

# HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

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## WESTERN COMMON WILDERNESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### MINUTES

October 22, 2009

PRESENT:

Mr. Bill Matheson  
Mr. Dusan Soudek  
Ms. Kelly Carlton  
Mr. Michael Lamplugh  
Mr. Alan Kitz  
Ms. Susan Smith  
Mr. Lorne Logan  
Mr. Blake Maybank  
Councillor Reg Rankin

REGRETS:

Mr. Darrell Cooling  
Mr. Phillip Cochrane  
Ms. Jane Sears

STAFF:

Mr. Jan Skora, Coordinator, Real Property Planning  
Mr. John Charles, Planner, Real Property Planning  
Ms. Barb Allen, Legislative Support

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - July 2, 2009 & October 1, 2009**

**MOVED BY Mr. Soudek, seconded by Mr. Kitz that the minutes from July 2, 2009 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**MOVED BY Mr. Soudek, seconded by Mr. Maybank that the minutes from October 1, 2009 be approved.**

Mr. Soudek noted a change to Item 6.1, the minutes should read Proposed Chebucto Wilderness Common minutes.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

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

Additions:

- 7.1 Zip Line proposal
- 7.2 Strip Mall Development
- 7.3 Avalon Private Wilderness

**MOVED BY Mr. Soudek, seconded by Mr. Kitz, that the Order of Business, as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**4.1 Wilderness Common Master Plan**

Mr. Matheson explained that this meeting was the last chance for the committee to sit together before the public consultation process takes place. After the public consultation, the feedback will be included and the Master plan will go to Council for approval.

Mr. Soudek said it is somewhat concerning that there is a lack of detail in the plan.

Mr. Matheson expressed concern with the phased in approach of the Master Plan.

Mr. Charles noted that a two kilometer exclusion zone from the solid waste facility gives protection and the exclusion zone will be in place for up to sixty years. He added that Regional Park reserve would signal an overall intent. It was noted that over time zoning to Regional Park would take place.

Mr. Maybank questioned what legislation would protect lands in exclusion zone. Mr.

Charles noted that hunting is not permitted in exclusion zone and that exclusion applies to structures not activities. Mr. Maybank stated that there needs to be more protection. He added that he had mapped out the two mile exclusion zone which demonstrates that some sensitive areas will not be included.

Mr. Charles stated that zoning alone does not limit use or add protection to the lands.

Mr. Maybank advised that National Parks do not have resources to protect all National parks, but park designation would clearly label the lands as protected for park use. He added that park designation carries great weight.

Mr. Charles stated that once the plan is adopted by Council, future Councils will have regard for the intent for all lands to become part of park. Mr. Maybank advised that there is no compelling reason to have the lands in reserve and suggested they be designated as park land from the beginning.

Mr. Charles explained that there is to be a gradual limiting of access to old roads. He noted it would be easier to phase in limited use for groups such as off highway vehicles in a phased in approach. He stated that restricting access from MacDonald Lake Road will be easier if options are presented.

Mr. Matheson added that a big concern would be that new trails could be constructed. He added that motorized vehicles are not allowed to be used in parks.

Mr. Lamplugh said the rationale for the phased approach makes sense.

Councillor Rankin advised the Committee that the Municipality has a vision for more active transportation.

Mr. Charles said that each phase has been broken down to determine costs. Mr. Maybank asked if there are exemptions made for certain land uses. He stated that this Committee is in support of the ecosystem and residents noting that it would be best to clearly identify the area as a park from the beginning.

Mr. Charles said that public consultation will provide opportunity for residents to decide if the whole area should be given park designation. Ms. Smith commented that during previous public consultations, it was advised that the public suggested having motorized vehicles prohibited from parks and wilderness areas. Mr. Charles said there are old roads on the property and motorized vehicles are permitted on these roads adding that the goal would be to provide better trails for ATV's. He stated that the Provincial Government is responsible for the Greenhead and Old Coach Roads (K class Roads).

Mr. Matheson referred to the coloured map and questioned what will happen to winter trails in the Wilderness Park Area. He questioned if the rules could be enforced.

Mr. Charles advised that public feedback may lead to changes in the Masterplan. He stated that a Master Plan is not designed to provide high level detail adding that it sets a direction.

Mr. Lamplugh questioned whether it was possible that public feedback could change the designation. Mr. Lamplugh said we should not set precedence for having a park that allows OHV access.

Mr. Logan noted that there are holding ponds from the landfill that have effluence flowing into the river.

Mr. Maybank noted that policing of access onto park land could be difficult given the limited resources of the RCMP.

In response to a query by Councillor Rankin, Mr. Charles advised that he has spoken with the Province about acquisition of the K Roads.

Mr. Maybank advised that the public consultation will bring out a huge groundswell from citizens wanting the property designated a park. He added that the Master Plan seems weak because of the phased in approach. He stated that this is an extraordinary opportunity and the group needs to be bold noting that pragmatism is in the phased approach. He stated that it should be made clear and firm that this is a park.

Mr. Charles said the approach is fair and balanced. He advised that CPAWS - *Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society* - have endorsed the plan and Chris Miller from CPAWS commends the concept.

Ms. Smith said the designation of park reserve is confusing stating that it translated as "we may or may not need this land." She raised concern that the public may not understand these terms.

Mr. Maybank said the only area he would consider excluding would be the solid waste facility.

Ms. Morrissey agreed with excluding the solid waste facility site. She stated that the ATV riders have and will continue to use these lands and we do not have the resources to police access.

Mr. Lamplugh advised that it makes sense to keep the park reserve on the solid waste facility.

Mr. Logan said it is often difficult to restrict certain activities that have previously been permitted.

Mr. Matheson concluded that there is a divergence of opinion and it may not be helpful to try to vote on the zoning designation.

Mr. Maybank advised that he is uncomfortable with the Master Plan moving forward. Mr. Maybank and Ms. Smith do not want the public perception to be that all members of the Advisory Council support the Masterplan without all lands being designated park land.

Mr. Maybank stated that he does not agree to this plan going to the public without all of the area being designated Regional Park.

The Committee has divided opinion and this has been reflected in the records.

Mr. Lamplugh suggested that it would be productive to hear public comments on the plan.

It was advised that following the public consultation process, the Committee will meet again and hold a vote on the Master Plan.

**MOVED BY Mr. Maybank, seconded Ms. Smith that the Western Common Wilderness Advisory Council resolve that the area designated Regional Park reserve be reduced to lands surrounding the solid waste facility.**

**MOTION DEFEATED.**

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

6. **REPORTS**

6.1 **Proposed Chebucto Wilderness Common (verbal update by the Chair)**

As of Monday, October, 2009, it has been announced that the Provincial Government has declared the Chebucto Wilderness Common area as a candidate for wilderness protection. Mr. Matheson advised that this will compliment the Western Common.

6.2 **Cell Tower Proposal (verbal report - Mr. Jan Skora)**

Mr. Skora reported receiving a proposal from EastLink to locate a cell tower in the area of Brookside, between the cemetery and the ball field on Highway 333. He added the new cell tower would provide good coverage, which will be essential for the wilderness park. Mr. Skora distributed maps for information. He stated that EastLink would be willing to work cooperatively with community.

Councillor Rankin stated this was the case with other service providers and this would be welcome contribution to the new community centre.

Mr. Lamplugh advised that he has seen cell towers that look more like trees. He noted that the cell towers would detract from the community centre.

7. **ADDED ITEMS**

7.1 **Zip Line Proposal**

Mr. Skora has been contacted by a company looking for a location for a Zip Line in the Municipality. He added that this would create jobs and could be an economic engine for a community.

**MOVED BY Mr. Soudek, seconded Mr. Maybank that the Western Commons Wilderness Advisory Committee is opposed to the Zip Line within the park area. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**7.2 Strip mall development in Goodwood**

Staff advised that there is no planning permission or current application for a strip mall next to the driving range in Goodwood. It was noted that the work taking place is preparatory. Councillor Rankin expressed concerns for wet lands. He added that the lands are zoned presently for activities related to golf although this could be changed.

**7.2 Avalon Park**

Mr. Matheson supplied information on the private wilderness area of Avalon Park. He suggested that committee members to look into this concept.

**8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting is to be determined after public consultation is held.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Barbara Allen  
Legislative Support