

**URBAN DESIGN TASK FORCE
MINUTES**

June 2, 2010

- PRESENT: Ms. Dale Godsoe, Chair
Councillor Mary Wile
Mr. Jim Lamplugh
Mr. Lorne Perry
Mr. David Garrett
Mr. William Hyde
Mr. Stephen Terauds
Mr. Frank Palermo
Ms. Mary Jane Adams
Ms. Louisa Horne
Ms. Sally Camus
Mr. Bernie Smith
- REGRETS: Mr. Paul MacKinnon, Vice Chair
Councillor Dawn Sloane
Mr. Paul Shakotko
Mr. Patrick LeRoy
- STAFF: Mr. Andy Fillmore, Urban Design Project Manager
Mr. Richard Harvey, Senior Planner
Mr. Luc Ouellet, Planner
Ms. Shawnee Gregory, Legislative Assistant

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CALL TO ORDER	3
2.	APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES	3
3.	APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS	3
4.	BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES	3
4.1	Downtown Circulator Shuttle	3
5.	CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS	5
6.	CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS	5
6.1	Correspondence	5
6.2	Petitions	5
6.3	Presentations	5
6.3.1	"The Strategic Urban Partnership"	5
6.3.2	Complete Neighbourhoods	6
7.	REPORTS	6
7.1	Discussion: Summary of Functional Plans	7
7.2	Discussion Continued from May 12: Issues and Opportunities to Be Addressed in the Neighbourhood Greenprint	8
8.	ADDED ITEMS	10
8.1	World Trade and Convention Centre Update - Mr. Andy Fillmore, Urban Design Project Manager	4
9.	NEXT MEETING DATE	10
10.	ADJOURNMENT	10

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m. in the Media Room, City Hall.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - May 12, 2010

MOVED BY Ms. Horne, seconded by Ms. Adams, that the minutes of May 12, 2010 be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Addition:

- 8.1 World Trade and Convention Centre Update - Mr. Andy Fillmore, Urban Design Project Manager

Mr. Fillmore requested that an item regarding Projects Coming Forward be added to the July 7, 2010 agenda.

The Committee agreed.

The Chair introduced and welcomed Mr. Jim Lamplugh, a new member of the Urban Design Task Force.

The agenda was accepted as amended.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Downtown Circulator Shuttle

Mr. Fillmore stated that this item included Mr. MacKinnon who had sent his regrets.

Mr. Smith indicated that he was involved as well; noting that the downtown area was not well serviced by transit. He stated that when Metro Transit staff made their presentation at the May 12, 2010 meeting they indicated that their mandate was to serve in getting people out of their cars and to serve the suburban area migrating in, however, not the downtown area itself. Mr. Smith advised that he would like to send a letter from the Task Force.

The Chair agreed, stating that it had been a sobering presentation.

Mr. Fillmore stated that when staff was writing the downtown plan in 2009, Spring Garden Road and Barrington Street were designated as high shopping districts and also transit corridors. He indicated that the presented Metro Transit mandate statement was possibly not the correct vision statement and wondered what role the Task Force had to open up that mission statement. He advised that the letter which the Task Force agreed to hold off on sending in an attempt to resolve the issue with Transit staff may need to be sent now; noting that he would help with the process.

Mr. Smith advised that a re reading of the letter may be helpful.

Mr. Hyde expressed concern that a letter may be ignored.

The Chair indicated that the Task Force may want to go to senior staff and then to Council in order to point out the difference between the Functional Plans and Transit staff's comments.

Mr. Fillmore advised that staff were prepared to take a report to Council from the Task Force containing an interim check in and noted that this may provide an opportunity to get some of these transit related concerns on Council's radar. He indicated that a draft report would be submitted to the Task Force at the July 7, 2010 meeting and would likely be forwarded to Council in September.

The Chair stated that the Task Force would align it's strategy with the midterm report and revise the Transit letter for senior staff. She requested that Mr. MacKinnon, Mr. Smith and Mr. Palermo work with Mr. Fillmore on drafting the letter which will be brought back at the July 7, 2010 meeting.

Mr. Palermo expressed concern that efforts were not being coordinated under Council's different mandates and Functional Plans.

Several Task Force members indicated that there needed to be more education, communication and public outreach from the Task Force.

8.1 World Trade and Convention Centre Update - Mr. Andy Fillmore, Urban Design Project Manager

Mr. Fillmore stated that there had been some questions regarding whether the proposed World Trade and Convention Centre (WTCC) would go back through the Design Review Committee process and regarding the height allowances process for the building.

Councillor Wile entered the meeting at 12:32 p.m.

Mr. Fillmore stated that heights had been included in the Downtown Plan for approximately three months; noting that staff had went out of their way to highlight the fact that heights had been increased including at the HRMbyDesign Public Hearing.

Mr. Luc Ouellet, Planner, stated that a report had gone to Council on March 24, 2009 with a staff recommendation to not take action, however, Council decided otherwise and a supplementary report was brought forward on April 2, 2009 which included amendments to the Plan to support Council's wishes. He stated that these amendments to the WTCC were included in the full Public Hearing package for HRMbyDesign as well as the full page Public Hearing ad in the newspaper.

Mr. Fillmore advised that the Downtown Plan which the Task Force received had not included the height allowances as they came later during a time when the Task Force was recessed. He indicated that he would provide more details at the July 7, 2010 meeting.

Mr. Fillmore also stated that the Developer was being held to the same heights imbedded in the Downtown Plan; noting that the only amendment which the WTCC received was an expanded building envelope.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

6.1 Correspondence - None

6.2 Petitions - None

6.3 Presentations

6.3.1 "The Strategic Urban Partnership"

Mr. Fillmore stated that he had hoped to bring the full report to the Task Force, however, the reveal to Council had been moved to June 22, 2010, therefore, he would bring the full package to the July 7, 2010 meeting. He indicated that approximately one year ago there had been a plan to redo the street scapes on Spring Garden Road and Quinpool Road, however, those plans fell through due to staff not being communicative enough and not speaking to enough stakeholders and, therefore, not receiving the appropriate funding. He advised that staff had looked at how to better engage major stakeholders as one problem was that they were not having their objectives coordinated. Mr. Fillmore stated that it was a learning curve and, as a result, Council sent staff back to the drawing board and the idea of the Strategic Urban Partnership

was born. He noted that it was founded in the theory that strategic investments in the Regional Core were good for everyone.

Mr. Fillmore provided a diagram to illustrate his point; noting that high density settlements yield a higher tax revenue for the city, where density meets tax revenue was called the tipping point and anything lower than the tipping point was not sustainable.

Ms. Horne noted that the Strategic Urban Partnership seemed to have a similar mandate to the Greater Halifax Partnership (GHP); noting that core stakeholders were already involved with GHP.

Mr. Fillmore stated that GHP fell in the economic development column; noting that staff had been speaking to GHP as well as the Waterfront Development Corporation informally. He advised that staff had received great support from both groups and hoped to have a complete list of partners when they go to Council.

The Chair advised that this initiative was separate from GHP as it was a unique way to make HRM's governance and internal dealings more effective.

Mr. Fillmore indicated that a key recommendation within the model was the creation of an Infill Development Task Force to bring public lands to development as there was 11,000,000 square feet of capacity in the area; noting that it had the potential to become a self funded group. He stated that this would be implemented over the next 12 months.

6.3.2 Complete Neighbourhoods

Mr. Fillmore advised that the meeting had been moved from Halifax Hall where there is internet access and, as a result, he could no longer show a clip from the Centre for Disease Control, however, he would forward the link to the Task Force instead.

Mr. Fillmore stated that the clip discussed part of the five things which make a great city and also provided benefits and principles. He noted that it was as good a list as he had seen published anywhere and proposed that the Task Force take that language and put it in the Greenprint document for future planners. He requested that members view the video and bring back comments and feedback.

Ms. Horne left the meeting at 1:04 p.m.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Discussion: Summary of Functional Plans

- The HRM Functional Plans Summary dated May 25, 2010 was before the Task Force.

The Chair advised that people were becoming overwhelmed by all of the Functional Plans; noting that some areas were of critical importance to the values and successes of the Task Force. She stated that it may be helpful to take note of some of the points that members would like to revisit.

Mr. Fillmore advised that the heading of the second column on the first table on page 4 should read 'Regional Centre'.

Mr. Richard Harvey, Senior Planner, stated that the intent was not to go through the document in great detail today, however, if there were any points which the Task Force required clarification on staff would be happy to bring information back. He advised that the work the Task Force was doing was of the utmost importance and highlighted the fact that some of staff's existing approaches were somewhat tired; noting that there was some urgency in being able to get to a point of getting into detailed neighbourhood planning. He stated that staff had focussed on Functional Plans that have a Regional Centre focus.

A discussion on the HRM Functional Plans Summary ensued with staff responding to questions.

The Chair requested that staff and the Task Force take a more detailed look at the Synergies between Functional Plans on page 2; particularly regarding open space and transportation.

Mr. Palermo noted that he did not see the Functional Plans as being separate from one another and did not understand how they would be dealt with in isolation.

Mr. Harvey stated that all of this stemmed from the Regional Plan and the Functional Plans were not happening in isolation as they all came from one document and have the same tone. He indicated that was not to say that there may not be some small disagreements between some of the Plans which was why they were not policy or regulations yet, however, they were all acting in concert.

Mr. Fillmore advised that if the Task Force wished to create a voice to help in the execution of the remaining Functional Plans they should discuss that.

The Chair indicated that it would be helpful to have an analysis of what staff think are impediments and implementations to the remaining Functional Plans in advance as strategically the Task Force did not have the time or the mandate to go through each one separately.

Mr. Harvey advised that the best way for the Task Force to make a positive statement was through the Greenprint document.

Mr. Garrett noted, for those members writing the letter regarding the Downtown Circulator Shuttle, that item 5 of page 9 under the Public Transit Functional Plan outlined what the Task Force was discussing for the downtown.

Mr. Terauds wondered if the Greenprint was bold enough and if the Task Force should state that roads should not be used to maximize traffic flow in and out of the Regional Centre as the sentiment was there, however, the view was changing and the end result may not be what was intended.

Mr. Fillmore noted that ideas could be brought forward in the Issues and Opportunities piece which would be around until the last report from the Task Force goes to Council.

The Chair stated that it may be possible to funnel some issues from the Functional Plans through the Issues and Opportunities document. She requested that staff please ensure that any pertinent information be brought forward to the Task Force.

Mr. Harvey noted that it may be helpful to state in the Greenprint that the document does not exist on its own.

7.2 Discussion Continued from May 12: Issues and Opportunities to Be Addressed in the Neighbourhood Greenprint

- A document titled "Issues and Opportunities Within the Regional Centre" was before the Task Force.

Mr. Ouellet advised the Task Force that the most recent version of the Issues and Opportunities to Be Addressed in the Neighbourhood Greenprint document had been circulated. He indicated that the grey highlighted sections of the document referenced amendments based on comments from the May 12, 2010 meeting.

The Chair indicated that the Task Force would start from the beginning and discuss what members felt was appropriate.

Mr. Smith noted that it was long felt that the container port in the South End was in the wrong place as the port appeared to be coming back in terms of volume and the land which the container port operates in would be a huge development opportunity for HRM.

The Task Force discussed items 1.2 to 1.6.

The Chair requested that staff investigate whether wind standards were possible.

Mr. Ouellet noted that HRM did have a standard which was to not worsen current conditions.

The Chair indicated that the standard was not clear enough.

Mr. Fillmore stated that green design within the private sector was improving. He stated that the Sustainability Functional Plan which came out of the Downtown Plan was still in progress.

Mr. Garrett suggested that staff look at solar access.

Regarding the insertion of a potential guideline for green roofs and green living, it was noted that the document could discuss landscaping as the Municipal Charter allowed for this, however, HRM had no authority over green living roofs.

It was noted that LEED neighbourhood development principles could be included as the Greenprint was a document and not a By-law.

Mr. Fillmore noted that there should be a category for required legislative changes.

The Task Force discussed items 1.7 to 2.2.

Mr. Fillmore stated that the most intense changes would occur along corridors; noting that Mr. LeRoy, who had sent his regrets, had expressed concern with downloading heights to neighbourhoods as it may be suppressive. Mr. Fillmore indicated that the Task Force may want to consider recommending building heights on a higher range on speculation that they may be beat down.

Regarding a review of the Downtown Plan, Mr. Fillmore noted that the Task Force could call a workshop or extra meeting to be introduced to this document. He stated that the Greenprint Issues and Opportunities document was catching all comments and ideas that Task Force members and staff have submitted; noting that they could erase and add information.

Mr. Harvey noted that there were certain areas where there was no determinant for height and some of that did require correction.

Task Force members noted that the document required consistency and was possibly too permissive.

The Chair stated that this issue would be brought back at the July 7, 2010 meeting.

The Task Force discussed items 2.3 and 2.4.

Regarding a regulation that vacant lots be grassed over, Mr. Ouellet stated that he would have to investigate HRM's permission to do this in the Charter and bring information back.

Due to lack of time, this item was deferred to the July 7, 2010 meeting.

The Chair requested that staff divide the document into items which the Task Force has considered, items which were being worked on and new items.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 World Trade and Convention Centre Update - Mr. Andy Fillmore, Urban Design Project Manager

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting. Please see page 4.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting was scheduled for July 7, 2010 from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:54 p.m.

Shawnee Gregory
Legislative Assistant

The following item was added as information:

1. Planning Our Municipality - the Following Observations Could Be of Some Value When Planning Our Community - Mr. Lorne Perry