



**NORTH WEST PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
June 20, 2016**

PRESENT: Ms. Ann Merritt, Chair
Mr. Paul Russell, Vice Chair
Mr. Ross Evans
Mr. Brian Murray
Mr. Evan MacDonald
Mr. Kevin Copley
Mr. Dave Haverstock
Ms. Dianna Rievaj
Councillor Tim Outhit

STAFF: Mr. Andrew Bone, Major Projects Planner
Mr. Liam MacSween, Legislative Assistant

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to the North West Planning Advisory Committee are available online: <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/NWPAC/160620nwpac-agenda.php>

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. and adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Ann Merritt, Chair called the meeting to order in the Cafeteria of Basinview Community School, 274 Basinview Drive, Bedford. She described the role of the Planning Advisory Committee in hosting the public meeting and outlined the process for the public meeting.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

2.1 Case 17272 - Application by North West Community Council to review the Cushing Hill Commercial Comprehensive Development District (CCDD) policies to consider new policy related to commercial and/or residential development on the lands. The Cushing Hill CCDD is located opposite and north east of the Royal Canadian Legion (1772 Bedford Highway) and is comprised of nine parcels of land including 1763, 1775, 1781 and 1789 Bedford Highway, and 122, 128, 134, 136 and 144 Oakmount Drive, Bedford. Further the proposed change includes additional lands at 1753, 1757 and 1761 Bedford Highway, Bedford.

Mr. Andrew Bone, Planner, provided a presentation in relation to Case 17272. He noted that the purpose of the meeting is a preliminary review of the application to gain public input and stated that no decisions in relation to the application will be made at the current time. He displayed the site plan and provided background information in relation to the proposal.

Ms. Ann Merritt thanked Mr. Bone for his presentation and provided commentary on the rules of procedure regarding public meetings. She called for speakers to come forward and comment on Case 17272.

Mr. Walter Reagan, of the Sackville Rivers Association commented that any development should include extensive tree retention. He advised that any development activity on the site should include extensive and complete silt control, along with a storm water treatment including the installation of oil grit separators. Mr. Regan advised that extensive landscaping should take place to ensure that the property looks good and that a 20 meter setback from Oakmount Brook should be considered to ensure there is no impact on the watercourse. He advised that sidewalk construction is very important for the area and that the land would make a great location for a park.

Mr. Reg Jones, of Bedford requested further information with respect to the allowable density for the area under the current zoning. He also stated the importance of ensuring emergency accesses and exits to the subject property and surrounding neighborhood if residential development takes place on the subject property.

Mr. Jack Reid, of Oakmount Drive stated that he has lived on the street since 1964. He noted that in recent years a great deal of young people have started to come back to the neighborhood noting that it is a great place to live. He advised of his opinion that development on the site will ruin the area and noted that the land on the subject property is very steep and comprised of loose material. He concluded by noting his opposition for development activities on the subject area.

Mr. Harold Pelham, of 102 Oakmount Drive, noted his concern with the proposed density figures for the area stating that multi-unit residential development could add approximately 300 people and 200 cars to the area. He advised that safe access to the Bedford Highway and Highways 101 and 102 must be carefully considered as part of any development proposal as well as an emergency evacuation plan for the surrounding area. He commented that it is a good idea to delineate two parcels of land for differentiating uses (residential and commercial) as well as to ensure that Development Agreements are in place. He noted his opinion that a commercial use for the area would be quite difficult to implement given the difficulty of safe vehicular access to and from the site and on to the surrounding road infrastructure.

Ms. Dianne Das, of 10 Redbank Road, noted her concern in relation to traffic issues in the area stating that many motorists cut through her street to avoid the intersection at Rocky Lake Road. She advised that traffic has dramatically increased in the area because of this. She further advised that if the proposed policy goes through, there will be a great deal more traffic within an area that cannot support it. She advised that any development for the area should not be considered until such time as the traffic infrastructure with safe access from lower Oakmount Drive and the surrounding road infrastructure are upgraded.

Mr. Bone provided commentary on the following:

- The proposed density of 50 persons per acre for the area includes the commercial development as well as the residential.
- The provincial government is still working on the accesses to the highways which are tied into the Duke Street improvements to Burnside Drive. He advised that the work was slated to be completed at the present time but there were issues with respect to land acquisitions. He noted that staff will remain in communication with the province to see how the work is progressing.

Mr. Birman Das, of 10 Redbank Road, noted that he has lived in the area for 32 years and advised of the underlying issue that there will be too many people coming and going in an area that cannot support the increased activity. He noted that road upgrades, particularly safe accesses and exits to Oakmount drive and the surrounding road infrastructure is a necessity before development should be considered.

Mr. Paul Selig, of 77 Rock Manor Drive, advised that many people have been driving through his street to avoid the lights going in to the Superstore on the Bedford Highway. He advised that many motorists totally ignore the stop sign on Rock Manor Drive and advised that the proposed development would likely not solve this problem. He requested further information in relation to the proximity of the proposed development to the Bedford Commons.

Councillor Outhit noted that traffic counts have been conducted on Redbank Road within the last two to three years for the purposes of traffic signalization. He advised that a traffic count of 3000 vehicles in necessary for the installation of lights and that the last figures recorded came in at less than half of that. He noted that the traffic authority will continue to monitor the street.

Ms. Cynthia Vox, of Bedford reiterated the concerns of previous speakers in relation to erosion, traffic concerns, the installation of sidewalks and the proposed density for the area. She advised that more can be done with respect to cutting grass on the subject property for safety purposes. She commented that the whole development should be put on hold until the 102 exchange is completed by the Province and provided further commentary in relation to speed monitoring in the area. She concluded by expressing disappointment that the committee membership was not introduced at the beginning of the meeting and that the public sign-up sheet was not circulated in a more robust fashion. She further advised that the timing of the public meeting is not optimal given that it is taking place at the beginning of the summer when many residents are unavailable.

Ms. Merritt apologized for not introducing the members of the North West Planning Advisory Committee at the beginning of the meeting. She introduced each member of the committee and reiterated their role within the planning process. She requested further speakers to come forward.

Mr. Glen Mason of 86 Oakmount Drive requested further information in relation to the proposed density of the area and whether or not there is demand for a hotel use for the subject property. He commented that he is concerned about multi-unit dwellings going up in the area given the amount of people that will be placed in a relatively small area. He advised that rental buildings will likely fall into disrepair after several years becoming an eyesore. He inquired if there has been any consideration to single family homes as opposed to multi-unit residential properties and requested that staff and council ensure that the community is well informed of what is happening with the site.

Mr. Bone provided commentary on the following:

- The density numbers used by staff are fairly conservative noting that the calculations that are used are based on census numbers which differ among dwelling units. He advised that generally the numbers are accurate.
- Municipal staff only considers the applications on the basis of what is allowable under the Land Use By-law and planning policies. He advised that it is up to the developers to figure out what type of use is marketable and allowable under the policy. He advised that traffic impact studies and stormwater/waste water management plans for the site are required as part of the planning process. He advised that findings from these studies could impact what happens with the subject area.
- In terms of compatibility for the area, Mr. Bone advised that staff base its planning policies on design guidelines which for sustainable community building. He noted that there are pros and cons to each type of development scenario noting that if multi-unit residential is development is done properly, it can have less of an impact on surrounding areas and existing neighbourhood's given that less land is used. He noted that this allows for natural buffering and landscaping to be implemented, and other factors such as underground parking can be considered to lessen the impact of vehicle parking. He further noted that Council has the ability to advise otherwise on the basis of what is the best fit for the community.

Councillor Outhit provided further commentary on the development agreement process which allows for Council to set boundaries with respect to what is allowable for development on the site. He reiterated that Council cannot make decisions with respect to traffic signalization as this is a role of the traffic authority which is independent of Council. He advised that there have been no decisions made with respect to the application and that there are plenty of opportunities for members of the public to provide input before any decision on the matter is made.

Mr. Bone reiterated that the purpose of the public meeting is to gain feedback from the community first, and then to meet with the property owners to make them aware of the public's comments and concerns. He noted that the application will be discussed in further detail by the Planning Advisory Committee and then a report will be prepared for North West Community Council for their input and recommendation before it is forwarded to Regional Council to schedule a public hearing and ultimately render a decision on the matter. He advised that there are more opportunities for the public to provide input, particularly when the public hearing is scheduled by Regional Council, whereby citizens can come to the meeting and address Council before a decision is made on the policy. He further advised that he can be contacted to answer questions and concerns as the process proceeds.

Ms. Mary Jay, advised that she is the daughter of the owner of 128 Oakmount Drive. She reiterated earlier comments in relation to traffic issues and requested further detail with respect to timelines for the proposed development. She noted concern in relation to property values in the area and if there are any plans to remove derelict properties within the subject area.

Mr. Bone advised that at this point, a report could be prepared for Regional Council by mid to late fall and a policy could be in place by December. He noted that after a policy is in place, than an applicant would need to file an application for development. He noted that the application would trigger a year long process which includes full public engagement. He noted that if all these conditions are met, it would unlikely that any development would take place until 2018.

Councillor Outhit advised that there are Dangerous and Unsightly files open on some of the properties on the subject area to address concerns in relation to safety.

Ms. Merna Sutherland, of 35 Oakmount Drive commented that the occupants of the area distributed a letter in relation to citizen concerns for the subject area in 2005. She advised that she would like to submit a copy to Council as the concerns are still relevant for the present day.

Ms. Sutherland provided a copy of the letter to the Legislative Assistant for distribution to members of North West Community Council.

Mr. Tony MacKay, of Bedford advised that he is against the proposal for multi-unit development and noted that single family homes would be a better fit for the area given that it will have a lesser impact on traffic.

Ms. Merritt called three times for speakers. There were no speakers present.

Mr. Bone advised that he will take the information away from the meeting to incorporate in his draft report. He provided his contact information to members of the public to contact him in relation to the proposal.

Ms. Merritt thanked all those in attendance for taking part in the meeting and advised that the commentary from those who had spoken will be reflected in the minutes.

3.0 ADJOURNMENT

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

Liam MacSween
Legislative Assistant