

HALIFAX WATERSHED ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES

May 19, 2010

PRESENT: Ms. Ellinor Williams, Chair
Mr. Derrill Hynick
Mr. Scott Harron
Mr. Walter Regan, Vice-Chair
Mr. David Ripley
Mr. Ross Evans
Mr. Barry Thomas

REGRETS: Councillor Peter Lund
Councillor David Hendsbee

STAFF: Mr. Richard Harvey, Senior Planner
Ms. Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Julie Vandervoort, Legislative Support

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. in the Media Room, City Hall.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOVED by Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Evans that the minutes of April 21, 2010 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

The Chair advised that she had two brief items as updates to the Board and she would present these at the end of the agenda. One was a document, titled Water Governance, and the other item was an update from the Shubenacadie Watershed Environmental Protection Society.

Mr. Harvey, Senior Planner, mentioned that at the March 2010 meeting the subject of the preparation of the Board's recommendations was raised. He indicated he was prepared to provide assistance if the Board wished. It was agreed that this matter would be addressed as part of the Watershed Advisory Boards Workshop review.

4. ITEMS TO BE ADDED TO NEXT AGENDA: None

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES/STATUS SHEET ITEMS:

5.1 Business Arising:

5.1.1 Case 01238: Development Agreement by Hatfield Farm, Hammonds Plains Road, Hammonds Plains (HWAB Report)

- A draft report dated May 19, 2010 from the Vice-Chair of Halifax Watershed Advisory Board was submitted for approval.

MOVED by Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Thomas that the Board approve the report as submitted, and that it be signed and forwarded on to Community Council. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5.1.2 Case 015976: Amendments to Development Agreement, Rockcliffe Village, Northwest Arm Drive, Halifax (Mainland) (HWAB Report)

- A draft report dated May 19, 2010 from the Vice-Chair of Halifax Watershed Advisory Board was submitted for approval.

MOVED by Mr. Harron, seconded by Mr. Regan that the Board approve the report as submitted, and that it be signed and forwarded on to Community Council. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5.1.3 Gold Mining on the Eastern Shore

- A draft report dated May 19, 2010. prepared by Mr. Thomas for the signature of the Chair, was submitted for approval.

Mr. Regan asked about a tailing pond and Mr. Thomas referred to the Nova Scotia's Department of Environment document of assessment and approval which indicates how tailings will be handled. The Chair expressed thanks to Mr. Thomas for an important report.

MOVED by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Regan that the Board approve the report as submitted, and that it be signed and forwarded on to Council. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5.1.4 Watershed Advisory Boards - Committee of Council Reform Workshop

- A memorandum dated March 9, 2010 was submitted by Cathy Mellett, A Clerk/Manager, Office of the Municipal Clerk.

This item had been deferred from the Board's March 17, 2010 meeting. The Chair stated that HWAB appreciated the invitation to the facilitated session. Mr. Hynick noted he had made a written submission to the facilitated session as indicated in the March 9, 2010 memorandum

Two points emerged from the initial discussion:

- That if HWAB is meant to be a conduit to the community, there needs to be an improved mechanism for this as it is currently not an effective one
- That the difference in workload and resource allocation among the three HRM watershed advisory boards would need to be addressed if amalgamation was to take place.

The Board's process for reviewing applications was reviewed. In the past Board members were provided with some information prior to the meeting at which a presentation of the project under review was made by a planning staff member, who was also available to answer questions. The project was discussed either at that meeting if there was enough time, or the following one. A Board member was assigned to write the report, which was circulated to all members and then approved, possibly not until the third meeting.

Recently this process has been speeded up and draft recommendations have been provided to the planner by e-mail, during the week following the meeting at which the project was presented. The formal report was approved for signature at the next (second) meeting.

Mr. Harvey suggested that, given sufficient information on the project prior to the meeting (and sufficiently in advance of the meeting for the material to be reach Board members living outside the central urban area, by mail), the planners' presentation could become more a Question and Answer session, and recommendations could be finalized at the same meeting. Mr. Evans mentioned the advantage of making same-night recommendations while the information was fresh in people's minds.

It was generally agreed that Municipal Staff could then develop the Report to Council to be approved and signed by the Chair – who, in some instances, might add some explanatory details as agreed by the board, in the Background or Discussion sections

Mr. Harvey stated that planners are working to improve the quality of the information provided. It was agreed that reference to the existing checklist could be helpful in this regard. Mr. Ripley pointed out that obtaining some of the technical information can be expensive for applicants who would not wish to provide this level of detail before it was really needed. Open Space Subdivision developments present a particular problem in that these involve a two part application. The Board sees them only at the first stage at which much of the information it needs to make recommendations is not available,

Mr. Harvey indicated that, as part of the information provided, or in their presentation, planners should be highlighting issues of impact to watercourses - and the applicable policies.

The Chair noted that if the Board were given reasons why its recommendations could not be implemented it would help in identifying gaps in the water resource protection process and in forming future recommendations. These reasons sometimes appear in another forum but are not sent to HWAB as feedback.

Concluding the discussion, there was general agreement that, with the next project, the Board try providing recommendations the same night. The Chair stated she would draft a response to the memorandum and bring it back to the members at the next meeting.

5.2 Status Sheet: None

6. DEFERRED ITEMS: None

7. NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Hynick requested the Board address item 7.2 first and members agreed.

7.2 Correspondence from NS Department of Environment Re Malfunctioning Septic Systems - Derrill Hynick

- Letter dated March 23, 2010 to Mr. Hynick from the Nova Scotia Department of the Environment

Mr. Hynick circulated copies of a newspaper article on septic systems that are not maintained by homeowners and explained his letter to the provincial Department of Environment on this issue. A response from the Department to Mr. Hynick, dated March

23, 2010, was also circulated. Mr. Hynick pointed out that his concern is the lack of enforcement of existing regulations.

7.1 Nova Scotia Options for a Water Resource Management Strategy

- A Nova Scotia Department of the Environment document titled “Options for a Water Resource Management Strategy for Nova Scotia” was submitted for discussion.

The Board entered into a general discussion of the Department of Environment document. Members described the document as disappointing and stated it was lacking in detail and concrete strategy or intent. Members expressed concern that there were no details on watershed management or restoration of damaged watercourses; that the focus was on meeting new water needs not reducing water use; that there was no discussion of storm water treatment or the key issue of water quality. The Board also discussed the issue of buffer legislation and allowing construction close to a watercourse.

The Board agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair will jointly prepare a response to the document and submit it by the deadline. Members were asked to send comments to the Chair as soon as possible. The Legislative Assistant noted she would confirm the date when the Board’s response is needed in order to be part of the HRM response.

8. CORRESPONDENCE: None

9. ADDED ITEMS

The Chair presented a document, titled Water Governance, that she had been sent. She stated that Board members were welcome to borrow it.

The Chair also noted in closing that the Board’s request to the Marine Drive Valley and Canal Community Council for approval of an appointment from the Shubenacadie Watershed Environmental Protection Society (SWEPS) was being considered by Community Council tonight.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: June 16, 2010

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Julie Vandervoort
Legislative Support