

Hello again and thank you for joining me.

Quite a few of you have accepted my invitation to get in touch so today I thought I'd answer some of your questions. Ready? Here goes:

**Q:** When will we have an ice surface in the Grand Parade?

**A:** Council has adopted a plan for the Grand Parade which identifies ways it can be made more useable and one of the proposals is for recessed water jets to provide fountains in the summer and water for an ice surface in the winter. The problem is, the Grand Parade slopes four feet from West to East, making the idea impractical for now. However, when the retaining wall which runs along the Barrington Street side is rebuilt, which will happen within 10 years, it will trigger the redesign of the entire Grand Parade, possibly including provision for a skating rink. Keep your fingers crossed!

**Q:** When will we get another Woodside ferry?

**A:** We did actually apply for funding for a fourth ferry through the federal stimulus program but the proposal didn't meet Ottawa's criteria. The ebb and flow of passenger traffic on the ferries is monitored constantly by Metro Transit, as is the potential for future expansion of routes, possibly to places like Eastern Passage, Purcells Cove, Rockingham, Bedford and, of course, an addition to the Woodside service. Meanwhile, the good news is, HRM has established a reserve fund which will allow us to replace our vessels as they age and so avoid any disruption to existing services.

**Q:** Why doesn't HRM use more of its own resources to solve its problems, instead of hiring outside companies for studies and surveys?

**A:** That's a great idea. I agree that we should take advantage of our own resources if we have them on hand. If we have the staff to make us more efficient, we should take that information. We've done so in the past and we continue to look for ways to make ourselves more effective and efficient on behalf of taxpayers. I welcome ideas from the public on ways to make us more efficient, absolutely!

**Q:** There are some untidy buildings in downtown Halifax; where are the bylaw enforcers?

**A:** We have numerous bylaw services officers on duty to enforce HRM's Dangerous and Unightly Premises bylaw and to respond to complaints from the public, no matter where you live. I've checked and, at the moment, there aren't any complaints pending relating specifically to the actual downtown core. If, however, you believe a building is dangerous or unsightly, you should phone our call-centre line at 490-4000 and report it. Your complaint will then be investigated by one of our officers. This whole issue of community appearance is one we take seriously which is why Council recently adopted the visionary HRMbyDesign plan for downtown. This strategy outlines clear regulations for development to ensure every building makes a positive contribution to the overall look and feel of the urban core. As well, Council has established a heritage conservation district on Barrington Street. As a result, we now have financial and regulatory incentives to encourage property owners to invest in restoration, rehabilitation and enhancement of their buildings. I'm positive this kind of leadership by Council will see a ripple effect of benefits for adjacent downtown areas.

So there you go. Thank you all for the feedback and I'll see you here next week.

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