

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

May 9, 2013

PRESENT: Terry Smith-Lamothe, Chair
William Hyde, Vice-Chair
Sue Sirrs
Kevin Conley
Mary Black
Suzanne Saul
William Hyde
Jeff Pinhey
Cesar Saleh
Anne Sinclair
Ramzi Kawar

REGRETS: Ann Wilkie
Suzanne Saul
Roy McBride

STAFF: Sara Knight, Solicitor
Kurt Pyle, Supervisor HRM Planning
Miles Agar, Planner
Jane Crosby, Legislative Support

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 11, 2013

MOVED by Ms. Sirrs, seconded by Mr. Saleh that the minutes of April 11, 2013 be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Additions:

3.1 – Special Meeting of the Design Review Committee

8.1 – Discussion on Preparation of Proposals

MOVED by Ms. Sinclair, seconded by Mr. Saleh, that the agenda, as amended be approved.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3.1 Special Meeting of the Design Review Committee

Mr. Saleh suggested that the Committee hold a special meeting. The purpose of the meeting would be to review the process the Committee uses to review applications and the role of the Committee with regard to making recommendations to Council on Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) amendments within the HRM by Design area. Committee members agreed that this would be beneficial. Mr. Saleh suggested that members email the Chair their thoughts and comments on the potential agenda.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES: None

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS: None

6. CORRESPONDENCE/PETITIONS/DELEGATIONS: None.

7. REPORTS/DISCUSSION

7.1 Case 18465: Substantive Site Plan Approval – Mixed-Use Development, 5504 Spring Garden Road, Halifax

A staff report dated April 30, 2013 was before the Committee.

Mr. Miles Agar, Planner HRM, gave a presentation on the application by Westwood Developments Limited for a substantive site plan approval. Mr. Agar gave an overview of the site context and presented the zoning map. He indicated the locations of view planes 9 and 10 and noted that they would not be affected by the development.

Various views of the location were presented through aerial photographs, street level photos and renderings. The materiality of the building was noted as being glass on the first two floors, with terracotta louvers and paneling through the middle portion of the building. A 3D rendering was also shown to give a sense of the massing and scale of the building. Mr. Agar also indicated that the roof on the building would be a living "green roof".

Mr. Agar then presented the site plan, the proposed lighting plan and the roof plan. The various elevations were shown, as were the entrances to the building. It was noted that canopies would be provided over the building entrances.

The requested variances were presented to the Committee and include:

- Upper storey streetwall stepback
- Upper storey side yard stepback
- Streetwall height
- Landscaped open space

The findings of the wind impact assessment indicate that resulting wind levels are expected to be comfortable, and that wind impact is mitigated by the building's stepbacks and canopies. Mr. Agar also noted that the building is in the post-bonus height category. The developer has proposed to provide the public benefit through exemplary building practices. Mr. Agar concluded his presentation by presenting the proposed recommendations to the Committee.

The Chair initiated a discussion regarding the Design Manual Checklist. Ms. Sinclair asked for clarification on the locations of the canopies on the building in relation to item 3.1.1d. It was noted that the canopies are not continuous along the length of the building. Ms. Sinclair indicated that the wind impact assessment noted down-washing of wind along Spring Garden Road. It was confirmed by the designers, present in the gallery, that canopies would only be located above the entrances. This item was then discussed in relation to the building's articulation. Ms. Sinclair expressed concern over the wind's down-washing effect on pedestrians and stated that further mitigation should be considered.

The Committee continued their discussion and staff responded to questions. The Chair asked Mr. Agar to explain the request for the Landscaped Open Space Variance. Ms. Sirrs expressed unease with regards to this request. She pointed out that in Precinct 3 that they have already eliminated the requirement for Open Space at Grade. She indicated that she understands that the site is small, has restrictions, and is located in

proximity to several public green spaces; however she suggested that the importance of open space is being lost.

Mr. Pinhey suggested that any public benefit coming out of this project could potentially go to a public open space rather than go to what is currently being recommended. Ms. Sinclair asked about the opportunity to explore using the building's roof as a landscaped open space. Staff and the Committee discussed some of the modifications to the building that would be required to meet this potential opportunity. The developer responded to questions from the Committee with regards to having a proper landscaped roof. The Committee then revisited the option to have any public benefit go to the provision of publicly accessible open space.

After lengthy discussion of the proposed recommendations, the Committee made a series of motions.

MOVED by Ms. Black, seconded by Mr. Saleh, that the Design Review Committee approve the qualitative elements of the substantive site plan approval application for the mixed-use development of 5504 Spring Garden Road, Halifax, as shown on Attachment A. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Ms. Sirrs, seconded by Ms. Black that the Design Review Committee approve the requested variances to the Streetwall Height, Upper Storey Streetwall Stepback, and Upper Storey Side Yard Stepback, as shown in Attachment A and outlined in Attachment B. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Mr. Conley, seconded by Mr. Saleh that the Design Review Committee approve the requested variance to the Landscaped Open Space as shown in attachment A and outlined in Attachment B. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Mr. Pinhey, seconded by Ms. Sinclair that the Design Review Committee accept the findings of the qualitative wind impact assessment found in Attachment B; furthermore the Committee recommends the Development Officer pursue more mitigation of the type suggested in the report. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Ms. Sinclair, seconded by Ms. Sirrs that the Design Review Committee recommend the Development Officer accept the provisions of publicly accessible amenity or open space (public benefit category, such as a financial contribution or sponsorship to the Halifax Public Gardens or other nearby public open space). MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Discussion on Preparation of Proposals

The Chair expressed concern over no longer being provided a “Vision/Design Statement” from project Architects. The Committee discussed this option and staff responded to questions. The Committee suggested that it would be beneficial to see the architect’s “side of the story”.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – June 13, 2013

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm.

Jane Crosby
Legislative Support