

NORTH WEST PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

May 17, 2012

PRESENT: Ms. Ann Merritt, Chair
Ms. Carrie Purcell
Councillor Tim Outhit

REGRETS: Mr. Walter Regan
Councillor Robert Harvey
Ms. Pamela Lovelace
Mr. Robert Wooden
Ms. Jessica Alexander
Mr. Michael Cogan

STAFF: Ms. Thea Langille, Supervisor, Planning Services
Mr. Tyson Simms, Planning Services
Ms. Sarah Pellerine, Legislative Support

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CALL TO ORDER.....	3
2.	Case 17489: Application to amend the Bedford Municipal Planning Strategy to enable a development agreement for two 24 unit multiple unit dwellings at 88 Dartmouth Road, Bedford.....	3
3.	CLOSING COMMENTS	10
4.	ADJOURNMENT	10

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. at the Basinview Drive Community School, 273 Basinview Drive, Bedford.

Ms. Anne Merritt, Chair of the North West Planning Advisory Committee, introduced members of the Committee and staff present, and welcomed members of the public to this public meeting.

2. Case 17489: Application by Genivar to amend the Bedford Municipal Planning Strategy to enable a development agreement for two 24 unit multiple unit dwellings at 88 Dartmouth Road, Bedford

Mr. Tyson Simms, Planner, HRM Planning Services, provided background and a presentation on Case 17489: Application by Genivar, for the lands of William Fenton and Mary Elizabeth Fenton, to consider amendments to the Bedford Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) which would enable a development agreement for two 24 unit multiple unit dwellings by development agreement, and enter in to a development agreement for the proposed buildings at 88 Dartmouth Road, Bedford.

Mr. Simms advised members of the public that this meeting is an information exchange and that no decision on the case would be made at this time.

Mr. Nathan Rogers, Genivar, on behalf of William Fenton and Mary Elizabeth Fenton presented the proposal.

Ms. Merritt advised the public of the ground rules of the meeting and requested that anyone who wanted to speak to the proposed amendments come forward. The floor was opened for comments from the public.

Ms. Mim McDow, Ridgevale Drive, Bedford, indicated that she is looking for further clarification on the buffer; whether it is 100 ft. and whether it would be possible in the future for this area to be used or the other part of the land that is vacant.

Mr. Fenton responded that there are no intentions whatsoever to use this buffer along the property in the future, nor the other portion of the land. He is unable to say that these will never be used for further development but at the current time there is no intention to use the land.

Mr. Craig Gosse, Ambercrest Drive, Bedford, inquired whether, given the land elevation, the four storey building would actually look like a six storey building from the sight line of surrounding homes, as was told to him by a surveyor. Mr. Gosse also wondered if a study had been conducted on the water way that runs through the property by Environment Nova Scotia and who deemed it not to be a river.

Mr. Rogers noted that it is a four storey building being proposed and that at the current time there has not been work done by a surveyor to state what the building would look like from surrounding site lines. As well before any work would be completed on the site there would be a study done by Environment Nova Scotia showing the effect on the water way.

Mr. Simon Dubois, Ambercrest Drive, Bedford, would like to know if there is anything preventing the property owner from building 16 single dwellings as well if this is the first or second application put forth by Mr. Fenton on this property?

Mr. Simms noted that there is nothing preventing the applicant from putting 16 single unit dwellings on this property but that is not what this application is for. As well this is the first application from Mr. Fenton on this property, he had met with HRM to discuss the property but no prior applications have been put forth. He noted that the application is still subject to review by HRM and this is the first step in the process.

Mr. Jeff Boyd, Ambercrest Drive, Bedford, ask for an explanation on how painting new lines on the road will affect traffic and make it better for current residents. He commented that this will just make traffic worse in his opinion. He also noted that he feels the only way to make this better would be to take someone's property and make a new lane for traffic

Mr. Rogers advised that based on an HRM traffic department review that there was no need for additional land, just the addition of a set of arrows, but at the same time he see this as a challenge given the amount of traffic on this road. Mr. Simms noted that this will be taken into consideration and will be reviewed again when looking into the application.

Ms. Melinda Melanson, Ambercrest Drive, Bedford, wondered how the minutes were being taken as well how that will be presented and if the public will have a chance to review them. She asked that the record reflect that it seems as if there is a spot for a third building. Ms. Melanson also wondered how the amendments to the Bedford MPS and the zoning change will happen.

Mr. Simms noted that after the minutes are approved they will be posted to the web. If any member of the public does not feel that their comments were captured accurately, to contact him. He also noted that a policy would be created for the subject property because it does not fall under the current zone on the property.

Ms. Melanson inquired about Environment Nova Scotia and who engaged them about this property and who deemed the water along the property a drainage ditch and not a watercourse. She would like to see the results from Environment NS posted for public viewing.

Mr. Rogers noted that the applicant contacted Environment Nova Scotia regarding the water along the property. Mr. Simms noted that the next step in the process will be to

have HRM talk to outside bodies about the water along the property and conduct a study.

Mr. Glen Dale, Bedford, wondered if this building goes ahead whether he will lose water pressure.

Mr. Rogers noted that they would like to have a small booster inside of the building for the water pressure, but does not know at the current time how or if this will affect current residents. Halifax Water will look into this if the application goes further.

Mr. Craig Gosse, Ambercrest Drive, Bedford, noted that the building was being promoted as a seniors' building and wonders why this is. He feels that the developer should go to the community and talk to the residents to see if there is a need for a seniors' building in the area.

Mr. Rogers noted that this may not strictly be a seniors' building, but they see a need given the demographic trend of downsizing seniors and empty nesters, due to the aging population.

Mr. Simon Dubois, Bedford, inquired how many senior homes are located within the Bedford area.

Mr. Rogers noted that at the current time he is unsure of this but will look into it.

Mr. Dubois wondered as well that if this amendment to the MPS gets passed, what would stop anyone else from attempting to do this to other parcels of land.

Mr. Simms noted that any residents can go through this process at any point in time as long as they have good background and reason for making a change to the MPS. With that being said, staff do not feel that because of this application there will be an increase in the number of MPS amendment applications.

Ms. Melinda Melanson, Ambercrest Drive, Bedford, requested for the record that she feels this application sets a precedent and that the statistics noted in the application are misrepresented because Oakwood is not going to be effected by this development. She also requested that the minutes reflect that it took about 15 years to have traffic lights put in place, and she feels that this development will increase the number of people cutting through the current subdivisions to avoid the traffic along Dartmouth Road.

Mr. Wayne Sumarah, Ambercrest Drive, Bedford, inquired what the steps are involved and what the time line is for an application like this.

Mr. Simms said that an application can take up to one year, and from this step it should be another four to eight months before, before going to Council for approval.

Mr. Sumarah indicated that he would like to make the following comments for the record:

1. This is a challenging road as well as a challenging site and developing it beyond single family dwellings will impact the integrity of surrounding communities, their site lines and the intent of the original zoning in the area.
2. This development will impact road safety because of the increase in traffic.
3. The surrounding environment would be impacted because the site is next to a small playground where children play.
4. The development will elevate water lines which could harm surrounding areas.
5. This is setting a precedent and it will lead into additional units in the near future because there is space for one or two additional buildings on the site.

The developer noted that a rendering for site lines can be done and presented to the public but most times the public is not in favour of them because they feel they are made to be "best case". As well, there will be no more buildings on the site, confirming that the application is only for two buildings.

An unidentified female, Bedford, inquired what happened to the MPS with regard to Bedford. Residents came because they live in a close knit community. She wonders when high density came into play, and why staff wouldn't keep high density in Bedford West instead. She feels that this development will cause more traffic in the centre of town and when she becomes a senior she will look after her needs and doesn't feel like she needs to go to an apartment building. She thinks we are losing the feel for the community and wonders who is looking after the Bedford community. It is disturbing to her to see high-density buildings along the highway between Bedford and Dartmouth and inquired whether allowances will be made for the increased traffic this will bring.

Mr. Simms noted that from community stand point, there is a member of Council that represents Bedford, and from an HRM stand point, there is a planning and development services office in Sackville that looks after development in the area. There are situations where a developer or community member can ask to have policies changed for development. There are numerous applications that come through, some are allowed to move forward through the planning process, and others are not based on the individual applications.

Staff explained the maximum number of people who could live on the site in single unit dwellings is 24 and the sewer in the area can only support 24 people. Halifax Water will be reviewing the application as well.

Mr. Craig Gosse, Ambercrest Drive, Bedford, inquired, what will change and how it will change given that the current application is for two buildings. He inquired why lot number 94 is included in this, and will buildings be placed where they are shown?

Mr. Fenton noted that lot number 94 is included to make the area large enough to meet the requirement for the 16 lots which would allow for 24 person density. He will make

the commitment that he will put the buildings where they are shown in the drawings as long as HRM says that they can be put there.

Mr. Simms noted that the position has to meet the requirement of what is put in the development agreement and if it changes substantively then it would come back to the public. As well there may or may not be two building on the property; this is why we are here tonight based on comments raised there could be two or one or none. The developer would have to build exactly what is passed by the development agreement that is approved by HRM staff and Council.

Mr. Wayne Sumarah, Ambercrest Drive, Bedford, stated that land is very important to the community, and he doesn't feel that this project is needed to accommodate current residents. He thinks that this type of development is meant for Bedford West or a higher density area.

Mr. Simms noted that based on the calculation for the number of residents allotted in the 16 unit single dwellings, the space can hold 48 persons.

Ms. Sandy Sumarah, Ambercrest Drive, Bedford, would like to know how the buffer zone will be protected when it is owned by Nova Scotia Power. How can it be guaranteed that they will not come in and clear cut the trees and the buffer zone will then be gone.

Staff clarified that it was noted that there can be nothing done to prevent Nova Scotia Power from coming in at any point in time and clear cutting the trees on the land that they own.

Mr. Simon Dubois, Ambercrest Drive, Bedford, commented that each year he has to fight with Nova Scotia Power to not have them clear cut the trees along his property which are owned by them.

Mr. Doug Beattie, Shore Drive, Bedford, inquired why there is only one entrance and if there will be additional ones for emergency vehicles.

Mr. Simms noted that this will be addressed by HRM traffic department if the application goes further.

Pat, Ambercrest Drive, Bedford, noted that when residents moved to Bedford 25 years ago, they wanted to have a certain lifestyle and retain the community character. This is not at all represented in this application. He does not understand why Environment Nova Scotia said that the drainage ditch is not a watercourse and wondered how this can fall under HRM and not Environment Nova Scotia. He thinks that the amount of water (drainage) will be too much to handle with the building addition, because when he had gone to HRM to put a run off into the drainage ditch he was turned down for just that reason. He stated that he feels this is going to affect environment, traffic, lifestyle,

and other aspects of life for the residents and does not like the aesthetics or size of the buildings.

Mr. Eric Melanson, Ambercrest Drive, Bedford, commented on the buffer zone, noting that there is another house shown on the side which looks to be about 30 meters away, and inquired if this was correct. Mr. Melanson also noted that there was an article in the paper today which made it seem like the project is supported by HRM and is going a head

Mr. Rogers noted that the house in question would be about 30 meters away. He also noted that they were not involved in having the article placed in the paper but were contacted to comment on it.

HRM staff wanted to make the clarification that when it is stated "they support the idea of going to the community for a public information session" this does not say they are in support of the project, but think that it could be viable and would like to see what current residents feel and take it all into consideration.

Ms. Murna Nelson, Nottingham Drive, Bedford, noted that every piece of land that comes up seems to be turned into apartments or condos, and asked why it could not be developed into nice town houses, which would cut down on the number of cars which will be added to an already busy street.

Mr. Vaughn Steeves, Brentwood Drive, Bedford, inquired if 16 single family dwellings were built here how far down would the digging have to go in comparison to how far down they would have to go for the 4 story buildings? Should the community be concerned with structural damage to their homes?

Mr. Rogers noted at the current time he is unsure of the depth needed for the construction of single unit dwellings, but in either case blasting would have to occur in the area.

Staff noted that if blasting did take place there would be a pre-blasting survey done of all homes which could be affected by the blasting so that if some sort of structural issue occurs after the blasting it will be documented and the resident can go to their insurance to have it covered.

Mr. Frank Robinson, First Avenue, Bedford, inquired whether future development will increase water usage and flow at the Mill Cove water plant and how changes could happen to allow for the additional density of a second building. He feels that a second building will increase the density that is not allotted on the site, nor in the current water supply. He asked if there will be a creative alternative to collect storm water on the site or manage wastewater.

The developer noted that for wastewater removal it is not part of municipal regulations to have this done. Also at the current time an alternative system has not been thought of

but there is something in consideration for the peaks and valleys in the water usage and how to use the water in a valley to aid with a peak.

Mr. Kevin Borden, Properties Close, Bedford, noted that he would like to see the project go ahead but at the same time not. This is because he feels once a project like this is started it will open the door for similar projects.

Mr. Eric Melanson, Ambercrest Drive, Bedford, asked if the storm water will be sent out the rear of the property, and does the developer know how much this will be.

Mr. Rogers noted that at the current time he does not know the exact number but a survey will be done before going ahead to address this.

Mr. Craig Gosse, Ambercrest Drive, Bedford, wonders if there will be a traffic study done to address issues brought up this evening.

Mr. Simms noted that the HRM traffic department will review the application and determine if a study will need to be conducted; the same would go for whether an environmental survey needing to be done in the area.

Mr. Gosse wondered what HRM's opinion is on the 4 story building really looking like a 6 story building from the residents site lines.

Mr. Simms noted that before the application goes to Council the developer would have to submit a realistic view of what the building will look like to current residents.

Mr. Gosse asked if there will be another chance for the public to talk about this once again after the meeting tonight.

Mr. Simms noted that once HRM reviews the application with all of the comments taken away from the meeting tonight and the application goes forward to Council, a public hearing will be held where the community will have an opportunity to see and comment on the final rendering before a final decision is made. He also noted that there is a 14 day appeal period after the decision is made.

Ms. Judy Dubois, Ambercrest Drive, Bedford, wondered why 3A was part of the property in question tonight.

Mr. Rogers noted that the piece of land was added to allow for the 16 single family dwellings persons density and there are no intentions of using this land for anything else at the current time.

Pat, Bedford, would like to know the size of the units that will be in the proposed building.

Mr. Rogers noted there will be 1 and 2 bedroom units ranging in size from 800 square feet to 1,200 square feet.

Councillor Tim Outhit, District 21 - Bedford, wanted to let the community know that nothing has been decided, approved or pre-approved so please do not assume anything other than this is the beginning of an objective process. He commented that the land is zoned for 16 single unit dwellings with density of 48 persons or possibly the amount of people that would be allocated for one 24 unit building. At the current time the area is at capacity for the sewage system in Bedford and modification would have to be looked at to increase the number of persons permitted on that property. He also noted that with one building, as opposed to 16 single unit dwellings there would be less cars added to the area. Councillor Outhit noted that there would be a notification sent out to community members who would be affected by the blasting if the application goes forward and they would have a pre blasting survey done of their properties. He reassured the community that all their concerns regarding height of the building, site lines, waterways, traffic, and property development will be taken into consideration and have been captured in the minutes.

Mr. Simms noted that any email sent to him regarding concerns around this application will also be attached to the minutes, and if community members would like they are more than welcome to come down and discuss this application with him in person.

3. CLOSING COMMENTS

Mr. Simms thanked the public for their input into the process and outlined the process and timelines for the application as it proceeds to Regional Council.

Ms. Merritt thanked everyone for attending.

4. ADJOURNMENT

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

Sarah Pellerine
Legislative Support