



Subject: *Letter to the Province - Nova Scotia MGA Change Request*
To: Corporate & Residential Services Committee
Date Prepared: November 6, 2024
Related Motions:
Prepared by: Sheralee Mitchell-MacEwan, Assistant Municipal Clerk
Approved by: Kim Ramsay, CAO

Summary

The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (Charter) includes a section outlining when Halifax Council is permitted to go “in-camera” for confidential discussions in closed sessions similar to the NS Municipal Government Act (NSMGA). One difference in the Charter allows in-camera discussion regarding Federal and Provincial government topics, which the NSMGA does not permit. There is interest in seeking support for changes to the NSMGA to also include this allowance.

Financial Impact Statement

None

Recommendation

That the Corporate & Residential Services Committee recommends to Council that Council direct Staff to write a letter to the Province seeking changes to the NS Municipal Government Act to allow for in-camera discussions related to Federal and Provincial government topics, similar to the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter Section 19(i).

Recommended Motion

Move that the Corporate & Residential Services Committee recommends to Council that Council direct Staff to write a letter to the Province seeking changes to the NS Municipal Government Act to allow for in-camera discussions related to Federal and Provincial government topics, similar to the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter Section 19(i).

Background

The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (Charter) includes a section outlining when Halifax Council is permitted to go “in-camera” for confidential discussions in closed sessions similar to the NS Municipal Government Act (NSMGA). One difference in the Charter allows in-camera discussion regarding Federal and Provincial government topics, which the NSMGA does not permit. There is interest in seeking support for changes to the NSMGA to also include this allowance.

Discussion

The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter Section (19) Open meetings and exceptions includes:

- (i) *Any subject, the discussion of which could, in the opinion of the Council or the committee, as the case may be, violate the confidentiality of information obtained from*
 - (i) *The Government of Canada or the Government of the Province,*
 - (ii) *An agency of the Government of Canada or the Government of the Province, or*
 - (iii) *A public body.*

This clause would be valuable to allow other Council's the opportunity to discuss these types topics confidentially. For example, East Hants Council has gone in-camera to discuss federal or provincial funding opportunities under "contractual". It would be more appropriate and transparent if Council was permitted to use this clause similar to the Charter.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

None.

Alternatives

Don't send a letter.

Attachments

NS Municipal Government Act
Halifax Charter