

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

URBAN DESIGN TASK FORCE

**MINUTES
November 1, 2006**

PRESENT: Dale Godsoe, Chair
William Hyde
Paul Shakotko
Geoff Keddy
Kendall Taylor
Paul MacKinnon
Cathy Carmody
Bernie Smith
Linda Garber
Kevin Riles
Councillor Sloane
Councillor Smith
Councillor Wile

REGRETS: Clarence Butler, Vice Chair
David Garrett
Margot Young (absent)

STAFF: Jacqueline Hamilton, Manager, Capital District
Paul Morgan, Senior Planner, Regional Plan
Harold Madi, Project Manager, Office for Urbanism
Jennifer Keesmaat, Partner, Office for Urbanism
Stephanie Parsons, Legislative Assistant

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CALL TO ORDER	4
2.	APPROVAL OF MINUTES	4
3.	APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS	4
4.	BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES	12
	4.1 Revised Terms of Reference Update	12
5.	CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS	12
	5.1 Regional Plan in the context of Urban Design	12
	5.2 Heritage Properties vs Urban Development	12
6.	CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS	12
	6.1 Correspondence	12
	6.2 Presentation	12
	6.2.1 Heritage Names for Streets	12
7.	REPORTS:	13
	7.1 MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE	13
	7.1.1 Development Economics	13
	7.2 STAFF REPORT	13
	7.2.1 Options of replacement of local architectural expertise	8
8.	ADDED ITEMS	5
	8.1 Meeting Schedule	5
	8.2 Draft Urban Design Framework	5
	8.3 Review and Confirm Vision and Principle	9
	8.4 Schedule for the week of Forum 2	10
	8.5 Forum 2 advertising and communications: Role of UDTF	11

8.6 Site selection criteria for “Residential Infill Case Studies (Forum 2) 11

9. NEXT REGULAR MEETING DATE 13

10. ADJOURNMENT 13

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** - October 4, 2006

MOVED BY Councillor Sloane, seconded by Mr. Paul MacKinnon, that the minutes of the October 4, 2006 meeting be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. **APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

Additions:

- 8.1 Meeting Schedule
- 8.2 Draft Urban Design Framework
- 8.3 Review and Confirm Vision and Principles
- 8.4 Schedule for the week of Forum 2
- 8.5 Forum 2 advertising and communications: Role of UDTF
- 8.6 Site selection criteria for "Residential Infill Case Studies (Forum 2)

Deletions

6.2.1 Heritage Names for Streets

The Chair advised the members that if they have any suggestions regarding street names to contact staff directly.

Move

Move the additions before item 4.1.

MOVED BY Councillor Sloane, seconded by Ms. Cathy Carmody, that the agenda be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Meeting Schedule

- A revised meeting schedule was before Task Force.

The Chair advised that Councillor Smith and Councillor Wile were appointed to the Task Force and introduced Councillor Smith. She noted that Councillor Wile will be joining the meeting later.

She provided an overview of the revised meeting schedule. She pointed out that the revised meeting schedule coincides with the forums and the next forum is December 4, 2006. The next meeting will be January 10, 2007. She stated that input from the Task Force is important as the forums constitute the majority of the work.

Ms. Jacqueline Hamilton commented that there are three aspects to the Task Force Role:

1. Advising on our communications and public participation.
2. Reviewing the materials and information that has been gathered at the forums.
3. Formulating recommendations to Council at each stage of the process.

In addition she advised that the staff Steering Committee will also be making recommendations. Staff will work with the consultants to integrate the Task Force recommendations and staff recommendations into the study.

MOVED BY Mr. Bernie Smith, seconded by Ms. Kendall Taylor that the revised meeting schedule be approved . MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

8.2 Draft Urban Design Framework

- A copy of the Draft Urban Design Framework Plan descriptions, Draft character Area Statements and five related maps were before the Task Force.

Mr. Harold Madi, Office for Urbanism, provided an overview of the plans starting with the neighborhoods and districts map.

Responding to questions of the Task Force he advised of the following:

- Commons North was split into two separate planning areas, as Robie Street has two distinct areas and does not have a walking radius;

- Commons North reflects the planning areas;
- Planning areas are important to ensure that there are planning services within the character areas, it is about distinct character and does not form a complete neighborhood;
- The Neighborhoods District Corridor map identifies distinct characters that distinguishes them from other areas in the city, the red lines identify community planning areas;
- As we proceed different planning areas and neighborhoods will emerge.

The Task Force recommended that the following changes be made to the Neighborhoods District Corridors Map - Halifax:

- Delete the potential Community Planning Areas and only identify the existing neighborhoods (Red Lines);
- Rename Victoria General to V.G./IWK;
- Add a five minute walking corridor to Commons North;
- Rename the Spatz neighborhood to the community name. Staff is to determine what that name is.

Councillor Wile entered the meeting at 12:27 p.m. and the Chair welcomed her to the Committee.

In reference to the Neighborhood District Corridors Map - Dartmouth the Task Force recommend the following changes:

- Separate Albro Lake and Lancaster Ridge into separate neighborhoods;
- Delete the reference to Jellybean Square and include it as part of Victoria Park;
- Add Harbourview as a neighborhood.

In reference to the Prominent View and Character maps Mr. Kevin Riles commented that there will be a need to protect the prominent view planes. The Regional Plan intends to attract 25,000 people to the downtown area, therefore developable parcels on the map where you can increase density would be useful.

Mr. Madi stated that the overlay will be an important part of the framework. The character statements help to articulate what makes the area special and distinct. This will not be presented in the upcoming forum as it requires more analysis and time. At this stage it is important to identify the areas, the statements will come later.

The Task Force agreed that although all the detail is not present, the Consultants are going in the right direction. In addition they recommended that the consultants articulate the character statements for Dartmouth, add more detail to the Dartmouth map and clarify the map titles to

reflect what the map represents.

Councillor Sloane suggested that Brunswick South and Citadel North be combined with Gottingen Street.

Councillor Sloane left the meeting at 1:03 p.m.

In reference to the Urban Character Structure plans, Mr. Madi advised of the following:

- The plan is a result of building on background information, public consultations and the last forum;
- The intent is to define a plan to grow the Regional Center;
- This plan lays out the blueprint for the hierarchy for urbanism;
- The color coding corresponds to the intensity and density of buildings;
- Each of these categories will provide a matrix that will show land use and building topologies.

Responding to Ms. Linda Garber, Mr. Madi clarified that the maps represent a 100 year plan. The plans build on existing plans while looking at the future in conjunction with the Regional Plan. In addition he advised that panels will be prepared for each plan. During the next forum they will provide descriptions, photographs and precedents to demonstrate what is intended for each structure area.

Mr. Paul Shakotko commented that before you start considering infill cases you need to share the demographics and economics of the areas, they are designing in the absence of people.

The Consultants commented that the intent of the exercise is to provide a framework to direct growth and intensification in an orderly manner. The idea is to create a rational approach to direct growth, where people can be best accommodated, not where growth currently exist.

Mr. Shakotko commented that “best” accommodated” depends on the existing character of the population and economic standing of the residents who are currently there. Understanding where we think the demographic shift will occur will help understand how that shift and future demand will impact the infill structures.

Ms. Hamilton raised concern that the employment district on the Urban Character Structure Plan is harbor oriented and does not capture the significance of the DND property, Capital District and hospital and university areas.

Mr. Madi commented that the only place where land use is mentioned is in the districts. The intent is not to focus on land use but the built quality of these areas. The downtown core will still have employment uses, it is not about directing employment to these areas but identifying

them as distinct areas. There maybe a need to rename the employment district to avoid confusion.

Ms. Carmody questioned whether HRM and the study has determined the type of people they want to attract is it young families or only those who can afford condos.

Mr. Madi commented that the plan does not create a strategy for demographics to exist. It is important to have infrastructure to make a place livable and developable in a structured manner, which is the focus.

Mr. Riles commented that good urban design incorporates affordable housing, otherwise you will have a city that is not affordable to live in.

Responding to Mr. MacKinnon, Mr. Madi advised that Spring Garden Road has been identified as a distinct urban center due to density, building height and urban characteristics.

Mr. Smith expressed concern with density in the downtown core. He stated there is a distinction between downtown and Spring Garden Road, there is more retail on Spring Garden Road.

At this time the Task Force agreed to discuss item 7.2.1

Councillor Sloane reentered the meeting at 1:24 p.m

7.2.1 Options of replacement of local architectural expertise

- A staff report dated October 23, 2006 was before the Task Force

Ms. Hamilton provided an overview of the report and advised that staff is recommending option three.

MOVED BY Councillor Sloane seconded by Mr. Hyde that the Urban Design Task Force approve option three.

A discussion ensued and it was noted that there are four members who are members of the NS Association of Architects and it was suggested that persons with different backgrounds be considered in order to compliment the background of the Task Force. It was also noted that the onus is on the community to attend public meetings.

Amendment

MOVED BY Mr. Paul MacKinnon, seconded by Councillor Sloane that the Urban

**Design Task Force approve option three, with an amendment that item 2 be removed.
MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

8.3 Review and Confirm Vision Statement and Principles

- A copy of the HRM by Design e-news issue2 was before the Task Force

In reference to page 2 of the newsletter, Ms. Jennifer Keesmaat advised the Task Force that they are requesting endorsement off on the vision statement and the principles generated from the first forum. She also pointed out that they will be adding a principle around culture.

A discussion ensued and The Task Force agreed that the vision statement incorporates all the main ideas, however it requires refinement.

A discussion ensued regarding the Urban Design Principles and the following was noted by Mr. Riles:

- You must be careful with the wording of a vision statement or policy as it may make its way into a planning document;
- He suggested that the Consultants provide benchmark examples that show different types of human scale;
- He suggested that "Financial Sustainable" be included as a principle, because there are lots of areas that cannot be developed due to cost.
- If development is not financially sustainable the properties remain vacant or development is not in line with the Municipality's vision;
- For development to be financially sustainable in the urban core, afford ability needs to be consider;
- The cost of the design process may erase an existing market;
- Decisions makers should take into consideration economic feasibility.

In response to Mr. Riles, the Consultants stated the following:

- A policy framework to address built form and height will be developed;
- Market forces are not built into the plan because the real-estate market is continuously in flux, what may be viable today may not be in a year or two;
- The challenge is that quality development and the margins for the developers is inherent in the development process. The issue of affordability is a fundamental part of the overall development process. It is subjective what is affordable for some developers is not affordable for others.

The Committee agreed that heritage principle be renamed “Heritage and Culture” and that the principle environment be renamed.

MOVED BY Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Wile that the Urban Design Task Force recommend that the consultants and staff incorporate the following changes to the Neighborhoods District Corridors Maps and Urban Design Principles:

1. Neighborhoods District Corridors Map for Halifax

- Delete the potential Community Planning Areas and only identify the existing neighborhoods (Red Lines);
- Rename Victoria General to V.G./IWK;
- Add a five minute Walking Corridor to Commons North;
- Rename the Spatz neighborhood to the community name. Staff is to determine what that name is.

2. Neighborhoods District Corridors Map for Dartmouth

- Separate Albro Lake and Lancaster Ridge into separate neighborhoods;
- Delete the reference to Jellybean Square and include it as part of Victoria Park;
- Add Harbourview as a neighborhood.

3. Rename the “Heritage” principle to “Heritage and Culture”.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

At this time Ms. Hamilton introduce Mr. Paul Morgan, Senior Planner, and advised that he is the interim staff liaison during Mr. Fillmore’s leave of absence.

8.4 Schedule for the week of Forum 2

- A document entitled Urban Design Forum 2 was before the Task Force

The Chair provided an overview of the schedule and advised that the first venue will be at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.

8.5 Forum 2 advertising and communications: Role of UDTF

Ms. Jennifer Keesmaat, Office for Urbanism, commented that there are three public components of the forum and requested the Task Force assistance in advertising the forums.

She advised that they will be continuing with the bus advertisements, newspapers, PSA announcements, media, the website and e-mail. They will also be contacting the stakeholder groups.

Ms. Hamilton asked the Task Force how staff might network with various groups and target key groups who did not participate in the forum.

Councillor Sloane suggested that staff consider the following:

- Investigate the prospect of utilizing billboards;
- Advertise on the Eastlink Community Channel;
- Contact Eastlink to video tape the sessions;
- Conduct a radio circuit.

Councillor Smith raised concern about the low attendance at the first forum. He stated that it will be a challenge to get Dartmouth residents to participate, the question is why would a ordinary resident want to attend the forum.

Mr. MacKinnon suggested that when forums are being conducted in Dartmouth that he posters say "Dartmouth by Design".

The Chair asked the Consultants if they felt they have sufficient information, do they have the right people and does the invitation list reflect the gaps from the previous forum.

Ms. Keesmaat advised that it is unknown at this time if they have filled the gap as RSVPs have not been received yet. It would be ideal to do five areas in Dartmouth and five areas in Halifax. Staff may want to consider extending the forum by a few days and hold separate forums in Dartmouth and Halifax.

Responding to questions from Ms. Garber, she advised that the invitations will go out by e-mail on Tuesday and that the members will be receiving official invitations from the Mayor.

Councillor Smith stated that the stakeholder list needs to be reviewed to close the gap. Residents in his district did not receive any information on the forums. He requested that staff contact the Councillors for associations and other relevant community groups in their district.

8.6 Site Selection criteria for residential Infill Case Studies (Forum 2)

- A document entitled Residential Infill Topology Case Studies was before the Task Force.

Ms. Keesmaat advised they will be reviewing different case studies and identifying how these

areas can be transformed. They will look at an urban core, urban center, urban corridor, urban neighborhood and general neighborhood. The feedback from the forum will assist in selecting the study areas.

Ms. Carmody left the meeting at 1:54 p.m.

Responding to Mr. MacKinnon, Ms. Keesmaat advised that there will be five sites for consideration. It would be ideal if they could study 10 or 15 sites as there are different types of urban centers, however we have to take large area and narrow it down.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Revised Terms of Reference Update

- A revised Terms of Reference dated May 9, 2006 was before the Task Force
- A minute extract for the October 10, 2006 Regional Council meeting was before the Task Force

No discussion.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

MOVED BY Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Smith that items 5.1, 5.2 and 7.1.1 be deferred to the next meeting due to time constraints. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5.1 Regional Plan in the context of Urban Design

Deferred.

5.2 Heritage Properties vs Urban Development

Deferred.

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence- None

6.2 Presentation

6.2.1 Heritage Names for Streets

This item was deleted from the agenda during the approval of the order of business and approval of additions and deletions.

7. REPORTS

7.1 MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE

7.1.1 Development Economics

Due to time constraints this item was deferred.

7.2 STAFF REPORT

7.2.1 Options of replacement of local architectural expertise

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting. Refer to page 8.

8. ADDED ITEMS

These items were discussed earlier in the meeting. Refer to page 4.

9. NEXT REGULAR MEETING DATE

The next meeting date is January 10, 2007 as per the previously approved meeting schedule.

9. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Stephanie Parsons
Legislative Assistant

