



**HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING
MINUTES
December 1, 2016**

PRESENT: Jason Cooke - Chair
Aurora Camano - Vice Chair
Councillor Richard Zurawski
David Williamson
Dylan Ames
Scott Smith
Derek Bellemore
Janet Morris
William Breckenridge
Brian Cuthbertson

STAFF: Jacob Ritchie, Urban Design Program Manager, Planning and Development
Seamus McGreal, Heritage Planner, Planning and Development
Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to the Committee are available online: <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/hac/documents/161201HACPIM.pdf>

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. and adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

The Chair acknowledged members of the Committee in attendance, and introduced Seamus McGreal, Heritage Planner, HRM Planning and Development.

2. Demolition Applications for 1333-35 Barrington Street and 1349-53 Barrington Street, Halifax

Mr. Seamus McGreal reviewed the following applications for demolition:

- Case H00427 – Application for Demolition of a registered municipal heritage property located at 1333-35 Barrington Street, Halifax
- Case H00428 – Application for Demolition of a registered municipal heritage property located at 1349-53 Barrington Street, Halifax

A copy of Mr. McGreal's presentation is online and on file.

Mr. McGreal's presentation included the following points of reference:

- Review of applicable legislation under the Heritage Property Act, section 18, 'Consideration by municipality of application to alter or demolish'
- Review of images of the subject properties
- The applications involve:
 - Thomas Jefferey House, c. 1816 – 1333-35 Barrington Street
 - Renner-Kearney House, 1892 – 1349-53 Barrington Street
- Review of maps and images of the Old South Suburb
- Review of proposed boundaries and built form proposed for the Old South Suburb Heritage Conservation District
- Financial Implications of the applicant's proposal and staff's proposal
- Environmental Impacts of demolition - 25-30% of the entire waste stream is from construction debris.
- Reviewed the demolition application process – staff evaluation and recommendation to the Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC), HAC recommendation to Regional Council.

Responding to a question of clarification, Mr. McGreal advised that if Regional Council were to approve the demolition application, the applicant could proceed to apply for a demolition permit immediately, however if Regional Council rejected the demolition application, a three year period is imposed before the property owner can apply for a demolition permit.

The Chair invited the Applicant or the Applicant's representative to address the meeting at this time. No one came forward.

The Chair opened the floor for members of the public to speak with regard to the applications.

Mr. Graham Duffus, Halifax, advised that he is against the demolition of these buildings. Mr. Duffus spoke of his successful experience with restoring another heritage property, the Stoddard House, where the community came together to save the building and address crime issues in the neighbourhood. He indicated that he respects the Applicant's abilities with respect to development, but believes it would be a mistake to demolish these buildings, particularly given that a process is underway to implement a Heritage Conservation District for the area. Mr. Duffus encouraged Council to deny the applications for demolition, and consider expropriation to save the buildings, noting that these buildings should be looked at as a community resource. He commented that he hopes the Applicant will reconsider.

Mr. Louis Lawen, Dixel Developments, addressed the meeting, noting that he is the developer of one of the subject properties. He indicated that he has been working with HRM with regard to the redevelopment of this site since 2013. Mr. Lawen commented that if incentives to create value in heritage properties existed, these properties would not be in the position they are in. He advised that they are willing to surrender the properties and offered them for sale to the municipality, but they have become exhausted trying to discuss this matter with different members of the planning department. Mr. Lawen indicated that he is not an expert on heritage, but he has done a lot of successful development in Halifax. In his opinion the Heritage Conservation District will blanket a neighbourhood with a three storey height limit and not encourage any kind of growth, and will not work to create any value. Mr. Lawen commented that it is a free market, and he would rather not be in this position, but at the end of the day there would be no value comparison with restoring the building with a newly built structure with modern systems, which would reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Ms. Janet Morris, Halifax, speaking on behalf of the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia, and as a heritage property owner, indicated that this is an important district in Halifax with 44 registered heritage buildings, and many other buildings that contribute to the heritage character of the neighbourhood. Ms. Morris noted dismay at the number of buildings that are being demolished on Young Avenue, and commented that this area should be a precinct of heritage around Government House. She discussed that roof lines are one of the most important parts of a heritage house visually, and the height of these buildings should be respected.

Mr. Brent Schmidt, Halifax, advised that he worked with the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia on a study of these heritage buildings and how to generate economics to allow the buildings to continue into the future. He advised that both houses are incredibly well built structures which have been adapted over time to contain 18 units and the condition of both buildings is very good. Mr. Schmidt noted that the properties are filled with heritage and cultural material such as crown mouldings. He noted that the idea of demolishing the buildings is difficult and he believes they are special and could be adapted to be more functional.

Mr. Matthew Halliday, Halifax, spoke in opposition of the demolition of these buildings, and commented on the number of older buildings that have been demolished over the last few years in Halifax. Mr. Halliday inquired what the proposal for the site is.

Mr. Lawen advised that he did not bring the proposal to the meeting, but the proposal would retain three sides of the Renner-Kearney House and two sides of the Thomas Jefferey House, with a modern nine storey building attached with a set-back separate from the façade.

Ms. Peggy Cameron, Halifax, inquired how long the buildings have been registered as heritage properties. Mr. McGreal indicated that they have been registered as Municipal heritage properties since the early 1980s.

Ms. Cameron commented that the property owner would have been aware of the restrictions to the properties at the time of purchase. She noted concerns with the amount of demolition taking place in Halifax, and spoke of the need for better protection of heritage properties. Ms. Cameron indicated that there is economic evidence that mixed use neighbourhoods with character have much more economic clout than brand new neighbourhoods. Ms. Cameron read from a letter she wrote to the Mayor and Premier regarding the preservation of heritage buildings, noting that they are more sustainable, more economically balanced, more interesting to residents and tourists, and should be considered assets that require controls and incentives to keep them a part of the fabric of Halifax. Ms. Cameron spoke of the energy savings from reusing buildings as opposed to demolishing and starting over.

There being no further speakers, the Chair thanked all that attended.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Jennifer Weagle
Legislative Assistant