

Heritage Advisory Committee
MINUTES

February 26, 2014

- PRESENT: Ms. Emma Sampson, Chair
Mr. Brent Ronayne
Ms. Pascale van der Leest
Ms. Janet Morris
Mr. Jason Cooke, Vice-Chair
Mr. Reid Shepherd
Councillor Matt Whitman
Councillor David Hendsbee
- REGRETS: Mr. Richard White
Mr. Nelson Brison
Mr. Chris Kingston
Mr. Adam Matheson (absent)
- STAFF: Ms. Maggie Holm, Heritage Planner
Ms. Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant
Mr. Lachlan Barber, Legislative Support

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Vice Chair (Ms. Sampson) called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

1.1 Election of Chair

The Vice Chair invited nominations for Chair of the committee. Councillor Hendsbee nominated Ms. Sampson. Councillor Whitman seconded the nomination. There were no further nominations and Ms. Sampson was declared the new Chair of the Committee.

Seeing as Ms. Sampson was elected Chair, there was now a vacancy for the position of Vice-Chair. The Chair invited nominations for Vice-Chair of the Committee. Councillor Hendsbee nominated Mr. Cooke. Councillor Whitman seconded the nomination. There were no further nominations and Mr. Cooke was declared Vice-Chair of the Committee.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 29, 2014

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, second Ms. Morris, that the minutes of January 29, 2014 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 and the order of business was unanimously approved.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - None

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – None

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS – None

7. REPORTS

7.1 Staff

7.1.1 Case H00390: Revisions to HRM's Heritage Incentives Program Terms and Conditions, Proposed Administrative Order No. 2014-002-ADM

A report from staff dated January 26, 2014 was before the committee.

The Chair invited Ms. Holm, Heritage Planner, to present the report.

Ms. Holm explained that the report outlines an Administrative Order to amend the Terms and Conditions of HRM's Heritage Incentives Program. The program, allowed under the Municipal Government Act, provides incentives for the heritage property program. Specifically it provides financial assistance to owners of municipally registered residential and commercial properties to off-set the cost of labour and materials for maintenance works. Ms. Holm explained that the program is a 50/50 cost share between HRM and the property owner, up to \$10,000, and that property owners can apply for two grants over four years. To date the program has been successful, providing 190 grants totalling \$150,000 and resulting in 1.2 million dollars in private investment.

Ms. Holm went on to explain the Heritage Incentives Program Revised Terms and Conditions adopted in 2006, including eligibility, the waiver of the right to demolition, and a limit to the number of grants. She then provided an overview of the following changes recommended in the staff report.

1. Regarding the Application Review Process: To date staff has administered the program, including approval of grants. The recommendation is to move approval authority to Council. Council will approve applications on an annual basis and will also be granted authority to approve a waiting list.

2. Regarding Appeals: To date the HAC has heard appeals regarding grant applications. As an advisory board, this isn't within the HAC's mandate. When Council is given approval authority, the appeals section of the Terms and Conditions will be removed. To date no appeals have been received. If one arises it will go through a judicial review process.

3. Regarding Condominium Corporations: The current application process requires a signature of the property owner. For condo corporations where multiple owners may be affected, the recommendation is to require written documentation from the corporation's Board of Directors stating their wish to apply for a grant.

Ms. Holm explained the staff recommendation before the committee. The recommendation is to i) approve the Administrative Order; and ii) to continue the existing program for fiscal year 2014-15.

The Chair thanked Ms. Holm for her presentation and invited questions.

Ms. Morris explained her experience with the incentives program, highlighting the challenges of the time frame given the short season when certain forms of maintenance work are possible. She explained that her grant was lost because approval was granted too late in the season in order to secure the required labour. Given this experience, she wondered if it would be possible to carry the grant forward from one year to the next. She also asked why a building permit is required at the \$5000 threshold.

Ms. Holm replied that there is no mechanism to carry grants forward because the program is tied to the fiscal year. She also explained that it is the position of staff that that the use of building inspectors is of benefit to property owners.

Councillor Hendsbee asked if a recommendation on the approval of grant applications will come to the HAC before being read by Regional Council. Ms. Holm confirmed that this is the case.

There were no further questions. The Chair called for the motion to be put on the floor.

MOVED by Councillor Whitman, seconded by Ms. Van der Leest, that the Heritage Advisory Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Approve the Administration Order Number 2014-002-ADM – Respecting the Heritage Incentives Program, as outlined in the January 26, 2014 staff report, to be effective beginning with applications for financial assistance for the 2015-16 fiscal year; and

2. Continue the existing Heritage Incentives Program for the fiscal year 2014-15 and delegate to the Heritage Planner the authority to continue administering the program and to approve applications for financial assistance within the annual program budget for 2014-15.

The Chair invited discussion.

Councillor Hendsbee asked if the allotted budget has been spent. Ms. Holm replied that yes, this is generally the case. Some of the budget had been earmarked for the Barrington Street Heritage District incentives program.

Councillor Hendsbee asked for clarification on the eligible buildings. Ms. Holm explained that institutional buildings are not eligible, but that registered commercial and residential buildings are.

Mr. Morris asked if HRM promotes the program or approaches heritage property owners proactively to invite them to apply for grants. Ms. Holm replied that this hasn't been done in the past, but that there will be media coverage when the changes to the legislation happen, and that hopefully this will garner more interest.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Whitman introduced himself noting that he was recently appointed to the Committee, and asked if round table introductions could be made. HAC members introduced themselves.

8. ADDED ITEMS – None

9. NEXT MEETING DATE – March 26, 2014

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30pm.

Lachlan Barber
Legislative Support