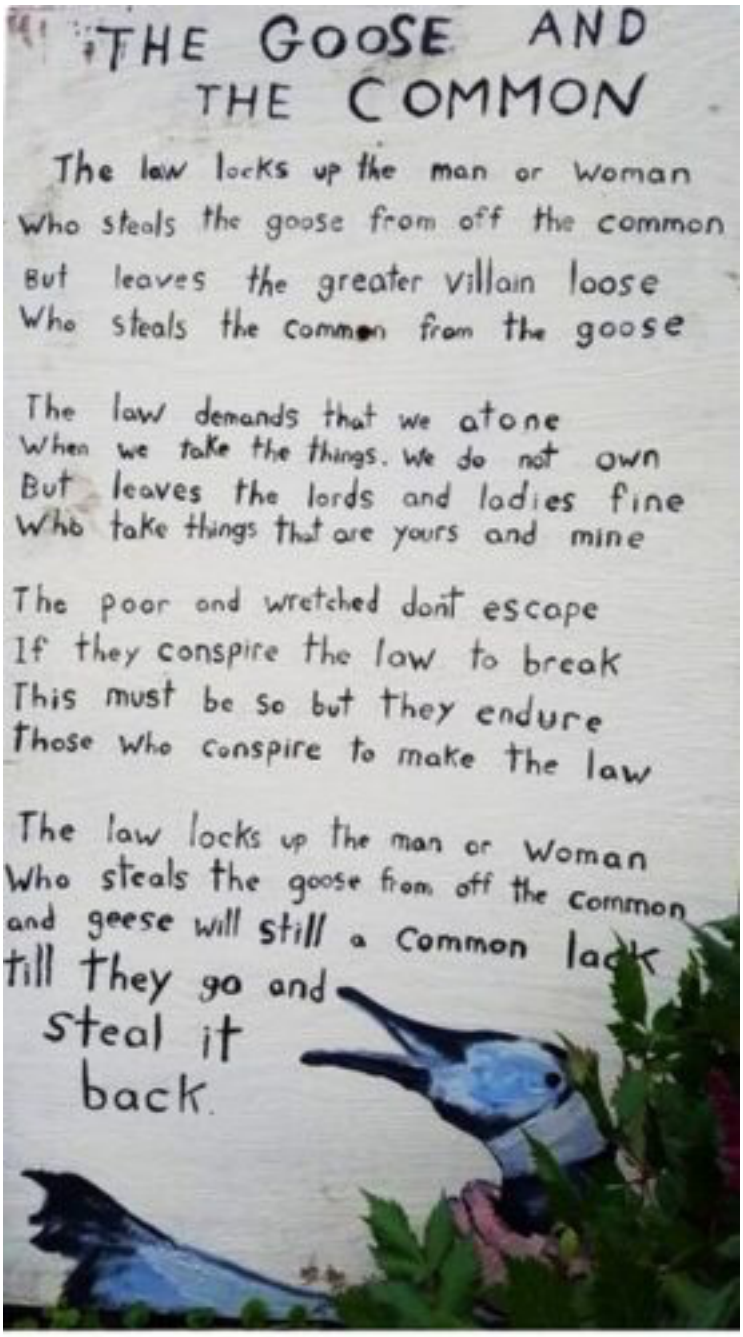
Friends of Halifax Common Activities Report AGM 2019-2021



1. Last Historic Neighbourhood on Halifax Common-Carlton St. towers: FHC as part of **Development Options Halifax** created renderings, then a 3-d model of two massive proposed developments to show the public for the first time. The towers previously- 16-, 20-, 26- & 30-storey but now 16, 26, 28 & 29 + penthouses have ~650 apartments & ~900 underground parking

spots. Between 12-14 houses & ~110 affordable housing/small-scale commercial units will be demolished.

FHC & DOH worked to understand and inform the context of what is at risk from following the developers' lead with block-busters, development agreements or ultimately the Centre Plan as we lose older, smaller, mixed-use neighbourhoods, cultural landscape, missing middle, distributed density and trust in planning processes. Also to propose more sustainable/equitable options for densification: a 9-storey infill with 550-650 units (retaining all but 1 building); Quinpool area densification with 4-5 storeys; a single block of Lawrence St with suites, coach houses.

Campaign: op-eds, letters to Heritage Advisory Committee, letters to Mayor and council, 800+ signatures on petition presented to 'special meeting' Mayor and Council of 4 towers etc. Also tabled by NDP MLA Lisa Roberts in NS Legislature. Final robust presentation at the public hearing before Peninsula and West Community Councils Sept 7 2021 resulted in approval 2 of 4 towers with 5 of 6 councillors voting in favour- thank you Patty Cuttel for excellent questions, comments and voting no.

Similar to Danny Chedrawe's 23-storey tower on Robie at Quinpool and Salloum's 8 -storey Robie/Chebucto tower. The latter resulted in 8 multi-unit houses torn down but new construction is not started. As Corridors expand affordable housing and neighbourhood businesses such as Jane's on the Common (now re-located to Gottingen Street), Studio 21, Elliot & Vine, Robie Street Station, El Chino Snack Bar and Tony's are at risk. New towers with greater "free" height give no public amenity but offer huge advantages to the developer ie. Common's last historic corner.

2. Halifax Infirmary Parking Garages ($100 million) on NS Museum Land and former CBC TV site. Initially 5 -storeys on south site by Wanderers Grounds and Bengal Lancers, needed land from city. Alternative proposal on Summer St failed. In April 2020, HRM Mayor and Council unanimously approved an 8-storey parkade and pedway north side of NS Museum.

Decision ignores health links to public open space; health impacts of motor vehicles (pedestrian, cycling safety and air emissions) climate impacts (Canada has world's worst vehicle fuel efficiency) and climate mitigation especially for extreme weather events (Halifax Common is a watershed with streams such as Freshwater Brook, ponds etc., important for absorbing/cleaning water. Harms transition to real options: robotic parking garage, park & ride, car share, transit, active transportation.

Campaign: letters to mayor; Premiers McNeil, Rankin, Houston; op-eds; petition with ~3000 signatures tabled before HRM Council and NS Legislature; installation of "Freshwater Brook signage and Fish"

3. Ten Case Studies on Public Consultation Experience submitted to HRM AG asking for audit (August 2020): Young Avenue District Heritage Conservation; Halifax Home Owners Assn., Halifax Military Heritage Preservation Society, Development Options Halifax, Peninsula Advisory Committee-former volunteer member, Charles St Neighbourhood; Oak-Allan Street Bike Corridor, Willow Tree Group, St Pat's High School Common Group and FHC. Subsequently added Oxford/North Street Neighbourhood Case study. No outcome but FHC continues to write HRM AG- new update to include council attitude & staff deceptiveness at public hearing etc.

4. HRM Mayor and Councillor Candidates Survey- excellent participation. No responses from Mayor or candidates in **District 14:** Candidates Incumbent Lisa Blackburn and Fred Frampton. **District 15:** Candidates Mary Lou Leroy, Anthony Mrkonjic, Jay Aaron Roxy, David Schofield and Incumbent Paul Russell. **District 16:** Incumbent Tim Outhit.

5. Provincial MLA Candidates Surveys- Excellent responses from Green Party and NDP candidates. Others, including Rankin and Houston not.

6. Centre Plan, Regional Plan and Halifax Common Master Plan (many many) Submissions are thematically similar: Concern and need for good planning: Consider the Common as a whole and incorporate more from the 1994 Halifax Common Master Plan; legislative protection; flexible, open,

non-programmed use of space; include municipal properties in proximity for public use and increasing public open space and connectivity; reverse decision to privatize use of Wanderers' Grounds which was previously fully subscribed by amateur players; reverse support of towers and parking garages; make sure the public fully understand and support directions of the Plan before they are made into a final document.

7. Buildings For the Climate Crisis – A Halifax Case Study- Preliminary assessment of GHG from Carlton St towers proves HRM's preference for towers is fueling the climate crisis (the taller the building the higher upfront carbon cost of the construction. Taller buildings fuel the affordable housing crisis (since 2003 there have been 2535 demolition permits issue, an area ~17 city blocks and similar to Cogswell 2639 buildings- primarily affordable). An over-arching theme is we have to deal with the issue of upfront carbon right now by changing our building codes, our official plans, and our zoning bylaws and banning demolitions to accommodate and encourage low-carbon construction. Lloyd Alter in international Treehugger writes, "This report should be studied and its lessons applied in every city—it's Halifax's loss but everyone else's gain."

8. Halifax Common Master Plan- started in January 2017, last seen by public in June 2019: https://www.halifax.ca/about-halifax/regional-community-planning/regional-plan/common-master-plan Along with an associated staff report will shortly be presented to the Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee and then to Regional Council. FHC has asked to be notified in time to present.

Receive HRM notifications- enter your email in upper right hand corner at https://www.shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/halifax-common-master-plan

Other FHC to Premier-Don't Approve a Pool Building Before Public Consultation and a Plan; Walk around Common; Six ways to Celebrate Jane Jacob's.