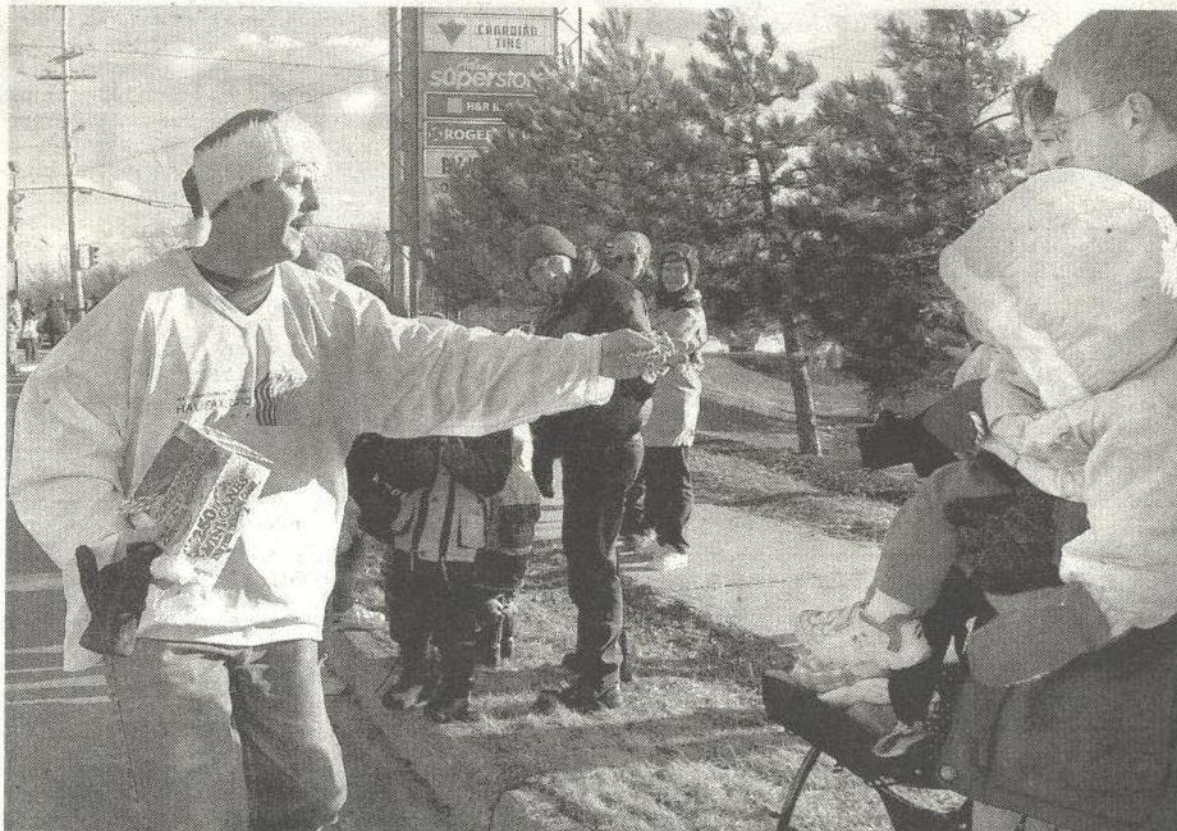




Residents want to get Spryfield walking



GOOD NEIGHBOURS: Mayor Peter Kelly hands out candy canes at the 2002 Spryfield Christmas Parade. Contrary to outside perceptions, a group of community members working on a development plan say Spryfield is a safe, friendly place.

SPRYFIELD

By Lindsay Jones — The Daily News

Spryfield is a safe, friendly community where neighbours know each other, said a group of citizens who met Saturday morning at the Captain William Spry Community Centre. The group of 17 business owners and long-term and new residents met to discuss making the community safer — and more walkable.

“There’s sidewalks (and the streets are) fairly well lit,” said Marjorie Willison, a 26-year Spryfield resident. “It would probably be a surprise to the rest of most people in HRM that we’re comfortable walking around at night.”

Because Spryfield is one of several Halifax communities expected to undergo a population surge in the next decade, transportation is a concern.

The open workshop was hosted by the community centre’s board of directors and three Dalhousie University master of planning students. Andrew Curran, Mary Ellen Wood and Rob Kostiuik helped organize the workshop to gather information for the **Action for Neighbourhood Change** program.

Launched in June, the national program is run by the **United Way**

and targets poverty, crime, drug use and education. Spryfield was picked as one of its five pilot communities in Canada. The program will distribute federal money to community groups that come up with innovative solutions for local issues over the next year.

Willison said community members want better connected trails with signage and lighting.

“We want our community to be developed and designed for pedestrians, not cars,” said Willison, a CBC gardening expert, author and former *Daily News* columnist.

“Right now, and for the past many years, development has been for cars with little attention to pedestrians,” she said. “We have a four-lane highway, in effect, running through Spryfield.”

Willison, who moved to the former farm area in the ’70s because of its rich, deep soil, said she loves Spryfield because of its sense of community, such nearby green spaces as Long Lake Provincial Park and local amenities.

“I can walk to the grocery store, the pharmacy, the library, the community centre. Everything I need is here. Why wouldn’t I love Spryfield?”

ljones@hfxnews.ca