



City of Halifax

Halifax Common

*Summary of results of Public Meeting and Workshops,
(27, 28, 29 November 1992) and Written Submissions*

March 1993

The views expressed in this report are of the public, and not necessarily those of the City of Halifax.

Shing and Associates

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This report presents a summary of the results of the public meeting and workshop held on 27, 28, and 29 November 1992 and the comments in the written submissions. The report has been prepared by Bernard Moe, Planner II, under the supervision of William B. Campbell, Senior Planner. The information has been compiled from material prepared by participants at the public sessions and from written submissions received.

The city wishes to express its appreciation to the people who attended the workshops or sent written submissions. Discussions were lively and many good ideas came from both the meetings and submissions. It is hoped this report fairly represents the breadth of the discussion that took place. Every effort has been made to include the complete range of comments in this summary. We apologise for any omissions or inaccuracies.

The views expressed in this report are those of the public, and not necessarily those of the City of Halifax. Responses to the public's views will be included in a report and recommendation to Council later this year.

Richard J. Matthews
Director of Development
and Planning



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PARTICIPANTS IN PUBLIC MEETING AND WORKSHOP

Workshop - Registered Participants

Groups

Bill MacNeill- Halifax Junior Bengal Lancers, Halifax
Bill McCullough - Friends of the Public Gardens, Halifax
Pauline Hamilton - Lawn Bowls Nova Scotia, Halifax
Bob Schwarz - Halifax District Soccer Association, Halifax
Peter Klynstra - Spring Garden Road Business Improvement
District Commission, Halifax
Sherry MacPherson - Alta F. Gymnastics Group, Halifax
Ron Munden - Metro and Area Slowpitch, Halifax
Lois MacLeod - Community Planning Association of Canada, Halifax
Pady Muir - Nova Scotia Choral Federation, Halifax
Innis MacDonald and Elizabeth McGibbon - Halifax Needham New
Democratic Party
Mario Demello - DPR Consultants, Halifax
T. E. Smith Lamont - Halifax Heritage Advisory Committee
Dulsie Conrad - Halifax Homeowners Association
Garfield Henderickson - NGM Productions, Dartmouth N.S.
Frank Nicks - Halifax Kiwanis Club
Walter Williams - Sport Nova Scotia Track and Field, Halifax
Bruce Wright - Halifax Dance Association, Halifax

Individuals

D. F. Mullaly, Halifax
James E. Bigney, Halifax
Marjorie McLeod, Halifax
Anne Dunsworth, Halifax
Graham Taylor, Halifax
James Leppard, Halifax
Amery Boyd, Halifax
James MacDonald, Halifax

Other Participants

A number of people attended the meeting on Friday or Sunday who did not register or take part in the Saturday group meetings. This included several members of City Council.

WRITTEN BRIEFS

Halifax Heritage Advisory Committee
Halifax District Youth Soccer
Canadian Parks Service, The Citadel National Historic Site
D. H. Waller, Halifax Citizen
Scott Robson, Halifax Citizen
Ian D. Johnson, Halifax Citizen
Waye Mason, Halifax Citizen

CITY OF HALIFAX STAFF PARTICIPATING

Peter Bigelow, Works Supervisor and Landscape Architect, Parks and
Grounds Division, Engineering and Works Department

William B. Campbell, Senior Planner, Development and Planning Department

Deborah Chambers, Information Coordinator, Development and Planning
Department

Thomas Crouse, Planning Assistant, Development and Planning Department

Stephen King, Superintendent, Parks and Grounds Division, Engineering and
Works Department

Lore Meggetto, City Wide Services Assistant, Recreation Department

Bernard Moe, Planner II, Development and Planning Department

Nickolas Murray, Superintendent of Planning,
Research and Development, Recreation Department

James Naugler, Superintendent of City Wide Services, Recreation Department

Daniel Norris, Heritage Planner, Development and Planning Department

Douglas Quinn, Operations Manager, Engineering and Works Department

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to summarize the results of the public meeting and workshop held on 27, 28, and 29 November 1992 and the comments included in the written submissions. This follows a number of steps in the planning study for the Halifax Common which is being carried out. The terms of reference for the study include the following steps:

Research	November 1992
Public meeting, workshop	November 1992
Public submissions	January 1993
Draft Report to Council	April 1993

The first three steps - research; public meeting and workshop and; public submissions have now been completed.

The research was summarized in a report called Halifax Common - Background Report which was completed by city staff in November 1992. The Background Report presented the following information: a history of the planning and development of the Halifax Common from 1758 to 1992; information on the site and current uses there; national and local trends in population and leisure time activity; a number of issues for discussion by the public and others.

The final section of the Background Report set out ten issues and opportunities. These were used as a starting point for discussion at the public meeting and workshop. Some of these issues had been introduced by Council and were included in the Terms of Reference for the study. It was understood there may be other issues that would evolve through staff and public review as the planning study progressed.

Public participation, in the form of a public workshop and written submissions, was held on completion and publication of the Background Report. The Mayor, Council and people taking part in the public meeting and workshop received a copy of the Background Report.

The information gained from the public discussions will be used to prepare a draft report and recommendations that will be introduced at Council. This will then be brought back to the public. Following this, a final report will be submitted to Council.



2. DESCRIPTION OF PUBLIC MEETING AND WORKSHOP
27, 28, AND 29 NOVEMBER 1992

The public meeting and weekend workshop were widely advertised by the Chronicle-Herald/Mail Star, radio, television, posters, and invitations sent to over 250 interest groups of all types. City staff made follow up phone calls to encourage as many of these groups to attend as possible.

The meetings were conducted on Friday, Saturday and Sunday as follows:

Friday, 27 November: Public Information Meeting

This was held in Room 238 at Queen Elizabeth High School. Approximately 40 members of the public attended plus city staff. William B. Campbell, Senior Planner, Development and Planning Department chaired the meeting and city staff made presentations using slides and overheads as follows:

- History - Daniel Norris, Heritage Planner, Development and Planning Department
- Urban Landscape - Peter Bigelow, Works Supervisor and Landscape Architect, Parks and Grounds Division, Engineering and Works Department
- Site - Stephen King, Superintendent, Parks and Grounds Division, Engineering and Works Department
- Special Events - Douglas Quinn, Operations Manager, Engineering and Works Department
- Leisure Trends - Bernard Moe, Planner II, Development and Planning Department
- Planning Issues - William B. Campbell, Senior Planner, Development and Planning Department

To assist the public in attendance Mr. Campbell explained the planning process and the events of the weekend. People received copies of the Halifax Common Background Report (1992) and the Parkland Plan (1991).

Other staff who assisted during the weekend meetings were:

Development and Planning Department

Thomas Crouse, Planning Assistant,
Deborah Chambers, Information Coordinator

Recreation Department

Nickolas Murray, Superintendent of Planning, Research and Development
James Naugler, Superintendent of City Wide Services
Lore Meggetto, City Wide Services Assistant

Saturday, 28 November - Public Workshop

The workshop was held in the gymnasium at Queen Elizabeth High School.

A total of 26 members of the public attended, 19 in the morning and seven in the afternoon. This involved 18 interest groups and seven individuals. As some of the interest groups have hundreds of members, it is estimated that over 3,000 people were represented at the workshop. About 10 individuals and groups that had pre-registered for the afternoon did not attend.

Those in attendance were divided into working groups, each containing approximately seven individuals from varying backgrounds and interests. City staff provided a facilitator and a recorder for each group. The issues in the Background Report were used as a basis for discussion. Each group summarized its ideas and, at the end of the assigned period of time, a spokesman presented a summary the group's ideas back to the assembly.

Sunday, 29 November - Workshop Wrap Up Session

The ideas from the Saturday workshop groups were summarized and presented to the members of the public by city staff on Sunday afternoon. Comments by the public and discussion followed the presentation.

The three day event was successful, with a good mixture of enthusiastic people and interest groups. The process allowed for participation by those involved and generated many worthwhile ideas.

Videotapes of the proceedings are available in the Development and Planning Department, City of Halifax.

3. WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

Through advertisements and the invitations, individuals and groups were invited to send written submissions by 8 January 1993. To date, seven written submissions have been received from the following individuals and groups:

- . Halifax Heritage Advisory Committee
- . Halifax District Youth Soccer
- . Canadian Parks Service, The Citadel National Historic Site
- . D. H. Waller, Halifax Citizen
- . Scott Robson, Halifax Citizen
- . Ian D. Johnson, Halifax Citizen
- . Waye Mason, Halifax Citizen

Please refer to Appendix 2 for copies of the written submissions.

4. SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF PUBLIC MEETING, WORKSHOP AND WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

4.1 Organization of Summary

A series of ten issues that were in the Background Report were used as a basis for discussion in the public workshop. During the public discussion some issues were changed or added resulting in twelve issues. Briefly stated these are:

- Issue 1: Protection and Planning
- Issue 2: Vistas and Views
- Issue 3: Active and Passive Opportunities
- Issue 4: Streets, Traffic and Parking
- Issue 5: Recapture of Open Space
- Issue 6: Private Use
- Issue 7: Safety and Accessibility
- Issue 8: Centennial Fountain and other Water Features
- Issue 9: Pathway System
- Issue 10: Beautification, Landscaping and Historical Recognition
- Issue 11: Special Events
- Issue 12: Design Ideas

The public comments from the workshop and written submissions are summarized here under these twelve issues. These twelve issues are indented and each issue starts at the top of a new page.

In some cases, there was unanimous agreement among the public on how to address an issue. In other cases only a few people expressed an idea. The level of support will be indicated in the summary. As much as possible, staff has attempted to include the range of ideas expressed and apologises for any errors or omissions.

Some people were concerned that the people who attended the workshops were not representative of the population. For example, there were very few people from the neighbourhoods near the Halifax Common. It was recognised that the city had made considerable effort to include representative groups in discussions including holding the workshop in a convenient location. It was suggested that the city make further efforts to obtain the views of residents in the immediate neighbourhoods surrounding the Common.

4.2 Summary of Public Comments by Issue

Issue 1: Protection, Planning and Decision Making Process

Council has specifically asked that this study address protecting the integrity of the Common. The ways and means of protecting the integrity of the Common may well be a significant topic for discussion. The historical overview provided earlier shows that use of Common land has been well considered and based on the needs of the city, region and province. Opinions on whether the result has been beneficial, and whether clearer and more binding policy or laws are necessary to protect its integrity, may well be as varied as the uses that the Common has been put.

Public Comments in the Workshop and Briefs

A great deal of the public comment dealt with **protection and the planning and decision making process for the Common**. Most people felt that there was need for more protection of the land and regulation of use of the Halifax Common. It was felt that decisions are now made on an ad hoc basis with no overall plan or process to follow. There was concern over the decision to hold the Grand Prix auto races. This was pointed out as a case where a better way of making decisions was required.

Most people were positive about the city's effort to establish a long term plan. However, a few people felt planning should have preceded the decision on the auto races and were sceptical that the city intended to establish a plan and policies for the Common.

The ideas expressed by the public dealing with protection, planning and decision making process fall into several categories: the need for a vision, principles and policies; who should use the Common and under what circumstances; detailed criteria to help decide what should be allowed on the Common; informing and educating the public; the form policies should take; organization of the management of the Common; planning of the Halifax Common in conjunction with overall planning of the city. The ideas under each of these categories are as follows:

Most people felt that a clear **vision, principles and policies** should be adopted by the city covering all aspects of the future of the Halifax Common. Some referred to this as a long term management plan. This vision and policy should recognize the spirit of the original designation for public use. The management of the entirety of the Common should adhere to the vision.

Where private development occurs within the Common, it must relate to the vision of the Common.

Some basic principles or themes suggested were:

- Environmental stewardship
- Cultural resource management
- Equitable use and access
- Public use and common good
- Appreciation and understanding through education of the history and role of the Common

A number of ideas were put forward by the public regarding **who should use the Common and under what circumstances**. These were:

- The City should guarantee a more equitable use of and access to the Common. Some questioned whether all groups had equal access and use of common lands (especially open spaces) and whether decision-making groups were representative of the whole city. They suggested the city work towards equitable representation in decision-making and equitable use of the Common. A review of decision-making processes and groups would be a starting point.
- The Common should be for public use and the greatest common good as opposed to the good of a select group. Everyone should have an equal opportunity to use the Common. Some were concerned that with league sports during prime time there is not an equal opportunity to use the Common because it is reserved for team sports. Raising user fees may exclude even more people. Considering this, the user pay principle should be examined.
- The communities being served should be defined and priorities for use should be set. For example, one group set out the following communities:
 - Residents of Halifax
 - Adjacent neighbourhoods
 - Other Nova Scotia residents
 - Visitors to the city

It was suggested by some that there should be more restrictions on people from outside the city on teams using the Common.

Detailed criteria, information and procedures were suggested to help decide what should, and what should not, be allowed on the Halifax Common. It was suggested that policies and criteria should be expressed as detailed application, processing, and decision procedures. Some criteria suggested were:

- Accurate numbers on demand for the Common (sports fields etc.)
- Cost-benefit analysis that shows who benefits from particular events. This analysis should be made public.
- The historic value and the costs of disturbance or changing of the Common or restricting access.

Other suggestions for decision-making were a plebiscite or placing major issues on an election ballot.

Many people felt there should be a **greater effort by the city to inform and educate the public** about the Halifax Common. One aspect of this is encouraging appreciation and understanding of the history and role of the Common through public education. Another aspect is keeping the public better informed about what is going on. Some felt that the problem is often the lack of communication about what is happening rather than the event itself. The Young Presidents' Group in the Public Gardens was given as an example. If the public had known earlier many felt the event would not have drawn so much criticism.

There were a number of suggestions as to what **form these policies should take**. Generally an improvement in the city's planning and decision making was stressed rather than provincial controls. However, one person suggested that legislated protection for the Halifax Common similar to the legislation for the Dartmouth Common and the Halifax Public Gardens be established both to protect the boundaries to any encroachments and to prevent any degradation to it. It was further suggested that such legislation should be developed in consultation with concerned citizens and organizations.

One person suggested that Bill 195, in which the City Charter was amended to allow auto racing on the Common and charging admission, should be rescinded and the question on whether to have the race or not should be on the next municipal ballot.

Several suggestions were made regarding **organization of the management of the Common**. A few people suggested that a standing Halifax Common Committee should be established to oversee the development and implementation of the management plan. Along similar lines, one person suggested that a representative management committee be established with the

power to approve, amend, or veto initiatives based on their adherence to the mission statement or policies.

Most people felt that **planning of the Halifax Common has to go hand in hand with overall planning of the city**, particularly the Mainland Common. A plan should be developed that ties the Halifax Common, the Mainland Common and Graves-Oakley Field together to meet demand.

A representative of a sports league that plays regularly on the Halifax Common said the leagues would move to other parts of the city if facilities were available.

Some people suggested the whole region (metropolitan area) should coordinate larger facilities (e.g. public swimming pools, major track and field facility) as there is too much duplication now.

Issue 2: Vistas and Views

Views across the North Common from the Willow Tree and the intersection of Cunard and Robie Street, for example, create a colourful and strong vision of openness, especially against the backdrop of Citadel Hill and the Armoury. How important are these vistas? Should they be retained?

Public Comments in the Workshop and Briefs

In general people favoured the open vista of the North Common, but felt this should be improved with more landscape features (trees and knolls etc.)

Some people suggested that Victoria General Hospital parking lot be made into a park. This would carry the open space to the southern boundary of historic Common which is important to the image of the Common.

Issue 3: Active and Passive Opportunities

Trends indicate that more and more of the demand for open space will be for more passive uses. However, in Halifax, demand for playing fields for organized and unorganized active sports continue to rise and put pressure on existing facilities and programming capacity.

Acquisition and eventual development of the Mainland Common and initiatives in other areas of the city will allow some rationalization of active space facilities. For the Halifax Common, this may mean that the concentration of active facilities can be reduced and an introduction of more passive opportunities can be accommodated.

This change cannot occur quickly. It must be related to the city's ability to finance new facilities and meet the programming needs for active recreation.

Public Comment in the Workshop and Briefs

It was generally felt that, with the population and leisure activity trends, more non-organized recreational space is needed. One person suggested that the recreational uses of the Halifax Common and the Mainland Common should be blended to serve the community needs and common good.

Most people felt there should be more space provided for passive (casual) activities in the North Common. At the present time, there is the perception that this area is booked solid by organized sports teams during prime time. It was suggested that 20 percent of the space could be left free for informal, casual activities. Hills, landscaping, benches and trees were ways suggested to create more passive areas. Start by landscaping areas between playing fields and eliminating some fields.

One person with young children who lived near the North Common felt there was now an adequate opportunity for passive or casual recreation.

Issue 4: Streets, Traffic and Parking

The relationship of the internal and boundary street system to the Common provides important opportunities while at the same time restricting some activities. The streets provide important parking for users. It has allowed the city to take advantage of the Grand Prix Race initiative and, foot and bicycle races are common occurrences.

However, the proximity of streets to active sports fields is a concern however. The accidental hitting of sports balls into traffic, parked cars and pedestrians is not an uncommon experience.

The street system also divides the North and Central Commons. Opportunities for closing streets and joining these spaces, provided that significant interference to traffic is not the result, could provide increased open space and reduce conflicts.

Public Comments in the Workshop and Briefs

There was the general suggestion there be a complete review of traffic and parking in association with any changes to the Common.

More specific suggestions to improve traffic were:

- Improve six corners intersection (Rainnie Drive, Cogswell Street, North Park Street, Ahern Avenue, Trollope Street)
- Have one way traffic system around the periphery of the Common.
- Make it reasonably easy for people in cars to get to the Common.
- Improve traffic movement on Ahern Avenue.
- Close Sackville Street between South Park and Summer Streets and extend Jubilee Road through the Wanderer's Grounds to connect with Ahern Avenue at Bell Road. The Public Gardens would be extended north with the extension of Jubilee Road as the new boundary.

Some ideas on parking suggested were:

- Parking by users of the Common in adjacent neighbourhoods presents problems. Further parking restrictions and closing of streets would make the problem worse.

- Do not just remove parking lots and parking on streets. Some parking must be retained or replaced in another location.
- Recognize the high demand for parking in hospital and education area.
- Parking lots should be properly and extensively landscaped.
- Put parking underground as has been done in the Boston Common. One possibility for this is under Citadel Hill off Ahern Avenue.

Issue 5: Recapture of Open Space

Council has asked that this study address opportunities for recapturing areas formerly part of the historic Common. The street system offers an important area of investigation to increase open space opportunity. Others might include a rationalization of the Parks and Grounds Depot, reclaiming land used for the Community College, the former School for the Blind site on University Avenue, the Garrison Grounds on Ahern Ave and relocating the Bengal Lancers. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

The city has contacted public agencies that have facilities on the Historic Common asking them to participate in this planning process. Much study would have to be done to determine the feasibility of any initiatives, especially those that involve land over which the city does not have control.

Public Comments in the Workshop and Briefs

The principle of **no net loss of open space** was emphasized. This means there should be no further decrease in the amount of open space in the Halifax Common. If one open area is developed then another area of equal size must be made open. The point was made that the use of the Common for public buildings did not substitute for open space.

There were several suggestions by participants for reclaiming land for open space by the city along with ideas on what could be done with the reclaimed open space. It was understood these were long range plans and would only occur when the existing buildings are no longer required.

Several areas with existing buildings to be recaptured for open space were frequently suggested.

- Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Building
- Community College
- Queen Elizabeth High School
- Old Grace Hospital - Some people suggested that this be made into a parking lot.

Other ideas for recapturing land for open space less frequently mentioned were:

- Parks and Grounds Depot - Move from the Wanderer's Grounds area.
- Bengal Lancers - Move to another part of the city.

It was suggested that the Garrison Grounds and some parts of the Citadel should be part of the Common. Some felt that the city should consider the possibilities if the Department of National Defence (DND) property (military buildings along Ahern Avenue) is removed. One suggestion was that this could be a possible future location for Bengal Lancers. It was understood this land is for sale and suggested that the city consider purchasing it.

The Halifax Citadel indicated that they intend to continue to use the Garrison Grounds and they wish to buy the DND property. They expect the DND buildings to be gone in approximately two years.

A number of Street closures were suggested:

- Trollope Street - Close but don't remove pavement. Use for roller blading, outdoor markets, community events. Another idea is to close one end and use it for parking.
- The Halifax Citadel would prefer to have Ahern Avenue closed and Trollope Street left open.
- Sackville Street - Close between Summer and South Park Streets and incorporate the street, the greenhouses and the caretakers residence\tourist bureau into the Public Gardens.

It was generally agreed that Cogswell Street should not be closed, but, that there be a grade separated pedestrian crossing to join the North and Central Commons. The view of the Common from cars on Cogswell Street was considered to be important.

One group recommended that none of the former Common lands or roadways reclaimed be designated for parking.

Issue 6: Private Use

The private use and funding of recreation, cultural and commercial activities and facilities including charging admission for events has been occurring on public lands of the Common. The City Charter was recently amended to permit auto racing and charging admission.

The master plan for the Mainland Common specifically calls for creative ways to assist the development and provision of recreation opportunities by joint ventures with business, cultural and recreation organizations. Achieving principles of "common" use while, at the same time, financially supporting ever increasing costs of recreational and cultural opportunities for citizens of the city and region will have to be balanced.

Public Comment in the Workshop and Briefs

Most people supported, in principle, private use of the Common. There was a general consensus that commercial activities with paid admission on the Common was acceptable. These events involve private funds for development or use of the Common, restricting the public, and advertising by sponsors.

To quote one person:

"The citizens of Halifax have historically accepted use of the Common for private events that have ranged from Bill Lynch to the Pope."

It was the type of event and the amount of disruption that was in question.

Comparisons were drawn between the Pope's visit and Grand Prix racing. Both involved extensive site preparation and restriction of other activities for several days. One event was accepted more than the other.

Some felt Moosehead Grand Prix and other events of this nature were not acceptable because they are more disruptive.

To quote from one submission:

"Traffic, safety, noise, school closure, appearance are matters of public concern. Citizens are denied access to city streets, playgrounds and other public space for three days and the traffic was hampered and Commons area made unsightly by concrete barriers over a longer

period. With ad hoc decision making there is no assurance that another enterprising organization will not preempt the use of the Common for another time.

Others pointed out the benefits of the Grand Prix to local business (hotels, restaurants, etc.) and the fact that it was improving each year. However, it was also felt by some that the benefits could largely be to the sponsors rather than the city, in general, and that more information is required on this.

It was felt by some the time had come for more regulation and policy to deal with private events such as Grand Prix racing because of increasing demands for private use and conflicts with public use. However, the question was raised: How can the city restrict one event and not another? It will be hard to draw the line. There must be a clear process for decision making.

There were a number of comments on payment for private use of the Common. Most agreed that users should pay for the exclusive use of the Common. Many agreed that for privately sponsored special events, fees should be paid and revenue should go back into the Halifax Common rather than some general fund.

Issue 7: Safety and Accessibility

Are there safety issues on the Common and how should these be handled? There are two possible areas of concern. One arises from the conflict between active sports and the more passive activities of walking, spectating and generally enjoying the landscape. For example, considerable expenditures have recently occurred to upgrade the Canada Ball Diamond to bring it up to current safety standards for spectators and to increase access for the physically handicapped.

A second issue is safety from crime, in particular, the safety of women. There are isolated and poorly lit areas which could be made safe through attention to detail in the future design of spaces and facilities.

Public Comments in the Workshop and Briefs

Some comments regarding danger to people or vehicles being hit by balls were:

- Reduce conflict between active and passive uses. There is danger of people walking on the Common or passing cars being hit by a ball. People walk not on paved paths but through the playing areas.
- Relocate the paths to where people walk and design the playing fields around that.
- Reduce the number of playing fields.

Some suggestions on how to improve personal safety were:

- Check with the police to find out if there have been problems. People regard the Common as unsafe to walk after dark.
- Provide better lighting on paths through the Common.
- Provide better lighting around Camp Hill Hospital area.
- Have more foot patrolling as a deterrent.
- Provide special emergency phones.
- For safety of walkers, maintain openness when landscaping. Do not provide hiding places that encourage hanging out and crime.

- During Moosehead Grand Prix, large barricades and screens create a mugger's haven. The Central Common is the largest safety problem.
- Provide for safety of pedestrians crossing the street to get to the Common or to the Citadel.

It was generally agreed that accessibility for the handicapped should be a major factor in redesign.

Issue 8: Centennial Fountain and other Water Features

The fountain is a impressive centre piece of the North Common. The mechanical workings of this important feature are nearing an age when significant investment will have to be made to keep it running. Now is the time to assess its role in the landscape of the Common. Should it be retained, redesigned to become part of a larger and more human in scale water feature, or maintained in its current form?

The swimming pool, wading pool, and Egg Pond are part of the children's play area and offer important opportunities for nearby residents. The facilities are small and if they are to be retained, even in the short term, investment will be needed to ensure safety and function. The continuation of these facilities should be reviewed against other opportunities in the vicinity, for example, the Centennial Pool.

Public Comments in the Workshop and Briefs

It was generally agreed that a water feature should be maintained in some form.

Some proposed the fountain be redesigned to a smaller scale, more useable feature and located on the North or Central Common near Bell Road and Quinpool Road. One complaint was that the present fountain wets players on the North Common. As the fountain needs to be overhauled this is the opportunity to look carefully at where it should go.

Others felt the existing fountain should stay as it provides spectacular view and represents an important project commemorating Canada's Centennial.

Many suggested a redesign and improvement to the swimming/wading pool/Egg Pond area. They thought this was an important feature, but it is badly run down. Some ideas suggested for this area were:

- Retaining this as a free facility is important in this part of the city.
- Use the Egg Pond for outdoor skating in winter and miniature sailing pond in the summer (both historic uses).
- Use the city building as a pavilion for information and display on events on the Common.

Issue 9: Pathway System

What should be done with the pathway system? In addition to sidewalks, there are several formal paths through the Common. Informal paths have also developed over time as pedestrians have taken the shortest distance between two points. Many of these conflict with sports activities. Redesign and landscaping can be used to encourage pedestrian enjoyment of the Common while preventing conflict between active and passive spaces.

Public Comments in the Workshop and Briefs

Some suggestions made regarding the improvement of the pathway system were:

- Improve pedestrian links through whole Common.
- Make new linkages, especially around public buildings in long blocks in the southern area where hospital, university and other buildings present long barriers to pedestrians. Paths around and, in some cases, through buildings could improve access. (See Appendix 1 for drawing showing suggested locations).
- There should be all season paths.
- Have stronger connection to Citadel via paths and general extension of the Common.
- Join the North and Central Common to make easy pedestrian crossing from one area to another.

Issue 10: Beautification, Landscaping and Historical Recognition

Much of the Historic Common is now part of either private development or significant institutional uses that will be with the city for the long term. Much could be done to recognize and promote the Historic Common. For example, a theme could be developed through such means as landscaping, street and park furniture, and street lamps. Signs or treatment of the sidewalks and paths within the Common could be used to highlight to the user that they are entering a special and historic space. Connections to residential neighbourhoods and the important commercial districts of the downtown and Spring Garden Road could be enhanced.

Public Comments in the Workshop and Briefs

A number of people suggested **further beautification and landscaping of spaces around public buildings** where the buildings and land could not be recaptured for open space. For example: Grounds around several university and hospital buildings in the southern part of the historic Common. (See Appendix 1.)

It was suggested all lots and buildings be made people friendly at ground level.

Temporary Landscaping of land that is vacant and awaiting new use was suggested. This would avoid the problem of unsightly vacant lots.

It was suggested **wide sidewalks, trees and landscaping should be maintained along with a common theme** such as sidewalk furniture (benches, signage, lighting) throughout the Common. It was recognized that one attractive and distinctive feature throughout the Common is the wide sidewalks and well-treed streets.

Many called for recognition and enhancement of historic Common

Some comments and recommendations in this area were:

- The Common has value as a heritage landscape and is closely tied to many important events in the city's history. This should be recognized and preserved.
- Maintain the landscape elements, vistas and green corridors.
- Provide special treatment of sidewalks, lighting, benches, signage.

- Provide interpretation (information on history etc.) through signs and plaques.
- Extend open space to South Street via the Victoria General parking lot.

Issue 11: Special Events

The Common has long been the site of special events in the city. The available public space and its adjoining streets have provided opportunities for parades, fireworks, concerts, equestrian events and many more. Proximity to employment and retail centres of the downtown, Spring Garden Road, major institution centres, universities and residential neighbourhoods provide a unique opportunity for capturing spectacular and inner city excitement.

Much of the planning and allocation of space for special events on and near the Common has occurred by responding to needs as they arise. The future of using the Common for special events should be investigated with the intent of establishing a more permanent facility for special events.

Public Comments in the Workshop and Briefs

Most people recognized the importance of special events on the Common and supported them.

A person who has a business that involves the booking and promotion of outdoor events suggested there should be a mix of events rather than events held at separate times. A cultural weekend on the Common along with other events was given as an example. This cultural weekend is now held in Dartmouth; but, he felt it was not doing well on its own.

Issue 12: Design Ideas

There is a need to tie together elements for different parts of the larger common into a design.

Public Comments in the Workshop and Briefs

Some suggestions for the future design **North Common** were:

- There should be more passive space. This could be aimed at an older population or at younger people for pickup games etc.
- Keep pedestrians on paths and off playing fields by landscape features along paths (e.g hedges or fences).
- Lighted sports fields to extend playing time.
- More enforcement of picking up after the dogs.

Some comments on the **Central Common** were:

- The playground on the Central Common is used a lot by children from nearby neighbourhoods and families and children of people on teams playing games.
- Redesign and improve of the swimming/wading pool/Egg Pond area.
- Close Trollope Street to provide continuous open space.

Some points raised regarding the **Public Gardens** were:

- Provide for more public access to the greenhouses.
- Make the greenhouses and the caretaker residence/tourist bureau part of the Public Gardens by closing Sackville Street.
- Provide for winter use of the Public Gardens. This has pros and cons. The most serious problem would be damage to sensitive vegetation.
- Close Sackville Street between South Park and Summer Streets and extend Jubilee Road through the Wanderer's Grounds to connect with Ahern Avenue at Bell Road. The Public Gardens would be extended north with the extension of Jubilee Road as the new boundary.

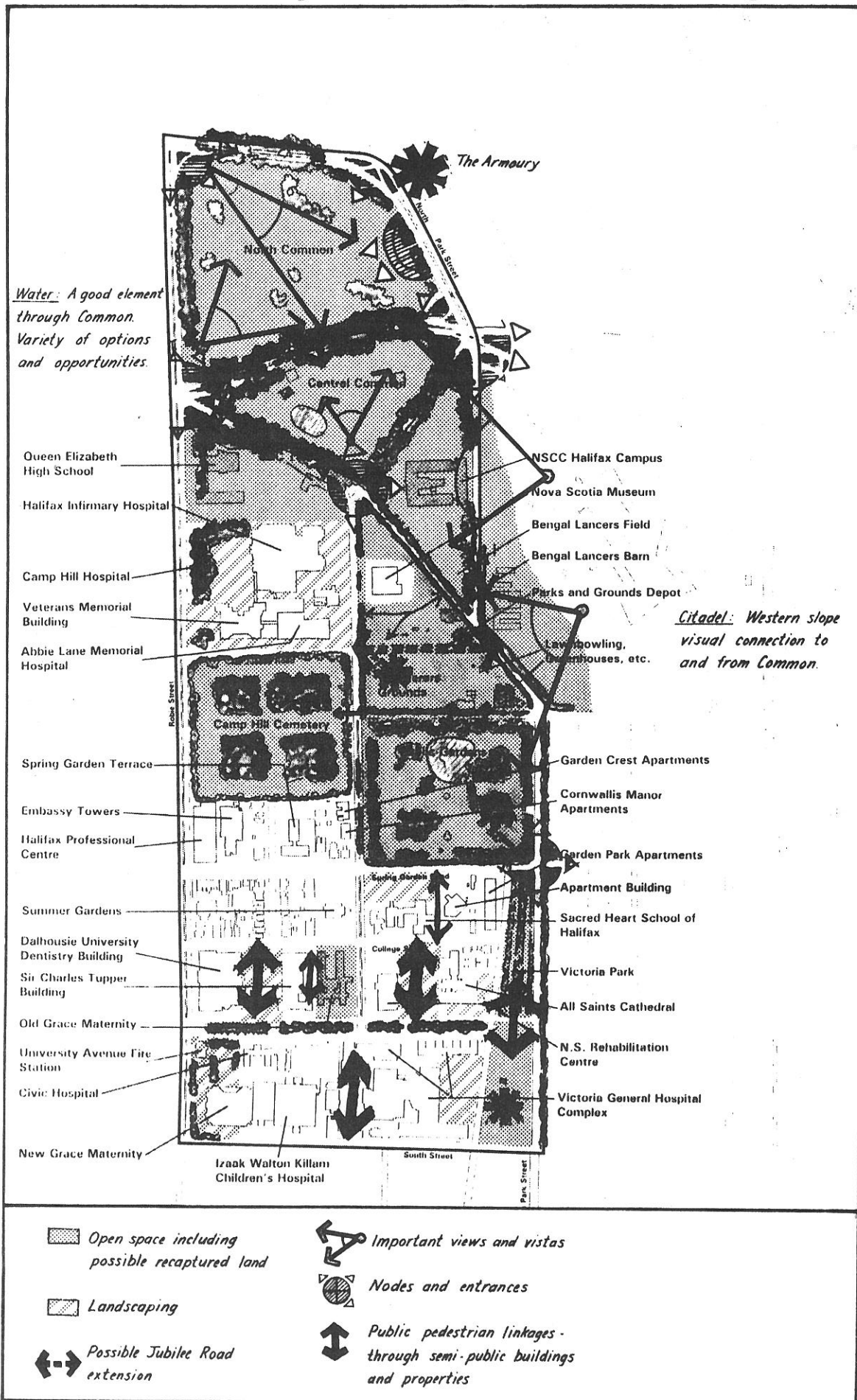
A redesign to the north end of **Victoria Park** was proposed that would involve removing the bus shelter and accommodating a speaker's corner.

Several suggestions were made for the **Victoria General Hospital parking lot.**

- Make it a park (extension of Victoria Park).
- Retain the existing playground.
- Put parking underground.
- Good location for a cultural centre.

APPENDIX 1
SUMMARY MAP

Halifax Common: Map Illustrating Ideas from Workshops



APPENDIX 2
WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS



M E M O R A N D U M
CITY OF HALIFAX

TO: Halifax Common Future, c/o Deborah Chambers,
Information Coordinator
Department of Development and Planning

FROM: Dr. Paul A. Erickson, Chair, Heritage Advisory
Committee

DATE: 15 January 1993

RE: Halifax Common Public Meeting

In reviewing the information presented at the Halifax Common public meeting and workshop in November, the Heritage Advisory Committee would like to express its concerns over two issues which arose during the weekend's discussions.

We would strongly recommend that if any former Common lands or roadways were reclaimed for use by the public that none of this land be designated as parking for vehicles. The Halifax Common is too valuable a resource for recreation, both passive and active, to have parking, no matter how attractive for event organizers, given even the remotest consideration. The example of the parking lot on the old lands of the School for the Blind is an effective persuader. We must protect and enhance this public heritage resource.

We would also recommend that an old heritage resource, the outdoor skating pond on the Common, be renovated and upgraded. There are few outdoor recreational activities available in the urban environment during winter. Historically, the so-called Egg Pond was used and enjoyed by citizens as a skating rink in the winter and a miniature sailing pond in summer.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. We look forward to reviewing your draft report in April.


Dr. Paul A. Erickson
Chair, Heritage Advisory Committee

Prepared by: Terry Smith-Lamothe



TO: Ms. Deborah Chambers

FROM: Robert Schwarz, President HDYSA

DATE: December 8, 1992

RE: Halifax Common

This is a formal written submission from the Halifax District Youth Soccer Association following the public meetings held to discuss the future development of the Halifax Common.

We appreciate that there is a need for greater leisure, non organized recreational space and we share the interests expressed by many of the experts and participants. The recreational uses of the central common and the mainland common north should logically be blended to serve the community needs and common good. To that end, we believe it was particularly important that the public be involved in the creation of a Mission Statement or Statement of Goals for the Commons (both central and mainland) together with a mechanism to assure those goals are adhered to.

The sport of Soccer feels an acute need for more and better playing facilities. There are more children registered to play soccer in Halifax than any other organized sport. Our registration has been steadily growing each year at almost 10% per year. During the 1992 season almost 3000 players (boys and girls), minis to 18 yrs., registered to play in our leagues. The facilities available for play has not kept up with the growth of our sport. What fields are available are over-used and therefore somewhat unsafe.

Soccer fields, unlike baseball diamonds, can be used both formally and for informal sports. In the move to make the commons less structured, the addition of one or two new soccer fields would be consistent with what I heard at the public meeting.

The final point we wanted to make is that when the plans are made it is important to assign fields carefully. The principle of proportionate access for now and the future is critical. That is, with the numbers of youth playing soccer, we need much greater soccer facilities in Halifax.

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate.

RDS/pl

Robert Schwarz, Past-President HDYSA



Environment
Canada

Environnement
Canada

Parks
Service

Service
des parcs

Halifax Citadel NHS
P.O. Box 9080
Postal Station A
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3K 5M7



January 6, 1993



1465-1

Mr. Bernard L. Moe
Planner
Development & Planning Department
City of Halifax, Duke Tower, Scotia Square
P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5

Dear Mr. Moe,

Although I have intended to write to you since the time of the open house, I have managed to put it off "for another day". Before the report to Council on the future of the Common is totally completed, there are a couple of thoughts that I want to convey to you and your associates, in my capacity as an official with the Canadian Parks Service. I felt that my presence at the open house was more as a private citizen and in that role felt at liberty to comment generally on the diverse range of issues affecting the future of the entire Common land area.

There are three issues that directly affect the Halifax Citadel and relate to the planning study. They are: the future use of the Garrison Grounds; the engineering design of the Five Corners intersection and the issue of Ahern Avenue for local traffic. I recollect that these three matters were discussed by the working groups at the Saturday sessions and that recommendations or comments were put forward for consideration by city staff. I would like to submit the following comments on each of these issues based on our interest in the management of the Citadel and, in part, as a reflection of public input we have received from visitors to the historic park.

.../2

Canada

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1. Garrison Grounds

At the outset I have to preface my remarks by noting that our present land holding in the area known as the Garrison Grounds is being considered within the context of the management plan review for the Citadel. Consequently there may be a shift in our long term policy for the use of this property. Preliminary indications from our public consultation process, however, support the continued retention of this property, as well as the addition to the Citadel of those lands now occupied by the Department of National Defence. Further, we have expressed our interest in the acquisition of the D.N.D. property when the property is now no longer required for their purposes. My most recent information is that the present use will continue for the next two years, approximately.

I raise this matter solely in the context of the plan for the Common, as one suggestion I heard was to relocate the Bengal Lancers to the Garrison Grounds, and I wanted to confirm the continuing interest of the Citadel in retaining its present land holding and, if possible, to incorporate the remainder of the D.N.D. property into the Citadel.

2. Five Corners Intersection

The concerns I voiced as a private citizen are based in part on my concerns as a manager at the Citadel. Admittedly I am not a traffic engineer, but as a driver and pedestrian I have reservations as to the safety of the intersection. From experience at the Citadel I have learned that visitors have problems with the configuration as well. From experience the staff at the Hill have learned that, when providing directions to any visitor, it is impossible to describe how to get to any destination from the Hill via the Rainnie Drive exit. Regardless of how convoluted, it is simpler to have visitors follow a route that begins with the Sackville Street exit and avoids the intersection. The confusion rivals the Armdale rotary in complications for the visitor.


3. Ahern Avenue

One proposal to reduce the angles in the geometrics of Five Corners is for the closing of one or more streets comprising the intersection. Trollop and Ahern were cited as candidates in this regard. From a Citadel perspective, our preference would be for the closure of Ahern Avenue. With the removal of the D.N.D. structures on Ahern Avenue there would be no further need for vehicular access to any property adjacent to the street. At present vehicular access to the school and the riding area have alternate access and egress and the conversion from pavement to open space would be an advancement of the overall aesthetics.

There is one further observation of a planning nature that I want to raise, in connection with the Citadel plan more than directly related to the Common, but may have some application. The matter of pedestrian access to the Citadel was raised with City officials in the late 1970's and remains applicable. Apart from the signal controlled intersections bordering the Citadel, the only designated crossing is on Brunswick Street, at the Town Clock. The absence of a pedestrian crossing on Sackville Street has been brought to my attention on numerous occasions. Visitors from the Spring Garden Road area that approach the Hill along either Queen Street or Dresden Row cross four lanes of traffic at peril, unless they go to an intersection at either Bell Road or Brunswick and then back-track. Another crossing that is less well travelled, but that imposes similar risk, is from the Red Cross building on Rainnie Drive. The access to the Citadel through an opening in the fence is well used, judging from the wear on the glaxis, and many of these hardy-souls cross Rainnie Drive at that point.

For the purpose of the land use policy for the Common this later point may not have application. I would however like to submit it for your consideration and that of your colleagues.

With respect to the three items pertaining more directly to the focus of your review, I can elaborate as required, at your invitation. I hope they serve as a helpful contribution to your deliberations.

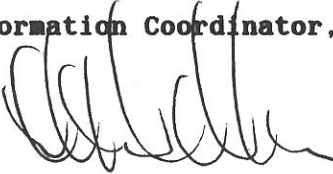

D.F. Mullaly
Superintendent
Halifax Defence Complex

D. H. WALLER, P.Eng., PhD.
1598 OXFORD STREET
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA
CANADA



M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Deborah Chambers, Information Coordinator, City of Halifax
cc Mayor M. Ducharme

FROM: D.H. Waller 

DATE: December 29, 1992

RE: The future of the Halifax Common

This is in response to the announcement of the Public Meeting and Workshop on this subject. I expected to attend these events but personal commitments intervened.

My comments are in two parts. The first part addresses what I believe are requirements that must be met in terms of process if the public will be respected in this matter. The second part of my comments express my personal opinions about uses currently made of the Common.

If my concerns about process were fully met, I would willingly accept decisions about the use of the Common, even if they did not coincide with my personal views.

PROCESS

The following requirements should be met as a basis for decisions about use of the Common:

1. All decisions related to policies and criteria for use of the Common should be debated in public, with adequate notice to permit interested citizens to attend and to make their views known beforehand. Adequate notice means knowledge of the topic and of the decisions under consideration. (Debates and decisions related to the Grand Prix and the Gardens were conducted by Committee of the Whole and/or Staff, with no public notice.)
2. Policies should be developed, debated, and adopted as a basis for decisions about use of the Common, and should recognize the spirit of the original designation of the Common to public use. (Decisions to date have not been supported by policy.)
3. Policies should be expressed in Criteria, which determine who can use the common, and under what conditions.
4. The Policies and Criteria should be expressed in procedures for Application, Processing, and Decision: Who decides, and how, if a particular application meets the Criteria?

The citizens of Halifax have historically accepted use of the Common for "private" events that have ranged from Bill Lynch to the Pope. It appears that we have now reached the point where ad-hoc decisions must be replaced by public policy, because

- increasing private demands for use of the Common, in terms of

time and space, are conflicting with an increased population and increased demands for public use:

- the side-effects of currently proposed uses (traffic, safety, noise, school closure, appearance) are matters of public concern.

THE GRAND PRIX

My particular concerns relate to the Moosehead Grand Prix, and are reflected in the attached letter, which has been copied to all members of Council.

My objections to this event, some or all of which might apply to any event of a similar nature, are:

1. Public use of the Common, including access to a public playground, is preempted for a private purpose.
2. Both citizens and visitors are exposed to a view of the centre of our city that resembles "downtown Beirut".
3. Citizens from a large area of peninsular Halifax are exposed to excessive and continual noise.
4. Queen Elizabeth High School is forced to declare an in-service day to coincide with the event.
5. Traffic is tied up by this event.
6. Concerns have been expressed about traffic safety.
7. There is no assurance, in the current ad-hoc decision making framework, that another enterprising organization will not preempt use of the Common for another block of time and space, with similar or other side effects.

I will be pleased to discuss this matter further.

DHW/gb
File DWC12292

Twice is enough

Dear Editor:

Bob Brown, chairman of the Gottingen Street Merchants Association, makes an interesting case for support of the Atlantic Grand Prix in The Mail-Star of Sept. 12.

Opponents of the race are characterized as "a few highly focused professional complainers", and we are asked to accept the event because Moosehead Breweries has taken a "creative initiative" which exhibits "creativity, dedication, and initiative".

This is wrong. The silent majority are opposed to this race at this location: I have yet to find a friend or neighbour who is not unhappy about this event. While we might applaud the initiative of Moosehead in promoting the event, we resent the fact that citizens of Halifax were denied access to city streets, playgrounds, and other public space for a period of three days, and that traffic was hampered, and the Commons area made unsightly by concrete barriers, for a longer period.

Mr. Brown argues the need for a "supportive environment" for creative corporations. Does this mean that if each of these other companies can devise a creative way to use Halifax streets and public places for several days per year for promotional events, citizens of Halifax should accept it in the name of economic opportunity? I don't think most of us agree with that.

There may be an appropriate place for the Atlantic Grand Prix, but it is not the centre of downtown Halifax and, hopefully, City Council will agree before approval is granted for next year's event.

D.H. Waller
Halifax

that of

But not entire years ago two ing the lake reported wh like two such monsters. have also reported over th hearing "strange noises fr lake"

Dr. Gladkikh and his fel entists have, through Russia nals, aired several explan about how the monster(s) have survived in the lake, wh some 600 metres long and metres wide.

"In the frozen wastes, reptiles known as tritons hav casionally been dug out from permafrost and brought back t... and even a large reptile have survived in such susper animation."

But no one has told Nessie. **A** VIEW From London colu on this page some months : examined the worsening plight motorists on Europe's increasin over-crowded highways a biways. Now the Society of Mo Manufacturers and Traders come up with some interesting ernational statistics.

Top of the league, of course the United States where there i car for every 1.5 members of population.

Canada is a close second w 1.9. Most of the western Europ countries recorded an owners ratio of between 2.1, as in Italy 2.7 in The Netherlands, with F ain at 2.5.

The difference being that it is only a restricted space in w to keep and drive so many car Europe, whereas North Amé has plenty of space.

Bottom of the league



2331 Maynard Street
Halifax, N.S.
B3K 3T8

29 December 1992

Deborah Chambers
Halifax City Hall
P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, N.S.
B3J 3A5

Dear Ms Chambers,

I was not able to attend the public meetings held in late November concerning the use of the Commons. However, I have made many representations to the Mayor and City Council about one particular use of the Commons—the Grand Prix races. Attached are copies of letters I have written. You will see in them that many comments are also applicable to other uses of the Commons. While these comments have been directed at the Grand Prix as a specific event, the lack of principles behind Council decisions has been even more disturbing. The Commons must be managed for public benefit and use, and must be protected from commercial and non-public use. Commercial use with some attributable benefit to the public should not be sufficient rationale.

As you may be aware, the TV broadcast of the Grand Prix is held up as one of the benefits to the city. But Moosehead is not the only company whose sponsorship can garner attention of the media. In great contrast, there was a wonderful bicycle race sponsored by Canadian Tire. The races were very exciting and open to the public the entire length of the course, without charge. These races too were broadcast and gave good coverage to the city and its attractions. Disruption was only for duration of the races (evening, low traffic volume) and about 10 minutes before and after—no major barriers, little construction for grandstands, etc. Certainly no noise at all. A very laudable **public-spirited** event which could be made larger and more important.

As we saw in 1991, the time of preparation and disruption for the Grand Prix was more than 7 weeks taking into account time setting up and dismantling and street and grounds repairs, before things were nearly normal. (Work began at least as early as 6 August and continued to at least 26 September.) That is almost 2 months out of 12 months! Supporters of the race refer only to the three days of the race. This is not at all true.

To make things even worse now, in November I heard that the Grand Prix may (or will?) be moved to July. As a concession, the organizers say they would offer to bus children to the beach. For that they want to be able to

close off the Commons to other uses—what about grown-ups dog walkers strollers, sports teams etc? That is the middle of the summer! When will the city say NO to these increasing demands? The organizers also say they want to expand the races and activities. They have been given too much already. No more!!

The Commons area is a neighborhood too. Those of us who bought homes here did so knowing how the Commons are used by the public but with no idea that our neighbourhood streets would be used for a race-track at all. Please remember the many other inconveniences which we already support or at least tolerate quietly throughout the year—celebrations fireworks, etc. occur for Natal Day, Canada Day and many others. There are foot and bicycle races—the Terry Fox run, for example—as well as many other "participaction" type events or fund raisers. There are also sporadic special events—the visit of the Pope, large crowds to greet Prince Charles and Diana. These are all socially relevant activities and there is only the slightest comment about the disruption they might cause because people in this neighborhood recognize that these events are generally useful to life in our city and province. Some are one-time events, others are repeated. None is excessively disruptive (except perhaps the concerts on the Hill); people accept them. There are also numerous sports matches and practices—football, baseball, cricket, field hockey—through the spring, summer and fall. For each there is general social benefit; these are appropriate uses of the traditional "common lands".

Any repetition of this race could be held in locations outside the city and interested people could travel there, this would be preferable to subjecting hundreds or thousands of residents to so many inconveniences for several weeks. This commercial, noisy, disruptive venture in the city centre is not suitable for any residential or parkland area. The Moosehead event most serves the commercial interests of Moosehead and of the race organizers.

At meetings, Moosehead displayed a map of the race course, mentioning all the ways in which they had improved their planning. However, the map shows only the course itself. The map should show all the area affected, including the streets blocked to public use and the large part of the Commons closed except to ticket holders, etc.

What about the larger problems of the suitability of this sort of commercial activity on public streets and land? After objections and threat of legal action, Council quietly altered the City Charter to make acceptable what had (therefore) been done against the Charter in 1960. Is that all the attention that principles require of a Council?

I have listened to comments made about the benefits, I will not argue those here. Be assured that if Moosehead wants to continue the race, it surely benefits Moosehead most of all.

As I see it, Council should separate the issues—a race from a car race, a race at the Commons from a race in another location, etc. Moosehead wants all it can get, including the scenic Citadel and Commons area. But how much of that shows in the TV coverage focussed on the track and the barriers? How much promotion for Halifax is it really? Look at a video of the race broadcast. If the race were held elsewhere near the city, Moosehead could still broadcast scenes of any part of the city as part of the TV program. And visitors would be able see Halifax when they are here—in a much more suitable, human condition, without the barriers which are most inhospitable for many weeks

Where is the promised protection for the Halifax Commons? Where is the discussion of principles? All of the responses I have read and heard seem to indicate that city staff worked only to make Moosehead's race route more acceptable. There does not appear to have been any thought that alternate routes or locations be considered. And little discussion of general principle or philosophy.

Why is it appropriate for any company to be allowed to stop city traffic, to close public schools and a community college, to block areas in front of people's homes, to eliminate parking on city streets (on at least one street for nearly 2 months), to close off part of the parkland known as the Commons (meaning 'public') and then to charge the public an admission fee to use land it has a perpetual right to enter and use without charge?

I hope that your work in protection of the Commons will also result in removal of the race to another location more suitable, leaving the Commons for public use.

Sincerely,



Scott Robson

c c Mayor Ducharme

P.S. I write above of the closure of one street for more than 45 days and evenings. Do you realize that that one act results in the loss of over 3300 parking space days? How many people does that one inconvenience represent? And what about the use of several city streets to mount advertisements for Players and Moosehead for 19 days? This is not at all appropriate, any more than a billboard advertisement on Bell Road would be. For what was done, did the city receive advertising revenue? Are the city's decisions compromised by commercial enticements?

29 Cavendish Road
Halifax, N.S.
B3P 2J6



January 8, 1993

Ms. Deborah Chambers
Information Co-ordinator
City of Halifax
P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, N.S.
B3J 3A5

Dear Ms. Chambers:

I am writing in response to the ad last fall about the Public Meeting and Workshop on the Halifax Common, and the invitation for written submissions from individuals and groups by January 8.

I was pleased to learn earlier that the City of Halifax is undertaking a study of the Halifax Common, and that it wants to hear from citizens on this matter. Unfortunately, I was away when the Workshop was being held so I am writing this letter to express my views.

As a Haligonian by birth who has lived away for various periods of time, I have long appreciated and valued the Commons (as I grew up calling the whole area). As a child, I was on the Common for almost every form of recreation possible including baseball, skating, tennis, football and even rowing (on the former Egg Pond). As an adult, I have continued to make use of the Common for exercise such as running and tennis. I have also enjoyed being able to bring my children to use the playground facilities. All in all, the Halifax Common has been an important part of my life and they represent a distinctive feature of this City.

In my view, it is vital that all possible steps be taken to preserve and enhance the Halifax Common. I have been distressed by what I and apparently, many other citizens have seen as intrusions and damage to its integrity and beauty such as Council's decision to allow the Moosehead Grand Prix to proceed in recent years through and across it. Despite the prospect of increased revenue and intense interest in this event, I do not think the Common and nearby streets are an appropriate venue for it. If permitted to continue over several years, I fear the Halifax Common will suffer irreparable damage and at the same time, open the door to still further degradation.

I would therefore like to make the following recommendations, perhaps similar to some which were made at the Workshop:

...2

(1) that there be legislated protection for the Halifax Common similar to the legislation for the Dartmouth Common and the Halifax Public Gardens both to protect the boundaries from any encroachments and to prevent any degradation to it. Such legislation should be developed in full consultation with concerned citizens and organizations.

(2) that a long-term management plan covering all aspects of the future of the Halifax Common be developed. This might include a possible closure of one or more side streets now running through the Commons.

(3) that a standing Halifax Common committee be established to oversee the development of the management plan and to oversee its implementation.

I appreciate this opportunity to express my views on the importance of the Halifax Common for me, and what might be done to protect and enhance it for generations to come.

Yours sincerely,



Ian D. Johnson

c.c. Mayor Moira Ducharme
Alexa McDonough, MLA



Waye Mason
2639 Lorne Terrace
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
B3K 3A8

29 November, 1992

Dear Ms. Chambers,

I am writing this letter to you in response to the 27 November 1992 article regarding the development of the Common that appeared in the Chronicle-Herald.

I hope that the weekend public workshops were well attended and gave you and the city a good sampling of public opinion regarding the Common. I was unable to attend, and hope that you will take a moment to consider a few thoughts and feelings about the usage of the Common.

To be frank, the use of the word "development" in association with the Common causes concern, which to a great degree is an emotional and reactionary response, not necessarily an intellectual one. I hesitate to speak for my fellow Haligonians, but I feel that many others in the City feel the same way I do.

I am aware that there are pressing recreational and development needs for the city, but I, for one, am opposed to the charging of fees for the Common, or the development of more facilities on the Common. The taxpayers of Halifax should bear the burden of keeping the Common open to all citizens. Fees would restrict the regular access to the Common to people who could pay. There simply is no such thing as a reasonable, "nominal" fee if you recognize that the neighborhoods to the north and east of the Common are some of the poorest in the city, and they, the closest to the Common, would be least able to pay.

I hope that further reduction of the green space of the Common will be stopped, also. The city of Halifax should ensure that the Commons remains a free recreational area. The commercialization of the Common is hardly "Common" by definition, and the City should recognize that.

The Grand Prix, while of great enjoyment to some, is a great ugly mess that inconveniences the city and mars the beauty of Halifax for weeks before and weeks after the actual race, and should not be allowed to take place on some of the city's most important arteries. Perhaps the race should take place in the South End. The vision of great smelly screaming race cars roaring down Young Avenue and screeching around to corner to Tower Road, up to Englis and

then on to Beaufort..... well, clearly, the powers that be would never allow that, but I fail to see why the people of the Gottingen Street area are unfairly subjected to such an objectionable experience, aside from the fact that they are poor, and pay less taxes, which simply is not an acceptable reason.

Back to the Commons. I hope that city council will make the decision to maintain the Common as a public area with unrestricted use. I believe this is the what the city founders intended when they created it, and it would be a great shame to erase the last of the Common.

Sincerely,


Waye Mason

