

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE
MINUTES

November 9, 2011

PRESENT: Mr. Alan Parish, Chair
Mr. William Hyde
Mr. Nick Pryce
Mr. Ramzi Kawar
Mr. Roy McBride
Ms. Anne Sinclair
Mr. Jeff Pinhey
Ms. Suzanne Saul

REGRETS: Mr. Terry Smith-Lamothe, Vice Chair
Ms. Sue Sirrs
Mr. Cesar Saleh

STAFF: Ms. Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CALL TO ORDER.....	3
2.	APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 8, 2011.....	3
3.	APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS.....	3
4.	BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - None.....	3
5.	CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – None.....	3
6.	DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS	
6.1	Redevelopment of Citadel Hotel Site, Brunswick & Cogswell Street - Presentation.....	5
7.	REPORTS/DISCUSSION.....	6
7.1	Case 16655: Amendments to the Regional MPS, the Halifax MPS, and the Downtown Halifax MPS and LUB for the YMCA – CBC Project at Sackville and South Park Streets, Halifax - Report.....	3
7.2	Election of Chair and Vice Chair - Discussion.....	6
8.	ADDED ITEMS.....	6
9.	NEXT MEETING DATE.....	6
10.	ADJOURNMENT.....	6

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED by Ms. Sinclair, seconded by Mr. McBride that the minutes of September 8, 2011 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda

The Chair noted that Mr. Hyde and Ms. Saul have to leave early, therefore, he was suggesting that the Committee move up item 7.1 on the agenda to be dealt with as the first order of business, **to which the Committee agreed.**

There was general consensus to accept the agenda as revised.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - None

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – None

7. REPORTS/DISCUSSION

7.1 Case 16655: Amendments to the Regional MPS, the Halifax MPS, and the Downtown Halifax MPS and LUB for the YMCA – CBC Project at Sackville and South Park Streets, Halifax - Report

A staff report dated October 31, 2011 was submitted.

Submissions were received from the following:

- Ed J. McHugh, Chair, Special Olympics Nova Scotia
- Phil Pacey, Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia
- Rebecca A. Jamieson and Christopher Beaumont
- Brahm Segal
- Francine Hollohan
- Peggy Cameron & Beverly Miller, Co-Chairs, Friends of Halifax Common

Mr. Richard Harvey, Senior Planner, provided the staff presentation outlining the application by Michael Napier Architects for amendments to the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy and the Downtown Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw for the YMCA – CBC Project at Sackville and South Park Streets, Halifax. He advised that the YMCA was proposing amendments to the maximum permitted height requirements on the site of the CBC

Radio building, at the corner of Sackville and South Park Streets in Halifax, to allow a mixed-use development that includes a new YMCA recreational facility. On the CBC site the maximum permitted height is 23 metres and the YMCA's application is to change this to 49 metres. Mr. Harvey highlighted that the staff recommendation is to approve the amendments. The project itself is not under consideration for approval at this time.

Mr. Harvey explained that after completing the report, staff recognized that it was necessary to more fully address the relationship of the project to South Park Street and the Public Gardens, and that this will be the subject of a supplementary report. Mr. Harvey advised that this relationship issue concerns policies and a requirement in the Land Use Bylaw that buildings adhere to a height/setback ratio, pointing out that the requirement is that at a height of 17m from South Park Street, buildings are required to have a setback distance of 0.9 m for every 0.6 m in height.

Mr. Harvey added that, although the YMCA plans are conceptual, it is known that an anticipated building, especially one that has a tower presence at the corner, will not comply with this, and that staff intend to address this in the supplementary report. He advised that an amendment to this requirement will be necessary. Mr. Harvey also advised that, at this time, staff can state that the purpose of this setback/height ratio is to address the scale of buildings next to the public gardens and potential shadowing. He added that judgment needs to be made with respect to building scale; with regard to shadowing, it is known that the impact upon the Public Gardens is minimal.

A discussion ensued with Mr. Harvey responding to questions.

During the discussion, the Committee members raised the following points:

Mr. Hyde expressed concern that the proposal varied considerably from the standard. He added that although the policies permit some variance to the standard, this proposal is too much. In addition, he noted that the Committee was being asked to deal with this when there is too much ambiguity. Mr. Hyde noted that the proposal could see a doubling in the height and that he was not comfortable with this.

Mr. Pryce pointed out that the Policy supports consideration of the application. He noted that the process involves engaging the public should Regional Council decide to consider the application, and that in his view there was merit in having it put to the public process.

Mr. Pinhey suggested that it appears that Policy is being developed according to the building and to accommodate a specific shape. He also expressed concern about the precedent-setting nature of this application.

Mr. Kavar advised that he did not support the application as it appears to be an attempt to change the law to fit the development.

Ms. Saul indicated that she was indecisive on the matter. She noted that the YMCA was very beneficial organization, but that Parks Canada has advised that they oppose the additional height. She also noted that she would like to have more information on the impact of shadows on the Public Gardens.

In response to a question on the height of the proposal, Mr. Harvey clarified that the proposed development is not uniform in height throughout the site, and that the amendment states that it would allow 'up to' 49 metres.

Ms. Sinclair indicated that although she was a supporter of the YMCA, she could not support the amendments, as her main concern was with the mass of height.

The Chair advised that he was not supportive of the amendments. He added that in his analysis, this was an exercise in spot zoning and that there is not sufficient public benefit to offset the requirements of the HRMbyDesign Plan which has been in place for only two years. He added that a building the same height as the CBC would provide a great entrance to the downtown but if allowed to go higher, it could result in the beginning of a wall of buildings in the area.

Mr. Pryce expressed concern that if the economics do not work out for the YMCA, the City may end up losing the Y. He added that the Policy enables this application to be considered and that it would be appropriate to take it to the public for feedback. Mr. Pryce suggested, in considering this matter, the Committee keep in mind the setback requirements, and that this site is the gateway to the downtown.

MOVED by Mr. Kawar, seconded by Mr. Hyde that the Design Advisory Committee recommend Regional Council refuse the proposed amendments to the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy, the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and the Downtown Halifax Land Use By-Law, as contained in Attachments A, B, C, and D of the October 31, 2011 staff report. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The Chair noted for the record that the vote, done through a show of hands, was passed with five voting in favour of the motion and three voting against.

6. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

6.1 Redevelopment of Citadel Hotel Site, Brunswick & Cogswell Street – Presentation

A memorandum dated November 9, 2011, with attached documentation in regard to plans, elevations, design rationale and variance request was submitted from Paul Sampson, HRM Planner.

Mr. Adrian Moore representing the applicant, SilverBirch Hotels and Resorts, addressed the Committee and he and other members of his project team provided a presentation

in regard to their application for site plan approval for a proposed mixed-use redevelopment of the Citadel Inn site, at Brunswick and Cogswell Streets, Halifax. The proposal is for a two-tower hotel complex with common facilities and a residential building at the southern end of the site.

During the presentation it was noted they would be seeking a variance in regard to Section 3.1.3 of the Design Manual concerning the 11m minimum height requirement, Because, there are sections that, due to the sloping site, the design objectives and the floor and ceiling levels, where the streetwall dips slightly below this minimum requirement. On Brunswick Street the maximum variance is 1.6m and on Cogswell, due to the increase slope, the maximum variance is 3.3m

The representatives responded to questions from the Committee.

7. REPORTS/DISCUSSION (cont'd)_

7.2 Election of Chair and Vice Chair – Discussion

Mr. Parish advised that his term was up at the end of November and he did not intend to re-offer. He noted that there were some other members whose terms also expire at the end of the month, therefore, he was suggesting that the election of Chair and Vice Chair be dealt with at the next meeting, and when it is expected that Regional Council will have made its new appointments. Mr. Parish expressed his appreciation to the Committee members, advising that it was a pleasure to work with everyone over the past couple of years. In turn, the Committee members thanked Mr. Parish for the leadership and guidance he has provided the Committee during his term as Chair.

8. ADDED ITEMS: None

9. NEXT MEETING DATE - December 8, 2011

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Sheilagh Edmonds
Legislative Assistant