

URBAN DESIGN TASK FORCE
MINUTES
October 17, 2007

PRESENT:

Ms. Dale Godsoe, Chair
Mr. Paul MacKinnon, Vice-Chair
Mr. Bill Hyde
Mr. Steven Terauds
Mr. Bernie Smith
Ms. Margot Young
Mr. Kendall Taylor
Mr. Frank Palermo
Mr. Paul Shakotko
Ms. Adriane Abbott
Mr. Kevin Ril
Councillor Jim Smith
Councillor Dawn Sloane
Councillor Mary Wile

REGRETS:

Ms. Linda Garber
Ms. Cathy Carmody

STAFF:

Mr. Andy Fillmore, Project Manager
Mr. Steve Higgins, Project Implementation Coordinator, Capital District
Ms. Jacqueline Hamilton, Manager, Capital District
Ms. Jennifer Keesmatt, Office for Urbanism
Mr. Harold Madi
Ms. Julia Horncastle, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Melody Campbell, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 pm

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - NONE

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

MOVED by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Garrett, that the Order of Business be approved. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

3. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - NONE

4. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - NONE

6. REPORTS

6.1 Project Management Discussion regarding Project Scope, Schedule and Budget

Mr. Fillmore and Mr. Higgins presented the Critical Path and project scope to the Committee in preparation for the public meetings and presentation of the proposal to Regional Council. The project is now under tight timelines in order to meet the set deadlines.

A public meeting will be held on November 28th for feedback on the preferred scenario. The Downtown Preferred Scenario will be going to Regional Council on February 12th.

Ms. Godsoe noted that the Cogswell project is also a very time-sensitive issue going forward.

Ms. Hamilton discussed the down-zoning project in the peninsula that had been sent to Council. This project was requested to be put on hold in order for Halifax by Design to be involved in this plan and implementation. Councillor Sloane added that this is an initiative that is required. She added that communities are concerned with the growth of condos and larger developments taking over the areas where single dwelling homes once were. These new developments are seen as not fitting with the community dynamic.

Mr. Garrett inquired as to when the rest of the plan will be going to Regional Council. Mr. Fillmore added that the plan look at the downtown core first, then the rest of the areas will be addressed. The main objective before the November 2008 elections is the

implementation of the downtown core project.

Mr. Garrett inquired if there is provincial representative on the Task Force. Mr. Fillmore advised that there are currently two provincial representatives on the Steering Committee.

6.2 Review of the Steering Committee Comment

Mr. Fillmore provided up update on the work taking place within the Steering Committee.

6.3 Status Update of the Work-In-Progress of the Downtown Working Group

Ms. Godsoe added that this plan must go in the right direction and the Task Force must work to ensure deadlines are met. The Task Force is receiving firm recommendations, it is up to the Urban Design Task Force to consider the recommendations given to the Committee.

Mr. Fillmore provided an update of the Work in Progress of the Downtown Working Group in regard to Forum 4. The Downtown Working Group have been working with volume of content and converting the feedback to develop a concept.

Mr. Fillmore advised that areas toward George Street South toward Spring Garden Road does not require excessive height. The area where more height may be required is North of George Street. The Ramparts By-law may have to be challenged.

One of the weaknesses in the plan is it fails to accommodate the short term requirement for Class A office space. There are sites that may be capable of accommodating Class A office space with the approval of the United Gulf site and a provincially-owned site that may become available.

In regard to heritage preservation, the Barrington Street district preservation will exist and other sites will be done on a one by one basis. The seven story height area may become a heritage preservation district. Ms. Keesmatt noted that the earlier proposal is stronger in heritage preservation. There could be demolition controls and heritage buildings will be conserved. Boundaries will be determined although sites will be considered on a one on one basis. Many areas will keep its own character, as for example Argyle Street.

Mr. Fillmore added that of the 10 big moves, 1-9 moved quickly. Big move 10 will require refinement.

Ms. Godsoe added that affordable housing must be considered when urban planning is taking place.

Ms. Godsoe and Mr. Palmero discussed that the development of transportation options and public transit are essential to make the plan feasible. This plan may provide a unique opportunity to implement parking standards and transportation. Mr. Shakotko noted that the transportation issue will have to address the downtown and its connection to the whole of HRM. Ms. Hamilton added that there need to be a strong statement which involves the transportation and transit plan that needs to work in conjunction to the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Regional Transportation Plan. HRM by Design can provide tangible input to interface with the larger transportation plan. Councillor Sloane discussed the NY strategy in regard to parking and e-passes

Mr. Smith expressed concern with regard to connectivity of the downtown to the North End. The Cogswell Interchange is a main concern. The North End needs integration into the waterfront and downtown.

Mr. Smith discussed the South End Container Pier, it adds high volumes of truck traffic to the downtown. With the development of the Atlantic Gateway more money may be utilized to upgrade and extend the use of current rail beds. Less truck traffic would be beneficial to the area. Mr. Madi added that a vibrant downtown may decrease truck traffic.

Mr. Fillmore added recommendations have been made in regard to amendments to the Regional Plan. The Regional Plan is in its first round of amendments and is within reach of HRM by Design.

Ms. Carmody inquired as to when ecological aspects, affordable housing and residential commercial ratios would be coming back to the UDTF. Mr. Madi advised that this would come forward at the next meeting.

Discussion at the November 7th meeting will include heritage, building height and street level views. Ms. Keesmatt advised that discussion will take place on the preferred scenario as the UDTF prepares to present the plan to the public.

Mr. Higgins advised that November 7th is an essential meeting in order to go forward with the public meeting on November 28th. Ms. Godsoe reiterated Mr. Higgins comments.

7. CORRESPONDENCE AND DELEGATIONS

A letter was received by the Committee from Mr. Phil Pacey.

5. ADDED ITEMS - NONE

6. NEXT REGULAR MEETING DATE

The next regular meeting is scheduled for November 7, 2007.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Melody Campbell
Legislative Assistant