

Halifax Regional Municipality
Western Common Wilderness Advisory Committee
General Meeting 006
Minutes

Date: November 14, 2007

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Lakeside Community Recreation Centre (Upper Floor)

Present: William Matheson - Chair, Darrell Cooling, Alan Kitz, Blake Maybank, Susan Smith, Dusan Soudek - Vice Chair, Councillor Reg Rankin, Phillip Cochrane, Michael Lamplugh, Lorne Logan, Kelly Morrissey, Peter Bigelow (HRM), Jan Skora (HRM), Doug Branscombe (HRM), Paul Morgan (HRM), Margot Young (EDM).

Regrets: Jane Sears

Meeting called to order by Bill Matheson, Chair

1. Approval of the proposed Agenda for Meeting 006

The proposed Agenda of the November 14, 2007 was approved.

2. Approval of the Minutes from Meeting 005

Minutes from Meeting 005 are deferred until the next meeting due to minutes not being typed.

Councillor Rankin advised that this meeting was being taped, concurred by Bill Matheson, Chair. Defer Minutes until Meeting 007.

3. Prospect Road Community Centre

Current status of the planing and design process. Access opportunity to “Nichols Lake Park” and Wilderness Common.

Jan Skora, HRM

Last week we had two community meetings in Brookside related to the approval process of the recreation facility in Brookside. The first meeting was Monday, the second was Wednesday & both meetings the staff made a presentation of the proposal. I made a presentation of the context of the Western Common, in particularly how Wilderness Common will contribute or interact with this facility. At the end of 2 ½ - 3 hours voting took place; 229 voted - 172 in favour (78%) of the proposed design & location of facility and 49 opposed. ??? The staff contributes to the overall site development/design for the facility and recommends for the convenient lake access for the future Nichols Lake Park and access to the back - which will allow in the future driveway and parking area. This was proposed & recorded on the plan and approved on the element of the design.

4. Background Information related to Western Common Needs Assessment Planning Process.

Presentation by: Paul Morgan, Senior Planner, Community & Regional Planning - HRM

Background information handed out - chronological order. First report addressed to Reg Rankin, Chair - Solid Waste Advisory Committee from George MacLellan & Dan English 1997. The first proposal was to the Solid Waste Advisory Committee from the local development agency based on the assumption that there were be a new dry landfill which would probably be located in Western Region. So at that time the solid waste resource facility, this committee was making recommendations to Council regarding that facility and it was receiving recommendations, one was from the local development agency to establish a resource recovery park. Reg Rankin said that HRBA was involved. - Dave Haley, Chartered Accountant helped. Recommendation also made by the Community Monitoring Committee that they establish a community investment for a multi-purpose centre that recommended Council set aside \$400K/year for 10 years. Politically that wasn't going to happen. Lands had been acquired for the Solid Waste

Facility, as well as lands surrounding it as a buffer zone, owned by the Regional Water Commission - Big Indian Lake area, Pockwock, and the Ragged Lake lands HRM acquired for an industrial park - At the time, the city had invested large amounts of money in acquiring land for sewer and water. Membership consisted of Dan English for whom Paul Morgan acted, Jim Bauld acted for George MacLellan, & Peter Bigelow was on the committee. Started meeting & decided they needed help so drafted ToR for a consultant - \$75K set aside for this study. Copy handed out at meeting.

Once the study was done, The Western Needs Assessment Committee send a report to Council with recommendations, February 1999 - Council wasn't prepared to accept the report. There is a lot of good information in this study, Indian Lake Golf Course, Baptist Church, & Sunrise Cemetery wanted land to expand. Wanted to save this area as a wilderness protected area.

Halifax area boundary, Timberlea boundary, & Area 4 - Prospect boundary. Even if designated as residential, recreation uses, conservation uses, not zoned for a landfill - special note that landfills are permitted according provincial legislation (landfills are exempt). Main piece of study was for a protection area.

Policies adopted, criteria established, a much more detail Master Plan needs to be developed.

Has been declared an Urban Reserve for next 20 years ± Not a high priority in the near future for development.

Western Common and the Wilderness Common and the recreations areas need to planned and need to be planned now. This issue was presented in the Terms of Reference.

Final Report came back to Regional Council. Council adopted policies and recommendations for site specific land development and land transactions.

Stewardship Committee, The Committee will be created in order to initiate planning process for Wilderness Common portion of Western Common.

It was indicated that some specific rules may be needed for the park planning and development.

No questions/comments with the exception of the Otter Lake landfill of John Savage era.

5. Western Common Needs Assessment.

Review of the methodology and planning process.

Presentation by Margot Young, Environmental Design and Management

The Western Common Needs Assessment document was presented. All details associated with presentations are included in the document distributed to WCWAC members. It was indicated that some of the land attributes probably have not changed since 1999. The study envisioned that some land uses in area of Wilderness portion of Western Common.

Goodwood: Soccer, baseball, parking lot, canteen. It is critical to establish proper relation between Active recreation areas - wilderness area

Ragged Lake & Blueberry Lake area residential development in small clusters.

Otter Lake Park - beautiful lake, pristine, fish in it. It is critical to determine an area for parking. The existing beach is not large enough. Close proximity to landfill site. No visual impact.

Exhibition Park may provide access to Wilderness Common area. Day-Use Parks is intended for 3 to 4 hours recreation uses. Currently Wilderness Areas not utilized as they should be.

Active recreation - soccer fields, playgrounds, (Peter) - additional 30 fields required back in 1999 in the municipality. School age children population has changed/dropped in the past 8 years. Active Recreation study being done at present - results will become known shortly.

6. Questions and Comments

Road coming from old Coach Road to the developed area - off the St. Margarets Bay Road. Traffic solution being able to get off the 100 series highway - good comment.

Copies of the maps will be made available to the WCWAC members of maps/report from Margot Young.

What do we need to know/what to do next re: Wilderness Conservation area?

Across the country, there is not another major city/urban area that does what Halifax does regarding conservation.

When we started this, the biggest park that we owned was 200 acres. Since this study was done, our idea of a regional park, now we have Long Lake Park, and Birch Cove Lake (6500 Acres). How can we justify three wilderness areas adjacent to each other on one side of the harbor? Joint land assembly owned by the province & the municipality since the '70s.

Discussion about what is provincial (parks) and what is regional (municipal).

Statement from WCWAC members... Margot's presentation is the one that people would get the most benefit from.

A good question for Margot, as the author, what do you think would be your top three things?

1. National parks, provincial parks versus municipal parks

2. Wilderness areas ??
3. Road issue

7. New Business and Date for Next Meeting

It was recommended that the next meeting will be dedicated to review high level planning issues and objectives for Wilderness Common portion of Western Common. No speakers to be scheduled for the next meeting.

Next meeting will December 12th from 7:00 - 8:30 pm.

8. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.