

NORTH WEST PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

September 11, 2013

PRESENT: Ms. Ann Merritt, Chair
Mr. Paul Russell
Councillor Tim Outhit

REGRETS: Ms. Carrie Purcell
Mr. Michael Cogan
Councillor Steve Craig

STAFF: Mr. Andrew Bone, Planning Services
Ms. Sarah Pellerine, Legislative Support

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Lebrun Centre (Lion's Den), 36 Holland Avenue, Bedford.

Ms. Ann 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 information meeting.

- 2. Case 18423: Application by West Bedford Holdings to amend the Bedford West Secondary Planning Strategy to permit:**
- a) 34' single family lot frontages within Sub-Areas 2,7 and 8; and**
 - b) Automotive service stations within the Mixed Use Business Campus (near Innovation Drive and Gary Martin Drive), and within the Community Commercial area, Bedford and Hammonds Plains.**

Mr. Andrew Bone, Planner, HRM Planning Services, provided background and a presentation on Case 18423: Application by West Bedford Holdings to amend the Bedford West Secondary Planning Strategy to permit:

- a) 34' single family lot frontages with Sub-Area 2,7 & 8; and
- b) Automotive service stations within the Mixed Use Business Campus (near Innovation Drive and Gary Martin Drive), and within the Community Commercial area, Bedford and Hammonds Plains.

Mr. Bone 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. Kevin Neatt, West Bedford Holdings (WBH) provided an update on proposed changes and why WBH were asking for 34' single family lot sizes in Sub-Area 2, 7 & 8. He provided an overview for Sub-Area 2, since Sub-Areas 7 and 8 are currently with HRM Planning and should come to a public information meeting in the upcoming months.

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.

A Resident of, Kearney Lake, posed a question to HRM staff asking where the new Highway 113 will be in relation to the developments? As well if there will be regulations against sound/noise coming from the highway?

Mr. Bone responded noting that Highway 113 is a provincial project, not municipal nor one of West Bedford Holdings. It was noted that this highway is not shown on the current 5-year provincial plan for transport and infrastructure, but should come across the middle of the Sub-Areas and would run in behind Kingswood. Mr. Bone noted there

are proposed access sites at Kearney Lake along with a ramp going under the highway to access the developed communities from the highway.

Mr. Bone responded to additional noise questions stating that HRM is not involved with this provincial project cannot regulate provincial projects. Councillor Outhit noted that Council has no jurisdiction regarding provincial projects.

Mr. Len Thompson, Blue Mountain Estates, Hammonds Plains wondered how traffic flow will be handled because currently there is an overflow of traffic?

Mr. Bone noted that within the master plan is a master traffic study. For any of these developments to take place there would have to be improvements to the roads to make the traffic flow smoother. It was noted that the roads along Kearney Lake are currently being widened and Larry Uteck will be brought down to Kearney Lake Road to improve flow. Mr. Bone noted that he does not have the list with all the road improvements with him, but will place it on the HRM website for the public to view.

Mr. Thompson also questioned the commercial property and what will be happening in that area.

Mr. Bone noted that the Development Agreement for Sub-Area 7 and 8 will be coming to the public in the next few months, and this is where the commercial area would be located.

Mr. Thompson noted that the past summer has been very bad in the community due to noise from the Industrial Park located close to Sub-Area 7 and 8 that has been grandfathered in allowing for noise early in the morning. He does not want additional light industrial businesses to come into the area creating additional noise and an unappealing landscape.

Mr. Bone noted that when Sub-Area 7 and 8 development is by Development Agreement HRM will have much more control. He also noted that the concerns about the noise have been heard and efforts will be made to ensure the project adheres to the by-law.

Mr. Carl Muller, Blue Mountain Estates, Hammonds Plains, would like to add to the concerns from Mr. Thompson, stating the noise in the light industrial park starts around 5:30 and he has called regarding this and nothing was done. Mr. Muller noted he has little faith in the new project being proposed to benefit the current residents.

A Resident of, Blue Mountain Estates, Hammonds Plains wonders about noise and how the new street layout will look once Highway 113 is constructed. He noted that residents bought big lots in the area for a reason and worries how the proposed smaller lots will look next to his for example.

Mr. Bone noted that Sub-Areas 7 and 8 have just been brought to him for a proposed Development Agreement. He noted there will be surveys conducted to help control any conflicts on the fringe of the urban to suburban will be brought to a public information meeting in the upcoming months.

Mr. Hynes noted that if you open up the end of Arbour Way this will increase traffic to the area as well if you have access to the highway traffic would increase. Mr. Bone further indicated that this could not be discussed because as previously mentioned.

A Resident of, Kearney Lake Subdivision, Kearney Lake would like to know if there will be a connector road built from the end of the Kearney Lake Subdivision or will it remain on its own.

Mr. Bone noted that this would be in Sub-Area 7 and 8 which will be discussed at an upcoming public information meeting. He noted the information will be put on the HRM website before the meeting so residents will have a chance to see what will be proposed.

A Resident of, Kearney Lake Subdivision, would like to thank the HRM planners for bringing this information to the public and would like to ask the developers if they have been to the Kearney Lake area. She noted that it is one of the nicest areas in HRM and can only be compared to Point Pleasant Park in the South End. She feels that subdivisions in the area and gas bars are not appropriate in the area; we should be talking about how to preserve the area and its beautiful nature. She believes the 34' single family lots will take away from the large lots and nature currently in the area. She invited West Bedford Holdings to come and visit the area so they will not want to potentially destroy it.

Kevin Neatt responded noting he fully agrees that the area is beautiful and full of nature and it is their goal to work with the land and make it a great community for new and current residents.

Mr. Bone noted that there have been many proactive things done in the area to preserve its beautiful elements. There is a series of parkland designated areas along Kearney Run along with policies to maximize the features. He noted when it comes to the storm water management; this area has the strongest controls in HRM to prevent possible damage to the lake water.

Mr. Bone also noted that there is a plan for a large regional park to be developed in the Kearney Lake area and because of this many controls will be put in place to keep disruption of the area to a minimum.

A Resident of, Kearney Lake/Hammonds Plains Area, noted that by building high density lots there will be a great loss of trees in the area and also by putting a commercial area close to the lake residents will not be able to enjoy the lake.

Mr. Bone noted that there is no commercial area on the lake, but in one Sub-Area the commercial development can come close to the lake based on the agreement.

A male wondered why there is not a plan to build a boardwalk area along the lake so that people can come to the area and enjoy what it has to offer.

Mr. Bone noted that within the plans there are walk ways built along the lake.

Mr. Neatt noted that on the side where the lake is located there is parkland allocated to bring proper and safe access to the lake.

A Resident of, Kearney Lake/Hammonds Plains area commented that all residents are on well water and wonders what will happen with the new development. She also noted that she would like to have walkable communities because in Larry Uteck it is not overly safe to walk because of traffic, nor is it transit friendly.

Mr. Bone responded that Bedford West is projected to have over 20,000 residents. By having a community of this size there is a transit component put in place along with the construction of multi-use trails providing a connection to the Hammonds Plains Road and eventually Kearney Lake Road and possibly Larry Uteck Drive. There is possibility in the area to connect too many other regional trails.

A female asked about the gas bars and what would happen if it was to leak into the lake and the water supply is damaged?

Mr. Bone noted that if a gas bar was built in close proximity to the lake many policies would be put in place to help the lake should a leak occur.

A Resident of, Kearney Lake/Hammonds Plains commented that nothing has been addressed as to what will happen to the wildlife in the area or what will happen to the prices of their homes in the area with these smaller row houses being put in. He also wanted to know what the impact on the water supply might be with all these new residents coming in.

Mr. Bone responded the new development will be fully equipped with water and sewer, with these upgrades slated to be completed in the next year. As previously noted there will be a very strong storm water management system put in place that will be by the Water Advisory Board.

Mr. Bone agreed that with the construction of these new developments, some wildlife will be affected and because of this Natural Resource was consulted when looking into highway 113 and that has been moved slightly to allow for a regional park in the area.

Ms. Roxanne Butler, Kearney Lake asked if there will be 20,000 homes in the area with 34' lots based on what has been proposed tonight.

Mr. Bone noted that the density is not changing, simply the mix of buildings in the area. He said if there is an increase in 34' lots then there would be a decrease in 40' lots, the one thing that cannot change is the 20 persons per acre, which is based on the sewage flow maximum.

Ms. Butler noted concerns about the traffic that will be in the area with all of these developments.

Mr. Bone noted that the developer had been required to make a number of improvements. He indicated he has a list of all current improvements and will post it on the website for residents to access.

Mr. Frank Chambers, Blue Mountain Estates, Hammonds Plains noted that he moved into the area a while ago and due to the noise coming from the light industrial zone he is unable to sleep and is very hesitant as to what will happen with this new proposed development. He also noted that the amount of service station seems to be far too many since there are already three very close to the area. Mr. Chambers has never heard one of his neighbours say they wish they had additional service stations in the area and feel this is a decision made by people outside of the community. His last concern was that he feels it will take many years before the voice of the community will be heard and changes will be made in their favour.

Mr. Bone noted that the area designated for commercial use is not solely slated for gas bars. When planning and the developer looked at these areas it was thought a gas bar would work in the areas furthest away from the lake.

Mr. Chambers commented that the area is suffering from the development with roads not paved and no sidewalks, but yet their taxes have gone up. He noted there will be an increase in traffic and wondered if Metro Transit service will be offered.

Mr. Bone noted that all the capital cost collected will go to improvements in the area. With regards to Metro Transit he noted it will take some time for it to be fully integrated into the area and, however, Transit is aware of the need in the area for their service.

Mr. Chambers asked for the definition of open space and why if highway 113 will not be going in for another 10 years, why are we talking about gas bars tonight?

Mr. Bone noted that with the amount of people in the area there will be a need for a gas bar long before the highway 113 will be constructed and that is why we are discussing it tonight.

Clarifying open space, noted for example that park land deemed as open space. This is space that will not be developed and will be a no cut zone unless subject to a report from an arborist stating trees must be cut in the area.

Mr. Len Thompson, Kearney Lake/Hammonds Plains Area wondered about the street view and if vehicles will be able to fit down the street once cars begin to park along the side of the road with the new proposed 34' lots. He said the streets in Mount Royale and Larry Uteck are hard to navigate down after 5:00 pm.

Mr. Bone noted that this area will have mixed use buildings, with various lot sizes and layouts. Traffic studies have been conducted in the area and there was nothing that would indicate any traffic flow issues.

Mr. Neatt from West Bedford Holdings noted that in 2006 they took over the area from the Annapolis Group, where between 2002 and 2006 they came up with policies and studies in the area dealing with the transportation council with whom they constructed a long-term transportation plan. He noted that there is a capital cost allocated to each portion of land between \$4,000 and \$40,000 per acre. With West Bedford Holdings paying over a million dollars thus far to allow for changes to improve the area, one of which being the road coming from Larry Uteck to Kearney Lake to help traffic flow.

Mr. Hanusiak also discussed the proposed highway 113, where he said they sold the land to the province and in that sale there was a mandate stating there must be a larger than normal buffer zone between the highway and the community. He noted that there may be access to highway 113 from Kearney Lake Road but does not feel there will be access from the new development. With regards to the gas bars in the area, they are looking at the big 25 year picture and planning for growth in the area not because of traffic that will be coming from the highway. Mr. Hanusiak also noted that gas bars cannot be put in place without the approval of council.

Mr. Bone agreed with the comments made by Mr. Hanusiak and noted he will be placing a copy of the proposed improvement on the HRM website.

A Resident of, Blue Mountain Estates, Kearney Lake wonders what the density in the area is and what types of buildings can make up the density.

Mr. Bone noted that the area is a mixed use area; this means in the area there can be single detached, semis, town/row houses, condos and commercial. Within the residential areas there is a density maximum of 20 persons per acre or around 6 single dwellings per acre.

A male asked about the 34' lots and if the builder will be able to get additional density in the area because of the smaller lots. He noted he does not want the additional density left over to be moved into Sub-Areas 7 & 8.

Mr. Neatt noted that on the flip side they are able to take additional density (if any) from Sub-Areas 7 & 8 and move it to other Sub-Areas. They will not know how 7 & 8 will look until plans can be drawn up once HRM has had a chance to review.

Mr. Bone noted that the ability to shift some density was added to the overall Development Agreement to add for some flexibility and movement because they did not know what issues would arise during construction. He noted that the policy is broad overall but in each individual Development Agreements they are very strict as to what can go where and the density. When Sub-Areas 7 & 8 comes to a public information meeting the layout and density can be discussed then.

A male also commented that he is against a gas bar on the Kearney Lake Road but could agree with the proposed one off of Hammonds Plains Road. He stated that by placing one on Kearney Lake Road this will only draw trucks from highway 113. The male noted that he agrees with the commercial area and additional amenities being added to the area.

A male would like to know what is being done with the money collected from the developer as a capital cost, what is HRM doing with this money and will it go to the development or elsewhere?

Mr. Bone noted that the money is in its own funding program account and will only go to improvements in the area.

A male asked what will be in all of this for him and the current residents. They will be living in a very different neighborhood very soon than what they bought into, what improvements the city will be giving residents.

Mr. Bone noted that there will be sewer and water closer to current residents but they will not have access to it, but the possibility is there if the current residents wish to look into gaining access. The community would have to work with Halifax Water and Community Council regarding sewer access. He also noted there will be natural gas in the area, but this is a call made by Heritage Gas not HRM and is normally brought into an area based on demand.

Councilor Outhit noted that there is a surplus in the Capital Costs funds and this money is used towards the specific development. He indicated that certain homes could not be built in the area until improvements had been made and that the developer is paying for 67% of the Larry Uteck extension. He pointed out this development have brought a lot of new things to the area including new schools, rinks and fields.

Mr. Rinehart Jerolek, Blue Mountain Estates, Kearney Lake asked what is the current lot size in the Development Agreement.

Mr. Neatt noted that the current lot size for a single family home is 40'.

Mr. Jerolek asked whether or not HRM and the developer see the development in Larry Uteck as a success and how a successful development is defined.

Mr. Neatt noted that they have had a lot of opportunities to talk with residents and they are very happy living in the area and that is their key way of determining success.

Mr. Jerolek asked how the 34' will be joined on to the current larger lots.

Mr. Bone noted that the goal will be to soften the boundary between the current landscape and the newly proposed one. This is something that will be looked at when Sub-Areas 7 & 8 comes to a public meeting. He noted that the developer is sensitive to this as well and will do all they can to make a smooth transition.

Mr. Bill Sheridan, Collins Road, Kearney Lake, noted that it would be very useful to see where the current gas bars in the area are located as it is hard to determine if the community would like the proposed gas bars without seeing where exactly they will be.

Mr. Bone noted that Mill Cove and Larry Uteck would be the closest gas bars within existing developments.

Mr. Sheridan also noted that he has a problem with changing density and that all the density could be built as condos and 34' lots. If this is done, this will not be fair to the current residents in Sub-Area 7.

Mr. Bone reiterated that he cannot comment on how Sub-Area 7 & 8 will look until he has had a chance to review the case.

Mr. Sheridan questioned what the existing rules are with regards to a green belt between Kearney Lake and Sub-Area 7.

Mr. Bone indicated the goal is to integrate the new and existing.

Mr. Hanusiak noted that as a developer he has to make a business decision and wants to know about housing ownership and affordability. He said he wants to introduce single family dwellings in a great community that are affordable. He asked if residents want him to use the density for semi-detached and town houses. He noted based on research the 34' single family dwellings are very popular rather than single family homes.

Mr. Hanusiak also addressed a question on tree cutting in the area, noting that the trees cut in this area will be replaced by planting in other areas. He noted that trees planted in front of the homes to replace some lost trees and that overall 20% of the development will be green space.

3. CLOSING COMMENTS

Mr. Bone 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 9:16 p.m.

Sarah Pellerine
Legislative Support