

**URBAN DESIGN TASK FORCE  
MINUTES**

**September 29, 2010**

**PRESENT:**

Mr. Paul MacKinnon, Vice Chair  
Councillor Mary Wile  
Councillor Dawn Sloane  
Mr. Jim Lamplugh  
Mr. David Garrett  
Mr. Frank Palermo  
Ms. Mary Jane Adams  
Ms. Louisa Horne  
Mr. William Hyde  
Mr. Bernie Smith  
Mr. Patrick LeRoy  
Mr. Paul Shakotko

**REGRETS:**

Ms. Dale Godsoe, Chair  
Mr. Stephen Terauds  
Mr. Lorne Perry  
Ms. Sally Camus

**STAFF:**

Mr. Andy Fillmore, Urban Design Project Manager  
Mr. Richard Harvey, Senior Planner  
Mr. Luc Ouellet, Planner  
Ms. Kelly Denty, Supervisor, Planning Applications  
Ms. Shawnee Gregory, Legislative Assistant

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 12:14 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - March 3 & July 7, 2010**

Amendment:

Councillor Wile sent her regrets for the July 7, 2010 meeting

**MOVED BY Mr. Hyde, seconded by Mr. Garrett, that the minutes of March 3, 2010 be approved as presented and the minutes of July 7, 2010 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

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

Addition:

- 4.1 Regional Plan Advisory Committee Update - Mr. Bernie Smith
- 4.2 Downtown Circulator Shuttle - Mr. Bernie Smith
- 8.1 Commercial Taxation - Mr. Bernie Smith

The agenda was accepted as amended.

**4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES**

**4.1 Regional Plan Advisory Committee Update - Mr. Bernie Smith**

Mr. Smith indicated that a number of Task Force members had attended a recent Regional Plan Advisory Committee (RPAC) meeting regarding the potential approval of three proposed developments. He stated that RPAC recommended that Council approve only the Port Wallace development and noted that while the development was closer to the urban centre, it was still a fairly significant tract of land. Mr. Smith advised that RPAC's reasoning for recommending approval of the subdivision development was that there were currently fewer lots on the Dartmouth side of the harbour. He stated that all three proposed developments would be undergoing environmental and water studies, however, only the Port Wallace development was currently recommended for approval. In closing, Mr. Smith stated that he believed the letter the Task Force wrote to RPAC had an impact on the Committee.

**4.2 Downtown Circulator Shuttle - Mr. Bernie Smith**

Mr. Smith stated that he was still surprised at the Metro Transit staff statement that their role was to transport people to and from the suburbs and not to circulate people around the downtown core.

A discussion ensued regarding the Downtown Circulator Shuttle.

Councillor Sloane advised that Metro Transit would be cutting the Route 3 'Manors' bus which was a disappointment to the urban population and, in particular, the elderly. She stated that she had received a petition from seniors requesting that the route be reinstated as the route provided them with the ability to reach essential services such as the blood collection clinic on Bayers Road. Councillor Sloane noted that, if reinstated, ridership may be higher if the route was renamed 'the Crosstown' as many people believed "the Manors" route was only for seniors.

Regarding the letter which the Task Force sent to Council regarding the Downtown Circulator Shuttle, Councillor Sloane stated that it may have been received by the former manager of Metro Transit. She advised that, once appointed, the new Chief Administrative Officer could possibly look into this matter and until then the Task Force could speak to individual Councillors as well as Community Councils.

Mr. Andy Fillmore, Urban Design Project Manager, provided an update; stating that the next edition of HRM's five year Economic Development Strategy was currently under development and the concept of focussing on the urban core would be included as a tangible item at the request of the Greater Halifax Partnership. He advised that there was a transit piece which states that HRM has to improve upon transit going around the downtown core as well as going in and out; noting that this was good news.

Councillor Wile stated that the proposed park and ride terminal for Clayton Park could potentially take many commuting cars off the road.

Mr. Fillmore advised that although there was a Transportation Functional Plan, there was the opportunity for the Task Force to take action regarding transit via the Greenprint document. He proposed that a chapter on transit be written for the Greenprint document in order for the Task Force to have their transit issues raised in Council.

**MOVED BY Councillor Sloane, seconded by Mr. Palermo, that the Urban Design Task Force request that a chapter regarding transportation be added to the Greenprint document.**

Several Task Force members indicated that an additional meeting to discuss transportation and what would be included in the document was necessary.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Mr. Shakotko advised that mobility was the issue and that the Task Force should ensure that this would be a discussion on creating complete neighbourhoods with good transit mobility.

Mr. Fillmore stated that it would be most productive for the Task Force to highlight the broad issue of mobility in the Greenprint document to attempt to help Metro Transit understand that their focus needed to change.

Councillor Sloane indicated that a 2002 study by Mr. Harry Kitchen was relevant to this issue.

**5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - NONE**

**6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

**6.1 Correspondence - None**

**6.2 Petitions - None**

**6.3 Presentations - None**

**7. REPORTS**

**7.1 Greenprint Draft 3**

- A briefing note dated September 22, 2010 was before the Task Force.

Mr. Fillmore presented the draft Greenprint Table of Contents to the Task Force; noting that staff wished to make the document as accessible and understandable as possible. He proposed the addition of a Section 5 titled 'Mobility' to Book B of the Greenprint document. Mr. Fillmore advised that Section E: Implementation would be presented to the Task Force in draft form in 2011; noting that staff would continue to make amendments and improvements to the document.

Mr. Fillmore indicated that the items listed in the Issues and Opportunities spreadsheet would be folded into the Greenprint chapters, become their own chapters or would be included in separate motions for Council approval.

Mr. Fillmore discussed sustainability and the numerical argument which could flow through the Capital Ideas discussion paper.

Regarding Book C which deals with urban cores, Mr. Fillmore advised that staff would expand and modify Section 6 to address downtown Dartmouth by using the model of the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-laws which staff worked on for downtown Halifax in 2009.

It was noted that public consultation would be done as part of the Implementation Plan.

Mr. Fillmore provided a presentation regarding Implementation. Highlights were as follows:

- There was pressure for change in neighbourhoods and changes should be made as soon as possible
- There are 11 categories within the General Neighbourhoods Table
- The table is a bit general and staff realize that there cannot be a blanket approach to every neighbourhood
- The next logical step is to create a table for each of the 11 categories and the table will then begin to reflect the character of each individual neighbourhood numerically
- Then plans could be done as of right
- The table will be easy to reference
- The Design Guideline piece will not be brought to Council as part of the Greenprint Plan draft 4 as it will be presented at a later date
- The standard form based code of the table is primarily being used in the United States at present

Mr. Fillmore proposed that staff include an example of how this will work in the Implementation section of the Greenprint Plan.

A discussion ensued with staff responding to questions.

Mr. Luc Ouellet, Planner, stated that land use would still be a part of the dynamic of the new regime, however, certain areas may be a bit wider and some would change; noting that uses would be discussed with the community.

Regarding public consultation and feedback, Mr. Fillmore advised that public consultation occurred in 2006 and 2007 at which time staff received fundamental and raw comments from the community. He stated that, after the Greenprint Plan was brought to Council, general meetings would be held for public feedback.

Mr. Shakotko left the meeting at 1:33 p.m.

A discussion ensued regarding when would be the best time to conduct public consultation.

Mr. Fillmore advised that staff had spent one and a half years consulting with residents, however, it was in the Task Force's mandate to hold public meetings at whatever point in the process they so wish.

Mr. Lamplugh left the meeting at 1:43 p.m.

Mr. Fillmore stated that it may be possible to conduct public consultation in 2011 prior to finalizing draft 4 of the Greenprint Plan; noting that staff still planned to present draft 3 to the Task Force in early November.

Councillor Sloane suggested a presentation rather than consultation.

Mr. Richard Harvey, Senior Planner, stated that the Greenprint document was meant to be general and community consultation was necessary as they would be dealing with the full neighbourhood plan.

Mr. Garrett left the meeting at 2:06 p.m.

The Task Force agreed to have staff present their findings and processes and to then invite public feedback.

#### **7.1.1 Work Plan and Fall Schedule**

- The UDTF Meeting Schedule for Greenprint Adoption was before the Task Force.

The UDTF Meeting Schedule for Greenprint Adoption was accepted as presented.

#### **7.1.2 Open Discussion**

This item was dealt with under item 7.1. Please see page 6.

### **8. ADDED ITEMS**

#### **8.1 Commercial Taxation - Mr. Bernie Smith**

Mr. Smith expressed concern that business buildings were being put in business parks rather than downtown as a result of the cap on residential taxation. He stated that the commercial base was going to be leveraged against the downtown which would

exacerbate the problem even further. Mr. Smith advised that his opinion was that the commercial rate be split between the downtown and suburban areas in HRM, however, this would not work at Council. He expressed concern that the taxation cap would effect property values; noting that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities was also against the cap. In closing, he advised that he was worried about commercial taxation levels and the thinning of downtown businesses which would, in turn, thin the downtown population.

Mr. Leroy advised that the cap created a disincentive to build downtown and, as a result, class A space was going up in business parks. He stated that incentives must be provided in order to create density and attract people to the downtown. Mr. Leroy indicated that this matter had to be seriously reviewed and consideration was required regarding how HRM thinks about zoning outside of the core.

Councillor Sloane indicated that she had taken a Municipal Financing course in 2009 and it had been noted that taxation can help stop urban sprawl.

Mr. Fillmore stated that Capital Ideas was a numerical argument that creates balance which was why it was accepted by urban, suburban and rural Councillors. He indicated that, included in Capital Ideas, was a section on creating new strategies to aid the balance and that Capital Ideas was going to be put into the Economic Strategy. He invited members to contact the Greater Halifax Partnership if they wanted to be part of the process.

Councillor Sloane left the meeting at 2:38 p.m.

## **9. NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting was scheduled for November 10, 2010.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Shawnee Gregory  
Legislative Assistant



