

CULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 7, 2007

MINUTES

PRESENT: Councillor Andrew Younger, Chair
Ms. Joan Hicks, Vice Chair
Ms. Adriane Abbott
Ms. Sheilagh Hunt
Mr. William Barker
Ms. Sally Camus
Mr. Michael Cross
Mr. Gary Russell
Ms. Megan Williams

REGRETS: Ms. Sharen MacPherson
Ms. June Buchanan
Ms. May Lui
Mr. Shalom Mandaville
Councillor Sue Uteck

STAFF: Ms. Holly Richardson, Regional Coordinator, Culture & Heritage
Ms. Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant

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1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. in the Councillors' Lounge, 4th. Floor, City Hall.

2. Approval of Minutes - None

3. Approval of Agenda - Additions/Deletions

Addition:

6.1 Meeting Room Location (Chair)

The Chair recommended that the Committee move up item 5.1 Aliant Presentation to be dealt with as the first order of business, to which it was agreed.

MOVED by Ms. Camus, seconded by Ms. Hunt that the agenda, as amended be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Chair recognized and welcomed Mr. Michael Cross, advising that he was the newly appointed representative from the Heritage Advisory Committee.

The Chair also noted that Ms. Abbott will provide an update at the April meeting on the Urban Design Advisory Committee.

5. New Business:

5.1 Aliant Presentation - Mural Program

The Chair introduced Mr. Keith Bennett, from Aliant and advised that he would give a presentation on the company's Mural Program. The Chair added that he thought it would be worthwhile for the Committee to be informed of the program and provide feedback.

Mr. Keith Bennett advised that he was an Exchange Area Manager with Aliant and his focus over the past couple of years has been with their Fibre to the Node Program. He noted that this program includes having murals painted on Aliant's cabinets and boxes that are now common in most neighbourhoods. Highlights of his presentation are as follows:

- the Fibre to the Node Program is designed to deliver high speed services to neighbourhoods and in order to do so, the cabinets have to be installed closer to the neighbourhood.
- there are plans in the future to move towards a fibre based network (Fibre to the Home network) and this will result in less cabinets.
- in 2005, the program began in Rockingham/Bedford area and this area is now fully deployed; last year started in Dartmouth and this is expected to be completed at the end of May.
- plans for 2007 include expanding to Main Street Dartmouth, Lower Sackville, and

- the downtown core of Halifax
- 80 sites will be built this year, and Aliant representatives will be meeting with the Councillors of the affected areas.
- Aliant is aware of the graffiti problem, and the program is designed to reduce the impact on customers; Aliant has an agreement with the City to put murals on any new cabinets and put murals on older ones as they can.
- the intent is to make the cabinet blend in with the surroundings.
- the amount of graffiti has been reduced; an anti-graffiti clear coat is put over the murals to protect them.
- local artists are contracted to do the murals
- to date, the murals have received very positive response.
- it was noted that many of the artists will carry out research with the idea of painting something which has historical significance to the area.

Mr. Bennett advised that he would appreciate receiving feedback from the Committee with regard to the type of artwork. He explained that Aliant has the opportunity to change the way the murals are painted, and that they can take more of a historical approach or a high-tech, modern approach. Mr. Bennett also noted that they are considering utilizing groups such as the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.

Mr. Bennett responded to questions.

In response to a question, Mr. Bennett advised that the lifespan of the boxes are five to seven years. He also pointed out that Aliant anticipates getting Fibre to Home within the next five to seven years.

The Chair noted the following issues in which Mr. Bennett would like feedback: whether the murals should stand out as public art, or should they blend in with the surroundings; and secondly, is there a different way to engage community when it comes time to get feedback on the downtown area.

In referring to downtown Halifax, Mr. Bennett explained that there will be approximately one cabinet for every one kilometre of people (i.e. every two to three blocks) and although they intend to hide them as much as possible, there will be some cases that the cabinet could be in front of a historical building or in someone's backyard.

Mr. Russell suggested that the murals on the downtown cabinets should be a historical representation of that particular street on which it is located.

Ms. Abbott advised that using artists from the neighbourhood of where the cabinet will be installed is a good idea, because you can entrust that artist will want his/her neighbourhood well represented. Noting that she worked for NSCAD, she indicated to Mr. Bennett that she could get him in contact with various artists.

Ms. Williams also suggested that he contact the Visual Arts of Nova Scotia, as they may be interested in taking this on as a project. She also cautioned against referring to the murals as 'works of art', noting that they are really decorative pieces work. She explained that using incorrect terminology could result in Aliant encountering legal problems. Ms. Williams indicated that it was important for Aliant to have contracts with artists in regard

to copywrite.

Ms. Hicks advised that having the murals blend in with the surroundings, particularly, historically significant areas such as the Hydrostone would be appropriate, whereas, an area like Quinpool Road could have something different.

Mr. Bennett indicated that he has resisted allowing more urban modern art because he does not feel that it fits in with Halifax.

In response to a question, Mr. Bennett advised that Aliant takes full ownership of the art, at the end of the project.

Ms. Richardson advised that HRM hired a mural artist specifically to work with young artists in high school, and they have been doing murals in the community. She added that one project they are working on now is the Skateboard Park and Pavilion Building on the Halifax Common. Ms. Richardson advised that her recollection of this particular project was that the mural artist is engaging local graffiti artists to do a mural that will explore graffiti art.

The Chair thanked Mr. Bennett for his presentation.

5.2 Canada Winter Games Presentation - Cultural Program

The Chair introduced Ms. Marion Currie and advised that she worked in the Community Development department and that, with HRM's recent win of the 2011 Canada Winter Games bid, she will be overseeing this work. He advised that there will be a cultural program associated with the Canada Games and Ms. Currie will provide an update on this.

Ms. Currie began her remarks by providing background information on HRM's bid process for the 2011 Canada Winter Games and advised that they were now at the stage where they are required to develop a nonprofit host society that will develop and manage the Games. She added that an arts program and ceremonies events program will be required as the host society will host the opening and closing ceremonies and any festivals and events that take place during the games.

The Chair noted that this was very preliminary information and that Ms. Currie would be back to the committee with updates.

Ms. Currie responded to questions.

Mr. Paul Dunphy, Director, Community Development, explained that staff will have to communicate back to Council in the next few weeks and that, eventually, the Municipality will let go of the Games as it becomes a community event. The Municipality's involvement will be as a funding partner, but the Games will be volunteer-driven with a hired staff. He indicated that if this committee wanted to be involved, it would not be through Regional Council, but through the host society.

The Chair advised that he believed the host society will very much value the Committee's

advice.

4. Business Arising out of the Minutes/Deferred Business:

4.1 Presentation - Paul Dunphy, Director, Community Development

The Chair noted that Mr. Dunphy was originally scheduled to come to the Committee meeting a couple of months ago, however, due to illness and then subsequently, his requirement to attend an HRM Court hearing, this meeting was his first opportunity to attend.

The Chair explained that this past September there was a re-organization of some HRM Business Units, and Mr. Dunphy became Director of Community Development. He noted that the Community Development business unit is where the Cultural Plan now falls. The Chair indicated that the Committee had expressed some concern as to whether there would be adequate staff support to assist the Committee in implementing the Cultural Plan, and that Mr. Dunphy was here today to respond.

Mr. Dunphy outlined the various divisions which comprise his business unit, and the rationale for the re-organization. He noted that no services were eliminated in this process. He explained that there are some vacancies in the Culture area, and when he initially took over the Business Unit, there was a period of time that he was reluctant to fill the vacancies because the manager of the area was on sick leave, and he felt that she should be involved. Mr. Dunphy added that she has since announced she is retiring, so he has been looking at restructuring at that level, and to fill the vacancies. He noted that no positions have been eliminated.

Mr. Dunphy responded to questions clarifying the following points:

- with regard to Culture, there are five positions designated as cultural and, as well, there are a few other position that have this component in their job description.
- with regard to expectations from the Committee, the most important aspect would be to prioritize what can be done at the Municipal level with regard to the Cultural Plan. Once the priorities are established then resources can be assigned.
- for the time being, Ms. Richardson is the staff resource assigned and he will ensure she has the time available to make this a priority.

In response to a question by Mr. Barker regarding what he sees coming out of the Cultural Capitals, Mr. Dunphy advised that he believed that the community and not bureaucrats should be the drivers for community issues. He explained that from a governance point of view, the Municipality provides core services, and that there are certain things that define or pertain to our community that end up coming to local government because the other levels of government will not deal with it. Mr. Dunphy explained that given that the Municipality does not have the resources, the option is then to go to the community and community groups. He suggested there were certain things that the Municipality can do

in regard to civic events, etc. and that there were other things that are not within the Municipality's mandate, but in which the Municipality can create an environment for.

Ms. Williams pointed out that Halifax has a rich cultural life, however the Provincial Government is in disarray with how it treats Culture. She advised that there is a place for the City to be in the centre of culture and that it should have an Arts Council.

In response, Mr. Dunphy advised that the Municipality does not fill a void that the Province has created. He added that if the Municipality is to be involved, it has to be strategic about what it does and why it is applying resources; and the fact that the Province has created a void is not a rationale for the Municipality to become involved in an arts council.

Mr. Russell retired from the meeting at 4:55 p.m.

Following further discussion, and In response to a question, Mr. Dunphy advised that staff could provide an inventory of the Municipality's physical assets, and the Committee could then work on community assets.

Ms. Hunt asked if a future agenda could included an item on Common Land for discussion. She advised that a group called, Friends of the Common Committee is forming at the end of the month.

The Chair thanked Mr. Dunphy for his attendance and presentation.

6. Added Items

6.1 Meeting Location

This was added to the agenda by the Chair.

The Chair noted that Mr. Russell raised a concern about the meeting in the Councillor's Lounge because it did not have tables in which he could take notes.

The Chair pointed out that he suggested this location because Halifax Hall is not reliable, as the meeting can be moved on short notice, should the Mayor's Office require the use of Halifax Hall. The Chair noted that there was a meeting room off the Councillors' Lounge, or another possible alternative is the large Board Room across the street in HRM's Duke Tower offices.

The Chair requested that members pay particular attention to their agendas as the meeting location may change, until a permanent location can be established.

7. Next Meeting Date - April 4, 2007

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

March 7, 2007

Sheilagh Edmonds
Legislative Assistant