canada	4/4/2022
Ayesha Shoaib	Montréal	QC	H3S	Canada	4/5/2022
Carlie H	Richmond	BC	V6X	Canada	4/6/2022
Drew Holloway	Morley	AB	T0l 1n0	Canada	4/6/2022
Jesus Christ	Markham	ON	L3P	Canada	4/7/2022
Marissa Palmer	Winnipeg	MB	R2C	Canada	4/7/2022
Deserai Disher	Montreal	QC	h3b1r2	Canada	4/9/2022
Syed Naqvi	Brampton	ON	L6v	Canada	4/10/2022
Johnny Vicencio	Ontario, Mississauga	ON	L5A 3E4	Canada	4/11/2022
Gina Jones-Wilson	Halifax	NS	B3K	Canada	4/21/2022
Sherlene Simms	Upper Hammonds Plains	NS	B4B 1P1	Canada	4/21/2022
Brittany Simms	Halifax	NS	B3K	Canada	4/21/2022
Christine Alward	Halifax	NS	B3Z 0A7	Canada	4/21/2022
Miriam Walls	Hammonds Plains	NS	B4B 1L3	Canada	4/21/2022
Shawn Beaulieu	Upper Tantallon	NS	B3Z 0G6	Canada	4/21/2022
Dennis Dixon	Halifax	NS	B3L	Canada	4/21/2022
Kevin Gauthier	Halifax	NS	B3K	Canada	4/21/2022
Megan McLaren	Cape Town	SA		South Africa	4/21/2022
Jayreece Whiley	Halifax	NS	B4B1N8	Canada	4/21/2022
Stephen Nurse	Upper Tantallon	NS	B3Z 4J9	Canada	4/21/2022
Melissa Nurse	Halifax	NS	B3K	Canada	4/21/2022
JR Ells	Upper Tantallon	NS	B0P1H0	Canada	4/21/2022
Amanda Mills	Halifax	NS	B3Z 0G7	Canada	4/21/2022