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Halifax, NS B3H 2X4

May 5, 2016

Law Amendments Committee

Dear Members:

I write to request that the Province amend Bill 177 An Act to amend the Municipal Government Act and Halifax Regional Municipality Charter so as to allow the HRM Municipal government to take charge of the issuance of demolition permits.

Our heritage assets play a large role in our tourism sector and the resultant economic benefits. Tourism contributes more to our provincial economy than agriculture, or the fishery, or forestry. Tourism is a HUGE business for Halifax, and much of it exists because we have truly authentic heritage resources that draw tourists from many origins.

Most tourists are well-educated, well-off, and they travel a lot. For example, surveys among cruise ship visitors indicate that 43% had at least one university degree, and another 24% had two or more degrees. Further, 20% of them had very significant household incomes – well over \$100,000 per annum. As for their tendency to travel, over 30% were 'regular' cruise tourists, taking at least two cruises over the past ten years.

In short, most tourist visitors to Halifax are discerning – they know what they want and they'll spend money to get it. They spend money for a genuine heritage experience. They come to see one of North America's most celebrated heritage areas, recalling our city's mercantile and military past over more than two centuries, replete with authentic buildings and houses that played substantial roles in North America's history.

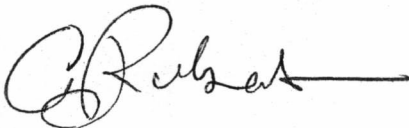
Look at the tourists who enjoy the grand entrance to Point Pleasant Park along beautiful Young Avenue – travelling slowly along the only street in Halifax established as part of City Beautiful movement in the 1800s. It is the pre-eminent historic streetscape in Halifax, cited several times in the Canadian Register of Historic Places as the most beautiful street in Halifax. What do you imagine tourists think when they see one of the largest and oldest residences on the street being demolished as they watch?

If HRM has control over issuance of demolition permits, rather than allowing the permits to be issued as a matter of right, the municipality would be able to take control over its heritage assets. This is the basis of my request to include in Bill 177 provision to amend the HRM City Charter and the Municipal Government Act to allow HRM to take charge of the issuance of demolition permits and to enforce stricter control of the permits.

Once our heritage buildings are gone, they're gone.

What would Joni Mitchell say?

Yours truly,



Allan Robertson, P.Eng., FCMC