

COLUMNS

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Mayor warns winter parking ban coming soon



PETER KELLY (TAKE FIVE WITH THE MAYOR) 
Halifax News Net

Wednesday was a solemn day throughout Halifax Regional Municipality. With Canadians everywhere, we paused at the 11th hour to remember the men and women who've served our country over the years and to honour those who made the supreme sacrifice.

Remembrance Day never loses its emotional impact on me nor, I'm sure, on you. Growing up, I belonged to the Cubs, Scouts and Air Cadets and would attend the ceremony in my uniform, just as so many youngsters do today, and march proudly with the vets. Last Friday evening, as usual, I was at the special annual service of remembrance at St. Agnes Church in Halifax. On Remembrance Day itself, I joined hundreds of residents paying tribute during ceremonies at the newly-restored cenotaph in Grand Parade. Later, I visited various Royal Canadian Legions to pay my respects to the men and women to whom we owe so much.



When the snow starts flying, the overnight winter parking ban will be back.

No matter where you gathered in HRM on Wednesday, whether it was at a simple cairn or one of the large cenotaphs in metro, no doubt you left remembering those Canadians still risking their lives overseas for freedom and democracy as well as for their families waiting at home.

I'm sure you're as excited as I am that the Olympic flame will shortly be visiting HRM on its long journey to Vancouver and the 2010 Winter Olympics. The torch arrives in Enfield next Wednesday, Nov. 18, just before 10:30 a.m. By the time it reaches downtown Halifax that same afternoon, many runners will have carried it through Waverley, Cherry Brook, Cole Harbour and Dartmouth. Residents of Bedford and Sackville will also get a chance to see the flame before it leaves. I do hope you'll join me and council downtown in the Grand Parade that same Wednesday evening for HRM's big Olympic Torch Relay Community Celebration. The two-hour party starts at 6 p.m. and has something for everyone, including bands, dancers, fireworks and our own Sidney Crosby as one of the relay runners. The climax of the evening will be the lighting of the community cauldron by Sarah Conrad of Dartmouth. Sarah is a skilled snowboarder who competed at the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin, Italy.

Last Friday's messy weather was a timely reminder we should all be getting ready for the inevitable arrival of winter. Our plans for snow and ice removal are well advanced, as are those of our contractors. As always, one component of our overall winter safety operations is the establishment of a parking ban for the urban core. Please keep an eye out for the announcement of the dates of this regulation. Personally, I dislike the ban but the decision isn't mine or council's; the reality is, we work under the direction of HRM's Traffic Authority which, in turn, is governed by the provincial Motor Vehicle Act. On the plus side, the faster snow on our streets can be pushed back, the sooner traffic can move again, especially emergency vehicles. As well, staff has indicated the ban helps reduce snow-plowing costs by as much as 20 per cent.

If you go to www.halifax.ca/snow/index.html you'll discover a lot of advice to help you cope with winter in HRM. You'll also find the answers to some frequently asked questions about the winter parking ban along with information such as how long will it normally take crews to plow you out after a major storm, (12 hours for main roads and bus routes and 24 hours for residential and rural streets). I can't change the weather, but I can assure you HRM employees are working diligently to make the approaching season as stress-free as possible for you. With your cooperation and patience, we'll all have a good winter. See you next week. You can contact Mayor Peter Kelly at city hall at kellyp@halifax.ca or by phoning 490-4010.

13/11/09



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