

May 20, 2026

Mayor Andy Fillmore, members of the standing committee on community planning and economic development, and members of HRM Council,

Downtown Halifax Business Commission is in support of HRM staff's recommendation that community engagement for Grafton Park be expanded in scope to include consultation about the value of the Memorial Library building.

The old Halifax Memorial Library, situated in Grafton Park, on Spring Garden Road, was, for decades, a vital and vibrant civic space. The library was a social hub, as well as a place of learning and discovery. The park and abutting sidewalk were also well known as a place where people would gather to meet friends, eat fries, and was the main point of connection between pedestrians travelling between Spring Garden Road and the rest of Downtown. Historically, it served as the heart of a monuments district, which also includes Saint Mary's Basilica, St. Matthew's Church, the old Burying Ground, Dalhousie's Sexton Campus, and the Provincial Court House.

The library has relocated across the street into a new facility; but the importance of that space remains. It is still a gathering place and a connector within our urban core. The vacant building still stands as a grand backdrop to the park. It remains a war memorial, civic asset, and HRM responsibility.

Halifax owes much of its character to historic buildings, which is why there are both incentive programs and restrictions on them. We know that heritage is a driver of economic activity – particularly tourism. Governments have special responsibility to ensure preservation of their own heritage assets, whenever feasible. Downtown Halifax Business Commission believes that HRM should do all it can to ensure that the old Memorial Library is re-activated, in some way, to ensure the preservation of our cultural and built heritage, and to maintain the active use of Grafton Park. We look forward to participating in the consultation, drawing inspiration from Downtown Halifax Vision 2030.

Sincerely,



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