

COMMUNITY PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STANDING COMMITTEE
MINUTES

March 10, 2011

PRESENT: Councillor Lorelei Nicoll, Chair
Councillor Sue Uteck, Vice Chair
Councillor Tim Outhit
Councillor Jerry Blumenthal
Councillor Darren Fisher
Councillor Peter Lund
Councillor Mary Wile
Councillor Steve Streach

STAFF: Jim Donovan, Manager, Economic Development
Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED by Councillor Uteck, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal that the minutes of February 10, 2011 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

4.1 Draft Terms of Reference

A copy of the Draft Terms of Reference for the Standing Committee was submitted.

MOVED by Councillor Fisher, seconded by Councillor Lund that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee maintain the current Regional Plan Advisory Committee Citizen Appointments at this time until a review of the process of the Regional Plan is identified. In addition, the Council Members on Regional Plan Advisory Committee be either the Chairs or their designates from the Transportation, Environment and Sustainability, and Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committees. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

5.1 Correspondence – None

5.2 Petitions - None

5.3 Presentations:

5.3.1 Economic Strategy – Presentation by GHP

A copy of the PowerPoint presentation on this matter was submitted.

Mr. Paul Kent, President and CEO, Mr. Fred Morley, Executive Vice President, and Chief Economist, and Mr. Jim Donovan, Manager of Economic Development, Greater Halifax Partnership presented a Five Year Economic Strategy for HRM.

At 2:14 p.m. Councillor Streach entered the meeting.

In his presentation, Mr. Kent advised that if they achieve their vision from the economic strategy, in five year's time Halifax will have:

- More companies, more businesses, more people
- Larger labour force responsive to business requirements,
- Sustainable economic growth/activity (GDP)
- Higher average income
- Cost competitive an a contagious business environment
- Confident business and proud people
- A more attractive and vibrant regional centre
- An increase in tax revenue for the three levels of government.

MOVED by Councillor Streach, seconded by Councillor Wile that the Standing Committee on Community Planning and Economic Development recommend Halifax Regional Council endorse the 2011-2016 Economic Strategy for Halifax Regional Municipality.

A discussion ensued with Mr. Kent, Mr. Morley and Mr. Donovan responding to questions.

The following comments were noted:

- The strategy will require extra resources of people and dollars, and it will be done within the GHP's means.
- A more detailed strategy is available which addresses the 'how'; today's presentation was designed as a high level overview; the more detailed information will be provided to the councillors.
- Small businesses are still having difficulty with issues such as the process they have to go through when they want to expand their business. There needs to be more attention directed at this, as small business needs to thrive, not just to survive.
- There needs to be a better communication piece developed to provide assistance to those in the development industry in regard to HRM's regulatory processes.
- The media does not understand HRM's goals and objectives.
- Would like the Strategy to show what makes Halifax different from other locales, i.e. the reasons why someone should move to Halifax.
- It was noted that most small businesses in the downtown core lease their property and, therefore, if there is tax relief offered, it goes to the building owner and there is not guarantee that it is passed on to the leaseholder.
- Pleased to hear that the universities are being engaged in this process, however, the universities also have to change their thinking as well.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6. **REPORTS:** None
7. **ADDED ITEMS:** None
8. **NEXT MEETING DATE:** April 14, 2011
9. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 3:48 p.m.

Sheilagh Edmonds
Legislative Assistant

The following information item was submitted.

1. Information Report dated March 10, 2011 Re: Update – Review of Governance and Delivery for Economic Development