

Now that Canada has been awarded the 2015 Women's World Cup of Soccer, many people are hard at work to ensure that the Canadian Soccer Association picks HRM as one of the six official host centres for the 10-day tournament.

We have a proven track record for staging major sporting events – witness our success with the 2011 Canada Games – however what we still need is a venue large enough for something of such magnitude.

A Council-sanctioned consultation and business planning analysis is underway to examine the long-term benefits to HRM of a stadium as well as all costs involved. We have also named a strong, citizen-led steering committee to consider the business case for a stadium. Committee members include: Kimberley Mason of RBC Atlantic; lawyer Joseph Burke of Cox and Palmer; Peter Giles, an Olympian and astronaut; David McGregor with Nova Scotia Power; Peter Spurway with the Halifax International Airport Authority; and Cheryl Stewart of the Nova Scotia Community College.

There will also be representation from government and community organizations and three members of Council – the mayor and Councillors Dawn Sloane (Halifax Downtown) and Darren Fisher (East Dartmouth-The Lakes).

In 2007, Canada hosted the Under-20 World Cup of Soccer which generated \$260 million in economic activity and attracted almost 1.2 million spectators. It was the largest single sports event in Canadian history.

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I'm pleased to report that this year's Mayor's Award for Emerging Theatre Artist and the Mayor's Award for Achievement in the Theatre will be presented at the Theatre Nova Scotia Merritt Awards on March 28. Each award comes with \$1,000 prizes.

Meanwhile, nominations are open for the position of Mayor's Poet Laureate 2011-2012.

This is an 18-month post to advocate for poetry, language and the arts. Candidates must have resided in HRM for two continuous years prior to the appointment. Eligible poets or spoken-word artists may be nominated or nominate themselves.

For more information, visit www.halifax.ca/culture/PublicArt/PoetLaureate.html or contact Siobhan Wiggans, Community Relations and Cultural Affairs, at (902) 490-5739 or wiggans@halifax.ca.

Deadline for nominations is Monday, March 28, 2011.

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HRM has a new Chief Administrative Officer; his name is Richard Butts and he comes to us from Toronto where he was deputy city manager.

Council appointed him by a unanimous vote last week and he starts his new responsibilities March 28.

Richard comes to us with a proven track record in both the public and private sectors and has a passion for his job. I will tell you more about him in the weeks ahead.

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And finally, in case you were wondering, the Canada Games flag which flew in the Grand Parade throughout the two-week event is destined, for now at least, for the trophy room at City Hall, along with other notable sports memorabilia. The spirit lives on!

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