

# **HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY**

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## WESTERN COMMON WILDERNESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### MINUTES

October 1, 2009

- PRESENT:** Mr. Bill Matheson  
Mr. Dusan Soudek  
Ms. Kelly Carlton  
Mr. Lorne Logan  
Mr. Blake Maybank  
Councillor Reg Rankin
- REGRETS:** Mr. Darrell Cooling  
Mr. Alan Kitz  
Mr. Mike Lamplugh  
Mr. Phillip Cochrane  
Ms. Jane Sears  
Ms. Susan Smith
- STAFF:** Mr. Peter Bigelow, Manager, Real Property Planning  
Mr. Jan Skora, Coordinator, Real Property Planning  
Mr. John Charles, Planner, Real Property Planning  
Ms. Melody Campbell, Legislative Assistant  
Ms. Barb Allen, Legislative Support

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - July 2, 2009**

As there was not quorum the minutes of July 2, 2009 will be approved at the next meeting.

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

**4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**4.1 Environmental Design Management Plan**

Mr. Trevor Hume, Environmental Design Management, and Mr. John Charles, Planner, reported that the Environmental Design Management Plan is now 95% complete. Mr. Charles advised that the recent changes include cutting Chapter Five, with Chapters One to Six as the Master Plan with Chapter Seven, as an addition, focusing on the Coalition's proposal. Mr. Charles reported that the next draft will be sent out early next week and circulated to HRM staff for comment and input. This version will also be sent to committee members for final comment.

Staff advised that open houses will be arranged, The Committee members suggested that two open houses be held. It was requested that one open house be held in the Whites Lake / Brookside area and one in the Timberlea / Lakeside area.

Councillor Rankin entered the meeting at 7:12 p.m. and quorum was achieved.

Mr. Charles stated that the open houses would be approximately three hours long with a combination of formal and informal presentations. There would be opportunity for questions and answers by the public. Mr. Matheson recommenced having a panel approach so that everyone gets the same message. Mr. Charles said that the open house will allow for the phased approach to be explained and provide information on timelines.

Mr. Maybank asked about existing trails and questioned why they were not shown on map. Mr. Charles reported that Mr. Gordon Radcliffe looked at routes the plan will focus on with access through the Community Centre as the Gateway on to the Western Common. It was noted that amenities such as parking and washrooms would be available in the Community Centre.

Mr. Maybank questioned the model used to track wildlife. Mr. Hume indicated this same model has been used in other areas, such as New Brunswick. He added that the model tracks the number of species although it may not capture all. Mr. Maybank expressed concern that the varieties and size of species are not accurately represented.

Mr. Soudek asked about camping in the area, as there has not been much discussion on this topic. Mr. Charles stated that HRM Regional Parks do not permit camping. The main

reasons for this is that maintenance costs and logistics make camping impractical. Staff advised that camp fires are not permitted in the park area. Mr. Soudek indicated that some amenities would be desirable.

Mr. Charles explained that the plan will be phased in. The first phase to become park will be Nichols Lake area. The rest of the lands would have Regional Park Reserve status. Mr. Soudek suggested that By-law P-600 be included in whole the master plan area.

Mr. Maybank asked if the walking trail would eventually be upgraded for ATV use. Mr. Charles reported that ATVs could link up with a higher grade multi-use trail that could accommodate all users.

Mr. Maybank raised concern regarding some of the drainage basin areas.

Mr. Maybank stated that it would be better if the whole area had park designation permitting the Municipality to restrict activities. He expressed concern regarding moving forward if all the land is not protected as a park. Mr. Charles replied that the phased in approach is more easily enforceable. Regional Park designation is intended to include the wilderness park. The whole area will become a Regional Park Reserve. Regional Park designation is intended to include the wilderness park area. Mr. Maybank expressed the opinion that residents would understand more clearly park designation for all the lands involved rather than portions being given status of Park Reserve. It was noted that park designation would mean all lands would come under By-law P-600 and there not enough resources to enforce same.

Councillor Rankin asked for clarification regarding ownership of boundaries of the solid waste facility. He stated that any questions around expansion of the facility should not impact the master plan, and that expansion of the facility is not part of the groups mandate given that it is sixty years until sign off. Councillor Rankin indicated his approval of the master plan to date.

It was noted that there may be the possibility of future transportation routes developed if there is assistance, in the future, from the Provincial Government.

Mr. Maybank said the plan commits to preserve land, and he added that all lands should have designation that would allow for restriction of some uses.

Mr. Charles said that there will be no hunting permitted in the first four phases or within two kilometers of development.

Staff advised that the phased in approach will allow for gradual education to all users including the ATV community.

Mr. Maybank maintained his opinion that all of the land should be designated as park from the outset. Staff advised that if the whole area were designated park at the same time, there would not be enough resources to enforce regulations.

Mr. Maybank retired from the meeting at 7:50 p.m. Quorum was lost.

Mr. Bigelow reported that there are some unstable stands of trees that would benefit from forestry management which could result in a more stable forest. Mr. Soudek stated that forestry management is not natural "wilderness" practice. Mr. Bigelow said these areas are not in their natural state and that forestry management can articulate how they can be treated to develop into stable stands. Mr. Bigelow advised that over the past forty years the industry has adopted new language.

Councillor Rankin requested that best efforts be put into the public consultation phase so that everyone has an opportunity for input. Councillor Rankin commended staff, Mr. Charles, Mr. Skora and Mr. Bigelow and Mr. Hume, and Ms. Young on the plan's work to date.

Upon further discussion, Mr. Hume advised that EDM would release a draft final report to the committee by email and courier. Committee members comments are to be sent to Mr. Hume via email by Friday, October 9<sup>th</sup>. It was agreed that the next meeting be held on Thursday, October 22 at 7:00 p.m. This meeting will be held to prepare the Committee to move forward with the public consultation process. Staff advised that committee members will receive a color copy of the plan prior to the public consultation sessions.

**5. PRESENTATIONS, CORRESPONDENCE AND PETITIONS - NONE**

**6. REPORTS**

**6.1 Chebucto Wilderness Common Update**

Due to time constraints, this item will be addressed at a future meeting.

**6.2 Cell Tower Proposal**

Due to time constraints, this item is to be discussed at the next meeting of the Western Commons Wilderness Advisory Committee.

**7. ADDED ITEMS - NONE**

**8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 22, 2009, at the Lakeside Recreation Centre.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9.05 p.m.

Barbara Allen  
Legislative Support

Melody Campbell  
Legislative Assistant

