

**URBAN DESIGN TASK FORCE
MINUTES**

March 14, 2007

PRESENT:

- Ms. Dale Godsoe, Chair**
- Mr. Kevin Riles**
- Mr. William Hyde**
- Mr. Paul Shakotko**
- Mr. David Garrett**
- Ms. Cathy Carmody**
- Mr. Paul MacKinnon**
- Mr. Bernie Smith**
- Mr. Stephen Terauds**
- Councillor Sloane**
- Councillor Smith**
- Councillor Wile**

REGRETS:

- Ms. Linda Garber**
- Mr. Kendall Taylor**
- Ms. Margot Young**
- Ms. Adriane Abbott**

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:07 p.m. in the Halifax Ferry Terminal Board Room, 5077 George Street, Halifax.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair introduced Mr. Frank Palermo, new UDTF member. Mr. Palermo will serve on the committee until its conclusion. The Chair also introduced Ms. Patricia Pegley, Corporate Communications, HRM. Ms. Pegley will act as the staff communications representative for the committee.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Changes:

Pg. 8 third paragraph- Stephen Terauds will also serve on the Sustainability sub-committee.

Pg. 10 Campaign on sustainability, not safety.

MOVED by Mr. Garrett, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that the minutes from February 7, 2007 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

Deletions:

6.1 defer to the next meeting.

8.3.1 defer to the next meeting.

8.3.2 defer to the next meeting.

MOVED by Councillor Sloane, seconded by Mr. Garrett, that the Order of Business be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- A handout titled "*Population by Age Group, Halifax Regional Municipality, 1996-2026*" was circulated to the Committee
- Mr. Fillmore advised that the above noted document describes three different growth processes used in HRM's community development process. Task Force Member, Mr. Shakotko also suggested that UDTF members go to The Nova Scotia Community Counts website to gain a better understanding of changes to the population forecast in Nova Scotia.

Members of the Committee provided comments on the above noted.

Councillor Sloane advised that the District 12 population has increased by 12% since the last census.

Mr. Palermo advised that densification may not be the proper word to use throughout the process. He expressed concern that stable areas in HRM may become defensive about densification, and not listen to the intended discussions. He suggested using words such as vibrancy, intensity and variety in conjunction with densification to provide a balance.

Ms. Godsoe advised that the discussion on this topic will resume at the next meeting.

Ms. Godsoe invited Ms. Patricia Pegley, Corporate Communications to inform the Committee of her role.

Ms. Pegley advised that she would provide communications and marketing support to the UDTF throughout the planning process. She advised that she would provide a strategy that would assist in media relations, advertising, promotions, writing, language and messaging. Ms. Pegley further advised that she is working with Eastlink to assist in increasing public attendance and participation at the forums. She advised that Eastlink may possibly televise the next forum to broaden the audience.

Ms. Godsoe advised that she would like as much involvement from Ms. Pegley as possible to ensure she understands and lives the process with the Committee. Ms. Godsoe invited Ms. Pegley to come to the next meeting to engage in a more in depth conversation on communications by providing the UDTF with a framework of a communication plan.

Meeting of the Canadian Green Council in Vancouver. Mr. Garrett further advised that Mr. Taylor was impressed with a presentation on Vancouver's Sustainability measures. He advised that Vancouver is shifting their planning to the 2030 model, meaning Vancouver hopes to be a carbon neutral city by the year 2030.

Mr. Garrett further advised that he is hoping to set up a lunch meeting with Jill Grant from Dalhousie University and Stephen King, Manager of Sustainability, HRM as well as any interested UDTF Members, to get an external viewpoint on sustainability and narrow down some important aspects that can be included in the UDTF process.

Ms. Godsoe reminded the UDTF that their role is to monitor the process being conducted by staff, and add value while articulating their thoughts through a balance.

Mr. Palmero advised that the role of the group should be to set ambitions for what the UDTF wants to see from the core area. He advised the committee to dream big because change will come from plans that are developed through "dreams." He advised that sustainability is too neutral a word to encompass the meaning and purpose of the carbon neutral and the environmental trends.

Mr. Riles reminded the UDTF not to lose track of the "big picture," and advised that the committee should follow a mandate rather than ambitions.

Councillor Sloane informed the committee about a program on the CBC that discussed Sudbury, Toronto and Halifax's approach to sustainability. Halifax was referred to as a pioneer in the solid waste industry because of their facilities and progress.

6.4 Coordination with NS Association of Architects 75th Anniversary Event

Mr. Garrett advised that during the month of May, The Nova Scotia Association of Architects will be celebrating their 75th anniversary by hosting a series of design Charettes. These Charettes will focus on the Opportunity Sites identified by the UDTF. Mr. Garrett advised that the Charettes will take place at The Cunard Centre and Pier 21, and a press release will be sent out in the next few weeks to inform those interested of the dates.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS-NONE

Downtown, and a three-D virtual model fo Downtown. Council expressed enthusiasm of the project at this time.

- The project budget has doubled from \$200,000 to \$400,000, with \$50,000 going toward building the comprehensive three-dimensional computer model of the downtown.
- A meeting has been set up with the seven groups of donors for later in the month to ensure that the three-dimensional model will meet their needs.
- A highly accurate terrain model will be used as the main criteria for the three-dimensional model, and existing building heights will be used as a comparison. The form based code will be developed by referring to what exists now.

8.1.2 Update on Forum #2 Outcomes

- A Memo titled "*Forum 2 outcomes*" was circulated to the committee.

Mr. Fillmore proposed that the Committee set up an additional meeting for March 30th, 2007 to discuss this topic , as well as the other deferred topics. The committee agreed to this date.

8.1.3 Discussion on Member Expectations

A document titled "*Thoughts About HRM by Design's Outcomes*" was before the committee.

Committee Members provided comments on the above noted document.

Mr. Garrett advised that the heritage element is very important and should be included in the synopsis. He also advised that careful language must be used when communicating the urban design process both internally (amongst the Task Force) and externally.

Mr. MacKinnon advised that Vancouver has similar geographic constraints to HRM and are a city that is making progress with densification.

Mr. Palermo advised that the UDTF should concentrate on areas that have been identified as "in need of densification," and leave the stable neighbourhoods alone.

Mr. Terauds advised that he would like more information from the consultants on project deliverables and communicating the public message appropriately.

Mr. Riles advised that if the downtown is not ready for the population influx, the people will go to the suburban area, and in turn, amenities will have to be provided in those areas. A clear distinction between heritage, transition, stable and dense areas will have to be developed to ensure quality design and growth in the preferred areas. A clear framework will help solve density problems.

Ms. Carmody advised of the need for more discussion on the human dimension. She advised that the words people, social and quality of life are mentioned, but not explored. She further advised that more discussion around what demographic the UDTF wants to attract to the downtown needs to take place. She advised that different types of developments will attract different types of people according to location, affordability and amenities. The UDTF's mandate promotes a liveable city, but Ms. Carmody questioned what a livable city looks like. She suggested looking at a mixed residential model to answer the question "who do we want to attract?"

Mr. Palmero advised that there needs to be a "wondering" element explored throughout the process to decrease the generic feel. He advised that a community engagement element is important because it is not a community based plan without the engagement of the community. He further advised that the UDTF needs to concentrate less on the how and let the what flourish. He advised that heritage and height issues need to be dealt with head on.

A brief discussion ensued around condominiums. It was noted:

- Condominiums do not support quality of life.
- Fear was expressed that there will be an influx of vacancies in years to come if too many condominiums are built.
- There needs to be alternatives to condominiums, and more information on this element needs to be provided by the consultants.
- Condominiums have become a popular trend because the land in the downtown has become so expensive.

It was agreed that there needs to be more leadership from the consultants to educate on the issues.

professional design industry and the development industry.

*Refer to sheet labelled 8.2.1 to get a full list of interview participants.

8.2.2 Consultation with North End Groups

Mr. Fillmore advised that a group of volunteers that live in the North End of Halifax will participate in conversations and workshops to help staff gain a better perspective of what people in that area would like to see come out of the Urban Design Framework.

8.2.3 Forum 3- Opportunity Sites

Mr. Fillmore provided an update on the above noted. The following was noted:

- The Vision and Principles will be applied to individual sites in this forum.
- The Forum will not necessarily create what will happen, but what could happen.
- Alterations could be made to the urban design guidelines once they are adopted, but a process would have to be followed.

A brief discussion around the opportunity sites ensued.

Mr. Fillmore advised that the five opportunity sites will be located in the five neighbourhoods that were outlined by the consultants in Forum 2. The opportunity sites will be a framework and a test exercise.

Councillor Sloane advised that the opportunity sites be presented to the public as a story. Words like experiment, practise, framework and imagine should be used to communicate this aspect of the process to ensure there is no confusion around the intent of the sites.

Mr. Smith advised that he feels built heritage resources are opportunity sites that have been ignored.

Mr. Fillmore advised that staff are hoping to hire a Heritage Co-Consultant to assist in the opportunity sites aspect of the plan. The possible Consultant will be Graeme Duffus, and Anthony Tung will provide input at key moments.

include Spring garden Road. This area may be subject to revision as the project proceeds.

- Forum 4 has been re-purposed from Implementation Strategies to Downtown Districts.
- Some legislation may have to be amended to support some of the urban design plans. A resivour of potential amendments will be started.

8.2.5 Implementation

Due to time constraints, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

8.3 ISSUES REVIEW

8.3.1 Residential densities, density/height relationship (residential/ commercial)

This item was deferred to the next meeting under the approval of the Order of Business.

8.3.2 Densification Communications

This item was deferred to the next meeting under the approval of the Order of Business.

8.3.3 Potential for “land rush” downtown and strategy

Mr. Fillmore advised that developers should be interested in waiting for this process to conclude before acting, as it will be beneficial for them, but it is possible that they will try to get development applications submitted before HRM by design is complete if they don't understand that the changes will be beneficial to them. Communications around this issue will be critical.

8.3.4 Next Steps After Report Completion/ Time line

Deferred to a later meeting.

Ms. Godsoe asked Mr. Riles to draft a brief e-mail on what other cities have done when challenging legislation and codes.

8.4 Additional UDTF Meeting Date- Vetting of Forum #2 Outcomes

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting will be March 30, 2007.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Chrissy White
Legislative Assistant