

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES

September 12, 2013

PRESENT: Terry Smith-Lamothe, Chair  
William Hyde, Vice-Chair  
Kevin Conley  
Jeff Pinhey  
Anne Sinclair  
Suzanne Saul  
Roy McBride

REGRETS: Sue Sirrs  
Anne Wilkie  
Cesar Saleh  
Ramzi Kawar  
Mary Black

STAFF: Dali Salih, Planner  
Kurt Pyle, Supervisor Planning Applications  
Jane Crosby, Legislative Support

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 11, 2013 and August 8, 2013**

Mr. Hyde noted that he was present at the July 11, 2013 meeting, meeting but is recorded as being absent.

**MOVED by Ms. Sinclair, seconded by Mr. McBride, that the minutes, as amended be approved.**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Ms. Sinclair noted concerns that were discussed at the August 8, 2013 meeting and not recorded in the minutes. She requested that item 7.1, at page 4, be amended to read:

*Ms. Sinclair noted concern over not having the complete Heritage Advisory Committee report as this report is referenced in the staff report before the Design Review Committee. She noted that having the report allows the Design Review Committee to fully consider the application.*

*Ms. MacLellan explained the process regarding heritage properties and noted that the application will go to the Heritage Advisory Committee then the Design Review committee before it goes to Regional Council. She added that the reason for this is because decisions of the Design Review committee are appealable to Regional Council. Ms. Murphy, Deputy Clerk, added that the Heritage Advisory Committee report is a recommendation to Regional Council and it cannot be released until such time as it goes to Regional Council. Ms. MacLellan added that reference to the Heritage Advisory Committee report in the Staff Report was an error. She suggested that perhaps an excerpt of the minutes from the Heritage Advisory Committee meeting be included in the future.*

Referring to Item 7.3 on page 6, Ms. Sinclair requested that the following be added to the the bulleted list.

- *Solid wall parking entrance modified to be more open based on previous Design Review Committee comments.*

Ms. Sinclair requested that the following be added to paragraph 5, on page 7

*Ms. Sinclair also commented that she feels a lot of careful design work went into designing the outdoor private space and she believes it is a good design however she would like to see Universal Design applied to this space as it is not accessible to everyone. She noted that Halifax is lagging behind in Universal Design Standards, but she feels with a new development these standards should be incorporated.*

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

**MOVED by Ms. Saul, seconded by Mr. McBride, that the agenda, as presented be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES: None**

**5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS: None**

**6. CORRESPONDENCE/PETITIONS/DELEGATIONS: None**

**7. REPORTS/DISCUSSION**

**7.1 Staff Report – Substantive Site Plan Approval – Mixed Use Building - 1581 Dresden Row, Halifax**

Ms. Dali Salih, Planner HRM, introduced the application for a five storey mixed-use building. She presented the location of the subject site and noted that the development would have two frontages. Aerial images of the site were presented and neighbouring properties were noted. Ms. Salih noted that the property is surrounded by commercial uses. The subject site is zoned DH1 under the Downtown Halifax Land-Use By-law and can be found within Precinct 3 and view plane 9. Ms. Salih added that the view plane is not obstructed by the development.

The applicant is proposing to demolish the building that is currently on the site and build a new mixed-use building that will feature eight (8) residential units atop commercial space. Ms. Salih noted that the ground floor unit could convert from commercial to residential and vice versa.

Various renderings of the proposed development were presented to the Committee. Ms. Salih also presented some of the elevations and side elevations. She then presented the requested variance to the quantitative elements of the Land Use By-Law and the evaluation of the proposed project against the guidelines of the Design Review Manual. Ms. Salih also noted the qualitative impact assessment that was conducted and the results of that assessment.

Ms. Salih presented a minor change to the application that recently came forth from the applicant. It was presented for comments from the Design Review Committee and Ms.

Salih noted that should the Committee prefer the alternative design, an alternative motion would be drafted. Ms. Salih concluded her presentation.

The Chair inquired about the renderings and expressed concern about the gap between the proposed building and the neighbouring building. Ms. Salih responded that the new development covers almost 100% of the site and the gap is from the neighbouring side. She noted that a project engineer approved this. The Chair noted that this could be a safety concern.

Ms. Sinclair indicated that, in general, she is finding it difficult to assess the project because of the inconsistencies amongst the drawing sets. She also noted that she has difficulty understanding the site plan. She feels that there is a lack of detail on the drawings.

The Chair inquired about the status of the application. Ms. Salih noted that a preliminary presentation of this application did not come forward to the Committee at the last meeting because the agenda was full. She added that this is why the preliminary information was sent out by email for comments. Because each application has 60 days, the timing on this one is coming to an end in approximately two weeks. Mr. Hyde commented that drawing and plans brought forth to the Committee should be clear and consistent. He echoed Ms. Sinclair's concerns.

Ms. Sinclair inquired as to how the Committee could proceed given the inconsistencies within the information provided. The Chair suggested that perhaps, Mr. Keddy could present to the Committee and respond to some of the inconsistencies within the drawings and to the questions that the Committee has.

Mr. Keddy agreed to present the proposed project. He noted some of the construction concepts that are being considered for the project and presented the materiality for the building. Mr. Keddy also presented the ideas behind the alternative design and giving the building a cap. He then responded to questions from the Committee.

Ms. Sinclair expressed that she is still concerned about the lack of information. She noted that there are many things about this project that are positive; however she would like the right information to make a proper assessment. Mr. Keddy apologized for the confusion with the information.

Mr. Hyde asked about the option to deny the application and what impact that would have on the project. Ms. Salih indicated that the process would have to start from the beginning again. Mr. Kurt Pyle, Supervisor Planning Applications, provided the Committee with the various options that are available to them with regards to this application. He suggested that the Design Review Committee outline exactly what they require to make a decision and then hold a special meeting to make such a decision.

The Chair initiated a discussion on the roof plan and asked Mr. Keddy to explain the plan. Mr. Keddy noted the roof deck as likely being a PVC type of material. He added that there would be planters, pots and benches similar to the Grainery Building. He noted there would be an exit on both sides and he indicated the location of the 42" railing and noted that it would be set back slightly. He outlined two options for the railing as being horizontal or vertical. He noted that the planters would likely be lumber and may contain some sort of evergreen or weeping birch. Mr. Keddy also added that there would likely be some sort of LED lighting.

Ms. Saul noted that between the two options, she prefers the first option that doesn't have a cap on the top. She feels the first option is more elegant. In response to a question about the ground floor use, Mr. Keddy responded that the concept for this building's ground floor is to have a residential unit that could also function as an office or studio for an artist or perhaps an architect. Ms. Sinclair noted that for the purpose of evaluating this project, the Committee would have to consider the space as Commercial and Residential. The Committee entered into discussion on the use of this space and Mr. Keddy and Ms. Salih responded to questions.

In response to how the ground floor could be transformed into more of a residential residence, Mr. Keddy responded that landscaping could be used. He noted that the front could be built up as a planter. He noted that window treatments could be used as well.

The Committee then reviewed and held a lengthy discussion on the Design Manual Checklist. Mr. Keddy and staff responded the questions from the Committee. The Chair discussed the options available to the Committee, including approving the application with conditions, rejecting the application or holding a special meeting. Because of the inconsistencies within the information provided, the Chair inquired about deferring the decision and holding a special meeting. The Committee clarified that they would like to see the following, additional, information on the application:

- A revised site plan, showing landscaping, especially at the ground floor level. It should also show setbacks relative to the building.
- A roof plan including all aspects of the landscaping; vegetation, decking, materiality, benches, pots, plants, railings and the lighting.
- The details and aspects of the 12 inch parapet.
- General materials and design of the whole upper level.
- A building section showing the scissor staircase.
- Physical samples of the materials for the railings and the balcony
- On site plan A-100 there should be additional notes on the materials and the products (on all schedules).
- Details on screening for the ground floor residential unit.
- A clearer indication on how the door way stands out.

Mr. Hyde noted that there are many errors in the drawings and feels that they should be corrected. He noted that he will submit his mark-ups to staff. A further discussion ensued and it was **MOVED by Mr. Hyde, seconded by Ms. Sinclair that the Design Review Committee defer a decision until a special meeting of the Design Review Committee to take place in the next two weeks.**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**7.2 Lunch and Learn Outcomes next steps**

The Committee concluded that this item will be deferred until the October 10, 2013 meeting.

- 8. ADDED ITEMS - None**
- 9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – October 10, 2013**
- 10. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.

Jane Crosby  
Legislative Support