



**COMMUNITY PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STANDING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
January 8, 2015**

PRESENT: Deputy Mayor Lorelei Nicoll, Chair
Councillor Waye Mason, Vice Chair
Councillor Steve Craig
Councillor Stephen Adams
Councillor Darren Fisher
Councillor Jennifer Watts

STAFF: Ms. Jane Fraser, Acting Deputy CAO
Ms. Karen Brown, Senior Solicitor
Ms. Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Sherryl Murphy, Deputy Clerk/Sr. 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 Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee are available online:
<http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/SCcped/index.php>*

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m., and recessed at 3:55 p.m. The Standing Committee moved into an In Camera session at 4:00 p.m. and reconvened at 4:06 p.m. the Standing Committee adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

The Chair welcomed two new members to the Committee—Councillors Adams and Craig.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 13, 2014

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Fisher that the minutes of November 13, 2014 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Additions:

- 12.1 Centre Plan – Draft Community Engagement Strategy
- 12.2 Eastern Passage Cow Bay Off-Leash Dog Park
- 12.3 Appointment of CPED Member to the Executive Standing Committee

Information Item:

Private and Confidential Information Report - Use of Halifax Commons for Recreational Activities.

The Chair suggested, and it was agreed that the In Camera session be held after the Election of Chair and Vice Chair.

At Councillor Mason's request, the Committee agreed that the Information Item on the Use of HRM-owned Pavilion would be added to the regular agenda.

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Watts that the agenda, as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - NONE

5. MOTIONS OF RECONSIDERATION – NONE

6. MOTIONS OF RESCISSION – NONE

7. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

8. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS - NONE

9. REPORTS

9.1 STAFF

9.1.1 Current and Potential Municipal Initiatives to Support Affordable Housing

The following was before the Committee:

- A staff recommendation report dated November 27, 2014

- A staff presentation.

Mr. Bob Bjerke, Chief Planner presented the staff report on Affordable Housing and noted that it was the outcome of work carried out over the past year and highlights the current municipal initiatives supportive of affordable housing and discusses some potential new ways in which the Municipality could support affordable housing. Mr. Bjerke advised that, in the past year, Council has expressed concern over housing and homelessness issues and directed staff's participation in the United Way Housing and Homelessness Partnership. He added that there is a lot of momentum around housing issues and, as the largest municipality in Atlantic Canada it is appropriate for Halifax to participate in strategic policy discussions that will affect its residents for years to come.

Mr. Bjerke explained that the Provincial Government leads in the provision and operation of affordable housing, but the Halifax Charter provides a mandate for the regulation of housing matters, and the opportunities to support housing initiatives. Halifax invests \$4.88 million per year in initiatives supporting housing and Halifax can help shape housing policy directions at the provincial and national level for the benefit of its residents and communities.

Mr. Bjerke went on to note that in 2013 Council endorsed staff participation in the Housing and Homelessness Partnership initiated by the United Way. The Partnership includes key public, private and non-profit stakeholders, including Housing Nova Scotia, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia (AHANS), the IWK Health Centre, Capital District Health Authority (Capital Health), the Investment Property Owners Association of Nova Scotia (IPOANS), and the United Way. In September 2014 a formal Partnership Charter was signed by senior staff of the 8 organizations. The stated goal of the partnership is to "put an end to homelessness and housing poverty in the Halifax Region". Mr. Bjerke advised that staff's participation in the Partnership has been guided by their mandate, including policy directions approved by Council in the revised 2014 Regional Plan.

Mr. Bjerke explained that the 2014 Regional Plan recently adopted by Council provides not only clear policy objectives but it commits Council to considering a number of planning policy tools to advance housing diversity and affordability during the review and preparation of community planning documents. These include a greater mix of housing types in locations served by transit, permitting auxiliary dwelling or secondary units, and introducing bonus zoning in the Regional Centre. He noted the current initiatives include the following:

- Community planning (e.g. Centre Plan, Port Wallace)
- Surplus Lands Disposal (Admin Order 50)
- Closing of Urban Renewal Agreements
- Non-Profit Tax Exemption Review
- Community Grants Program Review
- By-law M-100 Review
- Licensing of small rental units & single-room occupancy buildings
- Construction Regulations for Accessibility & Adaptability in Dwelling Units

Mr. Bjerke advised that staff is at an early stage in re-engaging in housing issues and, therefore, current and future involvement must be based on a sound understanding and Council will be part of any decision making. He added that Halifax has been involved in the Housing and Homelessness Partnership over the past year and that, given the complexity of housing issues, the presence of public, private and non-profit partners at the table is very encouraging. He noted that staff from Planning and Development, Government Relations, and the Mayor's Office have been participating as required. Mr. Bjerke outlined the workplan of the Partnership and their progress, to date. Mr. Bjerke noted that Planning and Development offered to lead the foundation study with the financial and technical support from Housing NS and CMHC.

Mr. Bjerke advised that the results of the Housing Study currently underway will be brought forward to the Committee upon completion along with any recommendations of the Partnership, and staff anticipate this taking place in late spring.

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded Councillor Mason that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council direct staff to provide regular updates on the work of the Housing and Homelessness Partnership through CPED, including recommendations for strategic actions and initiatives..

Mr. Bjerke responded to questions, clarifying the following points:

- With regard to the scope and housing study, a lot of the information staff are working with is anecdotal. Staff do not have good data around the specifics and this is the intent of the housing study.
- The definition of Affordable Housing the Municipality works with is the provincial definition. "Affordable Housing is modest in terms of floor area and amenities, is priced at or below average market housing rents or prices for comparable Housing in a community or area, and is for the benefit of and affordable to households who are on, or eligible to be on, a waiting list for social housing, in a manner approved by NSHDC "

Councillor Adams advised that terms like 'modest' are subjective and he questioned if there was a way to develop a definition that could provide Council with a deeper understanding. He added that he supports staff's initiative but he would prefer to have something more measurable to review and that was less open to interpretation.

Mr. Bjerke advised that CMHC tracks market rates, rentals so when they evaluate programs, they are quantified.

The Chair acknowledged that Mayor Savage was in attendance and wished to comment.

Mayor Savage spoke in support of staff's initiative, adding that he felt the City has a role to play, and to partner with other levels of government and organizations. He advised that it was within the Municipality's mandate to have a role and he believed it was very positive. He also pointed out that this is a priority issue for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Councillor Hendsbee noted that there were reports and studies on homelessness going back as far as 2003 and he hoped that staff would review some of these older reports and reflect on them, and to see what has changed within the past 10 years. Councillor Hendsbee referred to current and potential initiatives to address affordable housing and asked staff to look at those in the rural context as well as the urban.

Councillor Adams questioned if there was any intent, financially, of HRM supporting these initiatives, and Mr. Bjerke advised that the recommendation is to provide information only.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

9.1.2 2015 Meeting Schedule

The following was before the Committee:

- A memorandum submitted by the Legislative Assistant of the 2015 proposed meeting schedule

A discussion ensued with some members expressing a desire to change the monthly meeting to be held in the morning. Other members suggested keeping the meeting scheduled for the afternoon but starting a half hour earlier. It was agreed that the Committee would meet next month on February 12 beginning at 1:30 p.m. and the Legislative Assistant was asked to look into whether there would be any meeting

conflicts if the Committee were to change its monthly meeting to the third Thursday of the month, starting at 10 a.m. Councillor Watts asked that the summer meetings be rescheduled around the times that Council was in session.

9.2 MEMBERS OF STANDING COMMITTEE

9.2.1 Switch Open Streets – Councillor Watts

The following was before the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee:

- A 'request for Standing Committee Consideration' form

MOVED Watts, seconded by Councillor Mason the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee request a staff report on:

- 1) In support of the Healthy Communities Core Priority Area, investigate new support models for Switch Open Streets, including through a program modeled on Neighbourhood Placemaking, which is to promote healthy communities, active transportation, local business and neighbourhood pride in communities throughout the municipality, through open streets programming.**
- 2) To conduct a jurisdictional scan on municipal support models for open streets programming.**

Councillor Watts explained that Switch Open Streets is a program on the Peninsula and downtown Dartmouth that has been embraced by community groups and Business Improvement Districts and the purpose of her request for staff report is to look at support by HRM in a more formal way. She added that she would like staff to look at the options and implications of this, and in doing so look at the models that other cities use. She noted that she has had discussions with staff and that there are opportunities to open up with other areas of the Municipality.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

9.2.2 Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan – Councillor Mason

The following was before the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee:

- A 'request for Standing Committee Consideration' form

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Craig that the Standing Committee recommend Regional Council direct staff to provide a report regarding the feasibility and best practice approach to establishing a Parks and Recreation Strategic Policy Framework that identifies expected outcomes under which:

- **Service delivery is reflective of community interests and needs;**
- **Parks and Recreation finances and assets are managed in a fiscally sustainable, financially responsible manner; and**
- **Parks and Recreation services, programs, fee structure and facilities are accessible and inclusive for all.**

Councillor Adams referred to the third bulleted item and asked if it means that every playground will be accessible, adding that this could be a huge cost to the Municipality.

Councillor Mason clarified that he meant accessibility in terms of affordability (fees for example). He advised that he believed playgrounds should all be accessible as they are replaced, but in the interim accessible components could be added. He added that he would like to see the City's long term goal of having all playgrounds accessible.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

10. MOTIONS- NONE

11. IN CAMERA

11.1 Personnel Matter – Nominations to the Heritage Advisory Committee

This matter was dealt with In Camera. The following motion was ratified in the public session:

MOVED by Councillor Adams, seconded by Deputy Mayor Nicoll that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee

- 1. Recommends to Regional Council three citizen members to the Heritage Advisory Committee; and**
- 2. That these nominations be forwarded to Regional Council's January 13, 2015 meeting for consideration with the other citizen appointments to various Boards and Committees.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

12. ADDED ITEMS

12.1 Centre Plan – Draft Community Engagement Strategy

The following was before the Standing Committee:

- A recommendation report dated December 16, 2014 from the Chair of the Community Design Advisory Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Mason that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend Halifax Regional Council adopt the Engagement Strategy for the Centre Plan as revised to include input from the Community Design Advisory Committee and outline in the document entitled 'Centre Plan, Community Engagement Strategy' dated December 5, 2014.

In response to a request by the Committee, Mr. Jacob Ritchie provided a presentation on the Centre Plan Community Engagement Strategy.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

12.2 Eastern Passage Cow Bay Off-Leash Dog Park

The following was before the Standing Committee:

- A staff recommendation report dated December 15, 2014.

MOVED by Councillor Fisher, seconded by Councillor Watts that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee forward the report dated December 15, 2014 to Regional Council as an information item.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

12.3 Appointment of CPED Member to the Executive Standing Committee

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Fisher that Councillor Craig be appointed to the Executive Standing Committee for a term to November 2016. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

12.4 Information report – Use of HRM-owned Pavilion by the Pavilion Youth Association

The following was before the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee:

- A staff information report dated December 2, 2014.

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Watts that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend Regional Council request staff enter into discussion with the Pavilion Youth Association about the possibility of entering into a rental agreement.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

13. NOTICES OF MOTION

13.1 Councillor Mason

Councillor Mason Gave Notice that at the next regular Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting, he will move the following motion:

The Committee requests a staff report regarding:

- 1) In support of the Healthy Communities Core Priority Area, determine the legislative ability of the Municipality to exceed provincial building codes and regulations during renovation and new construction so as to ensure maximum accessibility for residents with mobility challenges and/or visual impairment; and
- 2) Identify municipally-owned buildings and facilities ability to meet current provincial building codes and regulations for accessibility; and
- 3) Recommend a strategy, including budget implications to ensure that all municipally-owned facilities meet current provincial building codes and regulations for accessibility.
- 4) Adopt best practice standards for accessibility that exceed national standards for accessible curb cuts and other public realm accessibility features when revising the Halifax Red Book construction standards.

14. ELECTION OF CHAIR/VICE CHAIR

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Craig that Councillor Mason be nominated as Chair. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Mason accepted the nomination; there were no other nominations and Councillor Mason was declared Chair. He took the Chair and called for nominations for Vice Chair.

MOVED by Councillor Craig, seconded by Councillor Fisher that Councillor Adams be nominated as Vice Chair. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Adams accepted the nomination; there being no other nominations, Councillor Adams was declared Vice Chair.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – February 12, 2015 (1:30 p.m.)

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Deputy Mayor Nicoll that the Committee convene In Camera. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The Committee convened in camera at 4:00 p.m.

The Committee reconvened in public at 4:06 p.m. and ratified the motion from In Camera. See item 11.1, pg. 6.

16. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Sheilagh Edmonds
Legislative Assistant