



**DISTRICTS 7 & 8 PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 3, 2014**

PRESENT: Councillor Mason
Councillor Watts
Mr. Brenden Sommerhalder, Chair
Ms. Katherine Kitching, Vice Chair
Mr. Michael Bradfield
Mr. John Czenze

REGRETS: Mr. Adam Hayter
Mr. Michael Haddad
Ms. Sunday Miller
Mr. Adam Conter

STAFF: Mr. Carl Purvis, Major Projects Planner
Mr. Alden Thurston, Planning Technician
Mr. Andrew Reid, 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 Districts 7 & 8 Planning Advisory Committee are available online:

<http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/D78PAC/140903D78Agenda.php>

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. and the Committee adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m., introduced the Districts 7 & 8 Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), explained the purpose of the meeting and outlined the ground rules.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Case 19326 - Application by Dino Capital Limited to amend the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy and Halifax Peninsula Land Use By-law and to enter into a development agreement which would allow a multi-unit residential development consisting of 2 towers of eight and ten storeys respectively containing a total of 142 dwelling units and 150 parking stalls on the properties located at 1034, 1042, 1050 and 1056 Wellington Street, Halifax.

Mr. Carl Purvis presented Case 19326, describing the background of the original application and the current proposal. Mr. Purvis explained the site location and context. Mr. Purvis described the site's medium density residential designation under the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS). Mr. Purvis also described the site plan and renderings. Mr. Purvis requested commentary on the following four areas: density, height, livability, and compatibility.

Mr. Stavros Tsimiklis, a representative of Dino Capital Ltd. introduced Mr. Michael Napier, the architect assigned to the proposal. Mr. Napier stated that the main difference between the current and previous application was height and ratio of one bedroom to two bedroom units. Mr. Napier described the materials used in the new proposal. Mr. Napier also stated that in the current proposal the podium was removed and the mass diminished.

The Chair opened the floor for comments. The Chair stated that given the length of the speaker's list, the public would have 3 minutes each for comments.

Mr. Ethan Michaels, resident of Greenwood Ave, voiced approval for the proposal, stating his support for the smaller mass of the revised proposal.

Mr. Tom Gerard, resident of Clayton Park, voiced support for the proposal, stating that the project fit well with the street and was compatible with the neighborhood.

Mr. Geoff Keddy, Architect, stated his support for the proposal.

Mr. John McKee, of Glenhaven, stated that the proposal was likely to be student residences. Mr. McKee stated that the developer was ignorant of the scale and character of the neighbourhoods and current policy's focus on corridors. Mr. McKee listed other areas where development was due, and described HRM by Design policy. Mr. McKee stated that the development contained no heritage elements and ignored current HRM policy.

Mr. John Dalton, resident of Wellington Street, summarized objections to the development as height, density, parking, and wind. Mr. Dalton stated that the current proposal was three times the height allowed. Mr. Dalton questioned why the community had to go through the proposal once more and indicated that it would be undemocratic to allow the proposal to go forward.

Mr. David Jamieson, resident of Wellington Street, presented a petition to reject the current proposal. Mr. Jamieson stated that the petition began August 10th and has so far been signed by 974 residents of HRM. Mr. Jamieson stated that during the time of the previous case, Case 18565, approximately 311 residents signed the petition. Mr. Jamieson stated that most petitioners lived nearby by the site of the proposal but that other residents of HRM also signed, sharing the concern for the disregard of the MPS and the precedent that the proposal might set.

Ms. Lynn McAslan, resident of Wellington Street, thanked the PAC and Councillors. Ms. McAslan stated that concerns around the development have already been well articulated. Ms. McAslan stated that the development proposal has been amended but not substantially and questioned why the proposal was currently being considered.

Mr. Ken McInnis, resident of Wellington Street, stated his concern for parking and the unsuitability of the towers. Mr. McInnis stated that one of his main concerns was the setback of the proposal. Mr. McInnis stated that this development would impede the nearby park.

Ms. Oriel MacLellan, resident of Wellington Street, stated that the current proposal was incompatible with the neighbourhood and represented a significant threat to Gorsebrook Park. Ms. MacLellan voiced concern for wind shear, shadows, and the threat to the community park. Ms. MacLellan stated that a 5 storey development would be preferable. Ms. MacLellan questioned the need for further student housing in the area and voiced concern regarding the development application process.

Ms. Chris Annand, resident of Wellington Street, questioned why there had been no significant public engagement if there was an intention to change the planning strategy. Ms. Annand stated that the objectives of HRM by Design were contrary to this proposal. Ms. Annand also stated that the structure design shows indifference to the neighbourhood context. Ms. Annand closed by stating that inappropriate development proposals would always solicit community opposition.

Ms. Anna Fraser, resident of Wellington Street, clarified that the residential communities on the peninsula are not in the downtown. Ms. Fraser stated that the highrise buildings on Wellington Street were built in the 1960s, before the planning strategy was introduced. Ms. Fraser voiced concern for the large footprint and small size of the side yards. Ms. Fraser endorsed protecting Gorsebrook Park and warned against past mistakes being repeated.

Ms. Patricia Livingston, resident of Wellington Street, agreed that the proposed development was unacceptable. Ms. Livingston stated her concern for the legacy of development projects in Halifax that had disregarded their surroundings. Ms. Livingston stated that low-rise residential would be suitable for the area. Ms. Livingston stated that the proposal was not substantially different from the previous submission and questioned the application process.

Mr. Brian Guns, resident of Wellington Street, stated concern over the proposal with regard to how much it exceeded the allowable density. Mr. Guns also commented on the disregard for the open space and landscaping requirement. Mr. Guns stated it was curious that the proposed design did not meet minimum building standards.

Ms. Pat Whitman, resident of Wellington Street, stated that the development would impact Gorsebrook Park. Ms. Whitman stated that no other parks around the peninsula were edged by tall buildings. Ms. Whitman stated that the Gorsebrook lands should not be used as a replacement for open space requirements. Ms. Whitman stated that the landscaping recommended for the proposal was not appropriate. Ms. Whitman disapproved of the location of bike racks and of the proposal's impact on traffic.

Mr. Bob Sime, questioned why the application process was occurring and voiced concern over the ability for amendments to be made to planning strategy. Mr. Sime stated that the nearby Century Towers and Peter Green Hall are not exemplars for the development to be permissible.

Mr. Kirk Annand, resident of Wellington Street, stated that the developer failed to make a compelling case for why the MPS should be changed. Mr. Annand stated that residents of the area are unanimously opposed to the developer's plans. Mr. Annand underlined how the two nearby towers are noncompliant with the current zone. Mr. Annand stated that staff comments for the previous proposal can be directly applied to Case 19326. Mr. Annand urged the PAC and Council to reject the proposal.

Ms. Karen Beazley, resident of Wellington Street, stated disapproval for the application and voiced frustration in regards to the process. Ms. Beazley stated that the lot coverage was too high, the height

excessive, and that the two nearby high-rises were inappropriate references. With regards to livability, Ms. Beazley voiced concern for privacy, views, sun exposure, wind, and traffic. Regarding compatibility, Ms. Beazley stated that the massing was inappropriate. Ms. Beazley stated that an appropriate development would be in the range of 4 storeys, or 55 feet in height.

Ms. Jennifer Szerb, questioned whether the proposal would set a precedent. Ms. Szerb questioned whether the sewer and road infrastructure were present to support the building.

Mr. Chris Beaumont, resident of Wellington Street, thanked members of the PAC and stated strong opposition for any amendments to the MPS. Mr. Beaumont asked members of the PAC not to support the development. Mr. Beaumont recalled that the MPS was developed by the community, which included developers. Mr. Beaumont stated that high rise buildings should be restricted to major corridors. Mr. Beaumont welcomed a review of South End land use bylaws and asked that it be noted that the community wished to be consulted.

Ms. Mary MacDonald, resident of Wellington Street, described the small size of Wellington Street, great percentage of single family dwellings and stated that the proposed towers were out of proportion. Ms. MacDonald stated that the proposal would change the character of the neighbourhood, mixture of housing, and polarize demographics. Ms. MacDonald asked that the proposal be rejected or reduced to 5 storeys.

Ms. Jennifer van Rooyen, resident of Wellington Street, implored the PAC and Council to reject the proposal. Ms. van Rooyen stated that granting more height than allowed in the MPS would be inappropriate. Ms. van Rooyen voiced concern for the blasting that would occur with 3 storeys of parking, given the small setback.

Mr. Jeff Scruttin, resident of Wellington Street, agreed with the residents in opposition to the development. Mr. Scruttin stated concern over where this development process would lead.

Mr. Denis Del Giudice, resident of Wellington Street, voiced opposition for the proposal for the reasons that it disregarded planning strategy and aggressively ignored lot coverage. Mr. Del Giudice thanked planning staff for giving clear guidelines in the MPS and asked that the MPS be respected.

Ms. Anne Taylor, Wellington Street, thanked the PAC and Councillors. Ms. Taylor stated the importance of the legislative process around development. Ms. Taylor stated that many letters have been submitted against the proposal and endorsed the opposition expressed by previous speakers. Ms. Taylor stated that the setbacks, lot coverage and impacts on the neighbourhood were unreasonable. Ms. Taylor questioned why the proposal was moving forward in the process despite opposition by citizens.

The Chair responded that when a process such as this one is initiated, the PAC as a Committee is obliged to hold a public meeting.

Mr. Kevin Forward, resident of Wellington Street, stated that the proposal was largely out of scale. Mr. Forward questioned if the proposal would set a precedent and emphasized how the proposal would change the character of the neighbourhood.

Ms. Rebecca Jamieson, resident of Fenwick Street, stated support for previous comments opposing the development and emphasized that the MPS should be followed. Ms. Jamieson stated that the proposal was in violation of R-3 zoning. Ms. Jamieson stated that five floors would be the maximum accepted for the site.

Mr. Alan Young, resident of Wellington Street, voiced disapproval for the proposal. Mr. Young disapproved of the setbacks and height. Mr. Young also stated that the landscaping plan was unsuitable.

Ms. Peitra Moody, resident of Lower Water Street, voiced concern for the nearby community garden and its absence from a shadow study. Ms. Moody stated that with a 35 ft limit on height, there would be less of a concern for the garden.

Mr. Owen Carrigan, resident of Coburg Road, opposed the proposal and stated that it was representative of other examples where blocks of homes were bought by property investors for the purposes of constructing higher density buildings. Mr. Carrigan stated that there was no need for this type of development on the peninsula.

Ms. Janet Shotwell, of Murray Place, voiced concern for the proposal causing the meeting to occur, the process, and the potential for setting precedents. Ms. Shotwell stated that if this development went through, despite opposition, other developers would attempt to thwart policy. Ms. Shotwell also commented that the Gorsebrook lands should be preserved.

Mr. Hudson Shotwell, of Murray Place, stated that HRM by Design and the MPS should be upheld. Mr. Shotwell requested that the proposal not go forward.

The Chair called for additional speakers.

Mr. Alan Ruffman, resident of Furguson Cove's Road, stated that the proposal was inappropriate given the time taken to create the plan. Mr. Ruffman stated that the application process was also important to think about.

Mr. Gary Drisdelle, resident of Wellington Street, asked how deep the parking garage would be and questioned what the impact on removing the soil would be. Mr. Risdell emphasized potential damage to the streets. Mr. Risdell also stated concern for the park during construction.

Mr. Purvis responded that bylaws are in place to protect against construction and blasting.

Ms. Beverley Miller, resident of South Street, stated concern for the precedent-setting nature of the proposal. Ms. Miller labeled the proposal as "block busting," and stated that its approval would unleash similar proposals. Ms. Miller stated that the public meeting demonstrated support for the current MPS.

3. CLOSING COMMENT

The Chair called for additional speakers and then proceeded to thank everyone for attending the public meeting and for their cooperation. The Chair indicated other channels for submitting correspondence.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Andrew Reid
Legislative Assistant