



*"for the use of the inhabitants of the town of Halifax as Common forever" (1763-2023)*

July 14, 2023

Dear Premier Houston and HRM Mayor Savage

**Re: QEII redevelopment on Halifax Common**

Friends of Halifax Common have just learned that it intended that many mature, historic trees on perimeter of the QEII block of the Halifax Common will be cut. We understand the trees are on city land but have roots extending into the provincial property. Every effort must be made to protect the trees.

**We object to this cutting and insist that you halt these plans.**

- The Halifax Common was granted “to and for the use of the inhabitants of the town of Halifax as Common, forever” in 1763;
- The Province has an obligation to pay attention HRM planning documents and principles when doing its own planning as per the HRM Charter;
- Cutting down trees is poor environmental planning — it is unnecessary;

- Urban green spaces and trees support public physical and mental health as evidenced in many notable scientific studies;<sup>5</sup>
- Trees are extremely important for mitigating effects of climate change, cleaning pollution, providing shade, reducing heat island effect etc. Mature trees cannot be ‘replaced’ as future environmental conditions become harsher and more vectors/diseases are factors.
- There has been a complete absence of public consultation by the province over the QEII site redevelopment;
- HRM’s 2008 agreement in making the QEHS land available (and referenced for the future of the CBC TV site) to the Province for the hospital re-build stated that the transaction was contingent on a MOU that was based on principles and guidelines intended to influence the future redevelopment of these lands. These Urban Design Principles included: collaborative Mutual Planning, Good Urban Planning; Green Corridor; Building Class, Landscaping & Condition; Pedestrian Realm; Porosity; Interim Site Use; Respect for the 1994 Halifax Common Plan.

Cutting mature trees on the Halifax Common is not showing respect for the Halifax Common or the Plan. Just as building a parking garage on the northern lawn of the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History was not respectful of the Halifax Common or the Plan.

The residents of Halifax and indeed the province will be strongly critical of any initiative by government to cut mature, historic trees on the Halifax Common. The sentiment will be even stronger than the public shock and horror about damage to the Public Garden trees, also located on the Halifax Common. We don’t know who undertook the secret damage but we will know who to hold to account should such a public and deliberate vandalism of trees by any level of government proceed.

FHC is a non-partisan, volunteer-sector organization, with a membership and contact list of ~3,300 persons. Please reconsider carefully concerns we raise. This is a great chance to make a difference, please take it.

We ask that you stop this egregious act and protect the trees.

Thank you.

Directors, Friends of Halifax Common (via email)

Peggy Cameron	William Breckenridge	Janet Stevenson
Beverly Miller	David Garrett	Howard Epstein
Lawrence McEachern	Judith Fingard	Peggy Smith

cc: Ministers of Finance, Public Works, Health and Wellness, Environment,  
Leaders of the Opposition, HRM Council