

**HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY**

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**DARTMOUTH LAKES ADVISORY BOARD**

**MARCH 27, 2002**

**MINUTES**

PRESENT: Ms. Audrey Manzer, Chair  
Dr. Ron Beazley  
Dr. Hugh Millward  
Ms. Stephanie Bird  
Ms. Catherine Lunn  
Councillor Hetherington  
Mr. John Osborne  
Mr. Robert Bell  
Dr. Don Gordon  
Ms. Christina Hoehne  
Dr. Paul Hines

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Kurt Pyle, Planner  
Ms. Lynne Le Boutillier, Assistant Municipal Clerk

REGRETS: Dr. Hellenbrand and Mr. Clement.

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Meeting called to order by the Chairman at 5:15 p.m., Findlay Community Centre.

With the agreement of the Board, item 4.0 - Watershed Advisory Groups and 3.0 - Presentation Regional Planning Review were moved up on the agenda.

#### 4.0 **NEW BUSINESS**

##### **WATERSHED ADVISORY GROUPS**

Circulated in the agenda package was a copy of an Information Report dated February 25, 2002 to Halifax Regional Council on the subject of Watershed Advisory Groups. Dr. Tony Blouin, Manager of Environmental Policy, was in attendance to introduce the topic to the Board.

He noted that North West Community Council and Chebucto Community Council had requested reports on the possible change of boundaries of the waters advisory boards. North West Community Council felt the boundaries should be based on watersheds versus districts and Chebucto Community Council felt the Halifax/Halifax County Watershed Advisory Committee should be split in two. As a result of these motions, Dr. Blouin advised he is attending each of the three boards monthly meetings to talk about the issue and suggest a process. He also noted that there are issues associated with the terms of reference. He provided a table to illustrate similarities and differences in purpose, membership, appointment and reporting. He emphasized that it is not his intention to start debate.

Dr. Blouin referred to two maps of the HRM. He identified the DLAB and BWAC boundaries. One of the maps illustrated the natural watersheds. He noted that the boundaries of the natural watersheds don't coincide with the political boundaries.

To date, Dr. Blouin has met with the H/HCWAB and will attend the April meeting of BWAC. He suggested to the H/HCWAB a process whereby representatives from each of the waters advisory groups would be appointed to meet with him, together with support planners to discuss issues related to the boundaries and terms of reference. It was noted that the terms of reference are not consistent. He did not anticipate the process taking very long. H/HCWAB nominated their Chair and Vice-Chair to meet with staff.

The Chair questioned whether Dr. Blouin had taken into account the fact that the DLAB just completed a redrafting of their boundaries, taking into account watersheds. Changes were agreed to by the H/HCWAB. While the Chairman felt strongly that recognizing watersheds was a good idea, there is a need for a political entity to relate to, to have support within the system. While the DLAB would be happy to participate in the exercise, so the others can have the benefit of their experience, the Board felt their

work was done. She noted that the Board, which consists of volunteers, feels their present workload to be just about right. Referring to the H/HCWAB's jurisdiction, she felt there was merit in splitting the Board in two to make the workload more manageable. She did not feel it would be logical for the DLAB to absorb additional workload, however.

Councillor Hethington referred to the Board's association with the HECC. He noted that if BWAC and H/HCWAB are encountering problems, why not deal with just those two boards. He questioned whether it was mandatory for the DLAB to get involved. Dr. Blouin noted it was not mandatory for the DLAB to be involved. Referring to the inconsistencies in the terms of reference, Councillor Hetherington noted that they are approved by Community Council not Regional Council. Dr. Blouin noted that in the H/HCWAB instance, they report to a number of community councils or to Regional Council in some instances. Councillor Hetherington stressed that the DLAB is a subcommittee of HECC, which includes several former Halifax County councillors, who are happy with the DLAB's terms of reference. Nevertheless, Dr. Blouin indicated a preference for all three boards to get together and come to a common understanding.

The Chairman noted that the Board was set up thirty-one (31) years ago by volunteers and questioned why it should be fitted into a box. The Board does things in their own neighbourhoods, in areas about which they are very knowledgeable. Over the years a very good relationship has been worked out, as a volunteer group of citizens advisory to its Community Council. She did not feel there was a need for standardization.

Dr. Blouin noted that there have been a lot of changes as a result of amalgamation. He referred to the fact that his HRM involvement is only over the past six years. If he was starting from scratch, he did not feel he would set up the structure as it is at present. He felt it important to have discussions with all three groups, not leave one out.

Dr. Millward noted that when the DLAB recently went through their revision process, they compromised and took into consideration political aspects. He felt it would be useful to do the exercise, as the DLAB's involvement would give the other groups the benefit of their experience. Dr. Hines felt similarly.

Dr. Gordon felt there were good reasons not to standardize the boards. He noted that the Board exists because of the involvement of volunteers. If changes are made, support may be lost from these individuals. At present, the DLAB is working. However during dialogue areas the Board might improve on, may be noted, and others could build on the DLAB's experience. While it would be useful to go through the exercise, he did not agree to the imposition of something new. He felt it most important that the Boards feel comfortable with the terms of reference they operate under. These terms of reference could vary for a variety of reasons.

The Chair reiterated Dr. Gordon's comments about the volunteers and noted what a

precious resource they are to the Municipality.

**MOVED BY Councillor Hetherington and seconded by Dr. Gordon, that the DLAB appoint the Chair and Vice-Chair, or alternate, if they can't attend a meeting. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Dr. Blouin will advise of a meeting date(s) once he has attended the BWAC meeting of April 11<sup>th</sup>.

Copies of e-mails from Shalom Mandaville dated March 16, 2002 to Dr. Stobo and March 25, 2002 to Dr. Blouin related to this subject were circulated at the meeting for information only.

### 3.0 PRESENTATION REGIONAL PLANNING REVIEW

Ms. Anne Muecke, Project Manager, was in attendance to discuss with the Board the Regional Planning Review exercise. During her introduction, the Chairman noted Ms. Muecke was a former member of the DLAB.

Ms. Muecke referred to the Regional Planning process as being an exciting project. She outlined to the Board the process. Copies of her presentation were left with the Clerk for circulation in the next agenda package.

She noted that with amalgamation, there was essentially a new Municipality created, but the planning strategies and policies, which were developed independently by the former four units, were still in place. Some of these had implications to adjacent areas but the units took no responsibility. Basically there was no coordination. It was decided that there was a need to take a fresh look at the situation, thus the planning process was started. She stressed that it is not the intention to develop a homogeneous municipality.

Referring to environmental management, she referred to the variety of policies used across the Municipality. These policies are buried in the various MPSs. It would be beneficial to develop umbrella policies to guide Council's decisions.

She referred to the trend of population loss in the urban core, while there is tremendous growth in the suburbs, a lot of which occurs in unserved areas. These areas are almost impossible to serve by public transit, thus residents are almost entirely dependent on their cars. Traffic has increased and there is more congestion as vehicles funnel onto the Peninsula. As a result, there is need to work on the road network and to figure out how to get more people using public transit. By predicting where development will go, plans can be made for recreation, police services, etc.

Ms. Muecke noted that how communities and neighbourhoods develop has not been looked at in the past.

She noted that as development occurs, the natural environment is imperiled if developers don't take into consideration the impact on adjacent lakes and woodlands, heritage views, etc.

Ms. Muecke noted that the project started as a result of a couple of things. For example, the HRM 20/20 process. This process identified various environmental issues that people cared about. The Chair agreed the HRM 20/20 exercise had been a productive one.

Reference was also made to Council's priorities, which is a work in progress. While it is difficult to blend four political units, a number of priorities have been identified, one of which was the need for planned growth.

Ms. Manzer referred to the former Regional Plan, which was withdrawn. She questioned whether the new Regional Plan will serve as an umbrella as the former plan did. If so, she wondered how the various area plans would fit in. She noted that Dartmouth has developed some excellent area plans. Using the example of the Highfield Park's secondary plan as an illustration, Mr. Pyle explained how it would fit under the umbrella of the new Regional Plan.

It was noted that as individual planning strategies are revised in the future, they would need to come into alignment with the new Regional Plan. Nevertheless, there will be an opportunity for individual visions. Hopefully this will lead to better development in the future. The plan will affect future development over the next twenty-five (25) years. Without a plan it is difficult to manage, particularly fiscally.

As Council wanted the Regional Plan developed as quickly as possible, a three year time frame was selected, consisting of two phases. One of the next challenges is to build collaboration within HRM. One of the strategies will be to get task groups working together. Four task groups are proposed, i.e. Growth Management (to encourage and discourage); Integrated Transportation; Vibrant City/Healthy Communities (refer handout); and Environmental Asset Management.

One of the important components was heritage view and landscapes. There are various views and landscapes important to the community, but there is no one to manage or identify them.

During the first phase, involving the four task groups, only staff is involved, to determine which issues HRM needs to deal with.

She outlined how input will be obtained from stakeholders, i.e. the DLAB and the

general public through the use of surveys, workbooks, etc. to obtain feedback on issues and concerns of the residents. The tentative schedule and milestones were reviewed, copies of which will be circulated in the next agenda package. She referred to the role of the HRM website in informing the public. She anticipates by early fall 2003, a preferred growth structure will have been selected by Regional Council. It is proposed that four issue papers will be developed along with alternative growth scenarios.

Ms. Manzer questioned how Ms. Muecke will keep Council knowledgeable, given the length of the project. This had presented a problem when Dartmouth embarked on its seven year MPS process some years ago. The final plan was never adopted because Dartmouth City Council felt it was not well enough informed about it. Ms. Muecke indicated the various materials will be presented, as developed, to maintain the information flow. She was confident that since this is Council's priority, they will want to stay engaged in the process.

The Chair also noted how frustrating it is to see inadvisable development proceeding which is wrong, while the Regional Plan is being developed. Ms. Muecke assured the Board that once the direction is set, there can be interim strategies to limit development approvals or put developments on hold, until the policy is developed.

Dr. Hines questioned how much consultation has been done with cities such as Toronto. He noted there are a number of forward thinking communities which could provide valuable input.

Referring to Draft #2 of the Smart Growth Principles for HRM, Ms. Muecke sought input from the Board on it. She desires to release a revised draft at the May Public Meeting(s). The Chair will have the item circulated and have the item put on the April agenda for discussion. Ms. Muecke encouraged the members to attend the public meetings. Workbooks and discussion papers will be provided to attendees.

In response to a query from Dr. Millward, Ms. Muecke indicated that as final drafts become available they will be posted on the HRM Website. She defined everything as being draft until Council makes its decision(s).

Referring to the earlier MAPC process, Dr. Gordon felt there would be a lot of good material there to build upon. Ms. Manzer advised Ms. Muecke that all the documents can be found in the old Municipal Affairs Library.

In closing, Ms. Muecke encouraged the members to attend the April 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## 1.0 **MINUTES**

The February 27, 2002 minutes were adopted, as circulated, on motion of Dr. Gordon

and Dr. Millward.

## 2.0 **BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

### 2.1 **UPDATE OF THE LAKE STUDY**

Deferred in absence of Mr. Clement.

### 2.2 **UPDATE - STATE OF LAKES TOUR**

Copies of an e-mail from John Osborne were distributed to the members for their information. The e-mail contained observations Mr. Osborne had made of Maynards Lake.

It was noted that the report provided, on the condition of the lake, could be used as a model when the other major lakes are surveyed. The Chair commented that Mr. Osborne had done an excellent job. Dr. Millward concurred, observing it was an excellent way to summarize an on site visit.

When the State of the Lakes tour is discussed further at the April meeting, this format should be considered, as it falls within the Board's terms of reference.

### 2.3 **REMOTE SENSING**

Dr. Millward circulated to the members his report on Lake Monitoring by Remote Sensing, Items of Interest in Lake Monitoring and an aerial view of a lake.

It was noted how the aerial view identifies a delta at the north end of the lake and underwater weed growth. It was felt that in terms of turbidity, one could tell a lot from such photos, including shoreline changes as a result of erosion and sedimentation.

Dr. Millward had provided in his report a brief description of the remote sensing alternatives, quality and cost.

It was noted that aerial photos will identify color changes, but are of no help when chemicals are introduced that don't result in a color change.

It was felt that Dr. Millward had provided the Board with some very valuable information.

In response to a question from Dr. Beazley, as to who might be able to help with the remote sensing, Dr. Millward felt the costs involved are likely prohibitive unless a research scientist was involved and funds were obtained from the various levels of government.



The Chairman cautioned that the Board would have to ask itself was this sort of monitoring valuable and necessary enough to justify the cost. She felt that work could start on sets of aerial photographs. Dr. Millward agreed that the Board would have to identify a need.

Dr. Hines questioned what are the critical properties which tell you the most about a lake's condition. By narrowing down, the list of things to be measured could be greatly reduced. By reducing to a few variables, it might be more attractive to take on such a project. While aerial photos are helpful, particularly for turbidity and sedimentation, it is difficult to quantify what is observed.

Dr. Gordon cautioned that the Board is an advisory body not a research body. He referred to work done in the past on the Metro Area Lake Survey. If anyone on the Board wishes to pursue setting up a remote sensing program, he encouraged them to do so, perhaps in partnership with an outside agency.

Dr. Millward was thanked for his good summary.

It was felt that it would be valuable to have HRM's aerial photos before the State of the Lakes Tour in June. The Chairman will contact Charles Lloyd.

#### 5.0 **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman advised that she had a meeting with Jim Naugler, HRM Recreation Department last week on another matter entirely, but during which he mentioned HRM has undertaken a study of lake safety under his direction. A pilot project is planned for Lakes Banook and Micmac. She advised Mr. Naugler that the Board would offer assistance and advice whenever needed as it has extensive experience with this matter.

Referring to an article, she had cut out of the National Post, she noted that Shearwater Airport is a thing of the past. It has been transferred to the Canada Lands Company. She felt the Board should have a heads up on this due to the strong possibility it will be developed. Dr. Millward questioned what the role of Canada Lands would be. Mr. Bell indicated their mandate is to build and operate. Dr. Millward was concerned that they will just sell the property.

#### 6.0 **STAFF'S REPORT**

None.

#### 7.0 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, April 24, 2002.

8.0 **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Lynne Le Boutillier  
Assistant Municipal Clerk