



12 June 2007

His Worship Peter Kelly and Regional Councillors
Halifax Regional Municipality
P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, NS B3J 3A5

Re: PROPOSED GRAFFITI BY-LAW

Dear Mayor Kelly and Councillors,

We all have a responsibility to keep our city clean. This means taking what measures we can as business owners and homeowners to deter graffiti with good lighting and by keeping our properties well maintained as well as by keeping an eye out for our own and neighbours' properties. I commend you on taking steps towards a cleaner city with a graffiti management plan and the creation of a graffiti task force.

This said we are very concerned about certain aspects of the proposed graffiti by-law in particular the sections that hold property owners responsible for graffiti removal. Our default in addressing issues should not be to make a new by-law. This is another layer of red tape, an additional burden for property owners who have limited ability to deter this kind of vandalism. Furthermore it is imposing potentially significant penalties on persons who are themselves the victims of graffiti.

A clean city is extremely important to all aspects of city life. It is important for tourism that our city is clean and welcoming. It is also important to our business community - a sense of civic pride, of pride in a city well-loved and well-kept is materially important to doing business in Halifax. It is also important to attracting new business to our city - as noted in our economic strategy, "Decisions that lead to a cleaner, more welcoming downtown will provide that all-important good first impression to potential business investors." Furthermore, one of the recommendations of the Economic Summit hosted by the Chamber in 2004 was to "Scrub" our streets and buildings to create an attractive, safe environment and one of the main objectives of the economic strategy is to "Ensure a vibrant, healthy and attractive downtown to make HRM a world-class urban centre."

As it is composed of Councillors, stakeholders and staff, perhaps it would be appropriate for the proposed graffiti task force to review the success of other graffiti management initiatives and subsequently to consider the need for a graffiti by-law. With respect to the task force composition, we are pleased to see the inclusion of businesses such as Aliant and NSP that have a large stake in this issue. We hope there will also be small business representation on the task force since small business can be equally affected by graffiti and measures to remove graffiti may be even more burdensome for small businesses.

I think you will find business persons are ready to work together for a cleaner, better city and I believe many initiatives such as the enhanced community initiatives like a free paint program and financial assistance for graffiti removal are excellent ways to alleviate graffiti in Halifax.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if it would be helpful to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Valerie A. Payn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Valerie A. Payn
President

Cc: Councillors, Regional Council, Halifax Regional Municipality
Mr. Dan English, CAO, Halifax Regional Municipality