

**URBAN DESIGN TASK FORCE
MINUTES**

June 20, 2007

PRESENT:

**Ms. Dale Godsoe, Chair
Mr. Paul MacKinnon, Vice Chair
Ms. Linda Garber
Mr. Bill Hyde
Mr. Stephen Terauds
Mr. Paul Shakotko
Mr. Frank Palermo
Mr. David Garrett
Ms. Margo Young
Ms. Cathy Carmody
Mr. Bernie Smith
Councillor Wile
Councillor Sloane**

REGRETS:

**Councillor Smith
Mr. Kevin Riles**

STAFF:

**Mr. Andy Fillmore, Project Manger
Mr. Austin French, Manager, Regional Plan
Mr. Steven Higgins, Implementation Coordinator
Ms. Chrystiane Mallaley, Communications
Ms. Chrissy White, Legislative Assistant**

CONSULTANTS:

Mr. Harold Madi, Office for Urbanism

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. in Halifax Hall, 2nd Floor, City Hall.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOVED by Mr. Garrett, seconded by Ms. Garber, that the minutes from May 28, 2007 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

Additions:

5.4.1 The Bridge

5.2 "Update from recent Urban Design Events" moved to the first order of business

7.3 Letter from Heritage Trust

MOVED by Ms. Godsoe, seconded by Mr. Smith, that the order of business be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. **BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES**

4.1 **INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair introduced Mr. Stephen Higgins, Implementation Coordinator. Mr. Higgins will be assisting Mr. Fillmore throughout the project.

The Chair also introduced Mr. Austin French, Manager, Regional Plan. Mr. French has attended the urban design workshops and will continue to provide assistance throughout the project.

5.2 **Update from recent Urban Design Events**

Ms. Godsoe lead a discussion on the above noted where the following points were noted:

- The Committee decided to pause, validate and re-work the plan,
- It was decided that Forum 4 would be re-scheduled for the fall,
- A two day workshop took place on June 12 & 13th where the Committee focussed on re-urbanization and sustainability,

Mr. Fillmore, Project Manger provided an overview, outlining the outcomes of the June workshops. The following points were noted:

- Approach tactics for Forum 4 were discussed,
- It was indicated that further refinement is needed,
- Creating a map of the future heritage conservation districts outlining future assets and buffer zones sent the message that heritage is the most important

- aspect the project will accomplish downtown, which is not the case.
- The consultants will present a refined report to the Steering Committee for edits,
- The UDTF will deliberate recommendations that have been vetted through the Steering Committee to ensure clarity,
- The refinements from the UDTF will be included in any report going to Council,
- 120 participants attended the public open house,

A brief discussion ensued regarding attendance and membership issues where it was noted that the Terms of Reference for the Urban Design Task Force states that all membership is to go through Regional Council's Membership Selection Committee.

5. REPORTS

5.1 Governance

5.1.1 Role of Urban Design Task Force

Ms. Godsoe presented an overview on the above topic noting that after review of the process, the decision has been made to slow down. She advised that materials will be worked through rigorously by staff before they are presented to the committee. She suggested mandating the Steering Committee to play a stronger role in the vetting process to aid in the editing and analysis of materials before they go to the UDTF. She advised that this will not be to stifle the process, but to ensure the detail is more refined and formal to decrease confusion.

Committee Members provided the following Comments:

- Mr. Smith advised that he liked the current process and predicts a healthy result,
- Ms. Young noted the proposed layout will ensure material is properly edited and analysed before it comes to the UDTF table. She noted that this process will provide more focus,
- Mr. Hyde noted that the information coming forward needs to be refined into a more standard format. He suggested creating a section in reports outlining the pros and cons of a recommendation to enable complex decision making,
- Ms. Carmody advised that she likes the idea of involving the Steering Committee,
- Mr. Garret expressed concern regarding the direction change. He advised that there are many fundamental ideas that still need to be addressed. He noted that a process change may solidify ideas too quickly. He thinks the current process is dynamic and suggested a phasing approach for any new roles,
- Councillor Sloane expressed concern that trust in the Committee may be challenged if process changes are made. She noted that the public may withdraw if they see too much change,
- Mr. MacKinnon suggested implementing the new process after Forum 4,
- Mr. Palermo advised that Council should be informed by a variety of view points enhancing judgements and values. He noted that enrichment and new ideas must be embraced, and the UDTF process should foster this. He suggested bringing values and judgements together with technical aspects to create new ideas.

Staff responded to the Committees concerns by advising:

- The new approach will provide more clarity and allow for easier decision making,
- The process will be very inclusive and strategic,
- The goal is to parallel what needs to be accomplished between the UDTF and the Steering Committee to ensure an implementable plan is delivered in a timely fashion,
- The consultants need to be grounded through a Steering Committee process due to the enormous amount of material coming forward. This will help to ensure accurate ideas and concepts,

Committee Members expressed concern that the new process will stifle their creative abilities to make suggestions. Members noted that they do not want to lose their ability to make strategic decisions at critical points during the process. They advised that they do not want the Steering Committee making the decisions without their initial input.

Mr. Fillmore advised that the Steering Committees role will be to analyse the material to ensure it is correct before the UDTF receive it. Including the Steering Committee will create an avenue for data checking.

The committee agreed to a contributing process rather than a vetting process.

Ms. Godsoe clarified that the Steering Committee will not be making approvals; they are designed to do fact checking and research. She suggested inviting members of the Steering Committee to attend future UDTF meetings to ensure the process stays on track. She noted that to date, detail has been minimal, but with Forum 4 approaching, detail will need to increase. She advised that the Steering Committee could assist in this exercise.

The Committee agreed to invite the Steering Committee to future Urban Design Task Force meetings.

5.1.2 Role of staff Steering Committee

Addressed under item 5.2. See page 3.

5.1.3 Communication with Council re: Forum 2 & 3 Outcomes

Mr. Fillmore advised that the recommendations for the Forum 2 & 3 Outcomes will be presented to the Committee in a staff report at the July 18th, 2007 meeting. He noted that the goal is to have the recommendations before Regional Council at its July 31st, 2007 meeting.

5.2 Update from recent Urban Design Events

Addressed under item 5.2. See page 3.

5.2.1 Project Management Workshop (May 31, 2007)

Addressed under item 5.2. See page 3.

5.2.2 Public Open House (June 11, 2007)

Addressed under item 5.2. See page 3.

5.2.3 UDTF Staff Steering Committee Workshops (June 12/13)

Addressed under item 5.2. See page 3.

5.3 Forum 4: Downtown Districts

A discussion ensued surrounding the above noted topic where the following was noted:

Mr. Austin French, Manager, Regional Plan advised that the Forum 4 should discuss heritage values to gauge community attitudes. He noted that presenting alternatives would also be an important exercise.

Mr. Fillmore advised that The Office for Urbanism has been tasked with finding alternatives, and they will communicate these alternatives once they are researched.

Mr. Madi advised that a preferred option will be presented with three variations to that option. He noted that the variations will be based on market and preference, and this will give people the opportunity to comment on different options. He noted that one of the options will be status quo, which will illustrate a best guess scenario of what the city could look like in 25 years if nothing is done. The status quo may be illustrated with 3-D models outlining low, medium and high density.

Ms. Young advised that urban design is highly context driven and values other than heritage must be highlighted. She noted that “people values” represent a colliding reality and need to be addressed.

Mr. Madi advised that a set of analysis including calculations will come back to provide a avenue for measurement. He further advised that the status quo supports why the urban design initiative is a necessary exercise.

Mr. Smith advised that he expected a decision based on a spectrum of examination. He advised that people do not need to be convinced that the status quo is an unacceptable option. He noted that ideas should be illustrated, but not in the form of options.

Mr. Palermo advised that he supports the idea of variations on the proposal. He noted that the debate has been segmented. He questioned if there was a way to bring heritage and development together.

5.3.1 Approach

Mr. Garrett advised that giving people too many options may not generate consensus and could be confusing. He expressed concern that the presentation may get watered down and suggested working out a schedule for Forum 4 that will help generate interest and provide structure.

Mr. Madi advised that the Office for Urbanism will provide an approach for Forum 4 and this will be presented in August.

5.3.2 Content

Deferred to a later meeting.

5.4 Overall Project Communications

Ms. Mallaley noted that she is available to assist in drafting responses to current issues, noting that this will create a proactive approach on an issue-by-issue basis. She advised that this tool will give the UDTF an opportunity to participate in the public dialogue around issues involving urban design. She noted that editorials would be a fearless way to engage the public.

Mr. Madi advised that the Committee should only respond to issues relevant to urban design.

Ms. Young noted that she opposes the idea of the task force responding to current issues. She advised that there should only be a response if it affects the mandate of the plan. She noted personal opinion must be separated from task force position.

Ms. Garber suggested that Ms. Mallaley book the large editorial space in the Chronicle Herald for one submission outlining some of the important urban design issues.

Ms. Mallaley advised that it may be difficult to obtain the large editorial space, but she would research options.

Mr. French suggested setting up a meeting with the newspaper editorial boards to develop a strategy.

5.4.1 Increasing Visibility of the UDTF Initiatives

Addressed under item 5.4

5.4.2 Opening Monthly Meetings to the Public/Advertising

Ms. Mallaley advised that she will be advertising the monthly Urban Design meetings to increase public participation throughout the process.

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS- NONE

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS

7.1 Approval of Future Meeting Schedule

Deferred to the June 27, 2007 meeting.

7.2 Discussion re: electronic agenda package

The Committee agreed to receive late materials electronically as long as hard copies are provided at the meeting.

7.3 Heritage Trust Letter

The Committee decided to provide Heritage Trust with a general response in the Chairs signature.

8. ADDED ITEMS

Addressed earlier in the agenda._____

9. NEXT REGULAR MEETING DATE

June 27, 2007 from 12:00- 2:00 pm in Halifax Hall, 2nd floor

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Chrissy White
Legislative Assistant