

**URBAN DESIGN TASK FORCE
MINUTES**

April 7, 2010

- PRESENT:** Ms. Dale Godsoe, Chair
Mr. Paul MacKinnon, Vice Chair
Councillor Mary Wile
Councillor Dawn Sloane
Mr. Paul Shakotko
Mr. Lorne Perry
Mr. David Garrett
Mr. William Hyde
Mr. Stephen Terauds
Mr. Patrick LeRoy
Mr. Frank Palermo
- REGRETS:** Councillor Jim Smith
Ms. Louisa Horne
Ms. Mary Jane Adams
Ms. Sally Camus
Mr. Bernie Smith
- STAFF:** Mr. Andy Fillmore, Urban Design Project Manager
Mr. Richard Harvey, Senior Planner
Mr. Luc Ouellet, Planner
Ms. Shawnee Gregory, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - February 17, 2010

Amendments:

Item 4 - The application has *applied* for a grant rather than *received*

Mr. William Hyde did not attend the meeting

MOVED BY Councillor Wile, seconded by Mr. Shakotko, that the minutes of February 17, 2010 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

The Chair requested that item 6.3.1 Graduate Student Presentation: "Filling in the Middle" be moved to the top of the agenda. The Committee agreed.

Additions:

8.1 Distribution of Commentary re: Message to Cities: If You Don't like Sprawl, Don't Make it Worse, Says C.D. Howe Institute Study - Councillor Sloane

MOVED BY Mr. Hyde, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that the agenda be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6.3.1 Graduate Student Presentation: "Filling in the Middle"

Mr. Andy Fillmore, Urban Design Project Manager, indicated that each year the second year Graduate Planning Students at Dalhousie University conducted a group project which was part of their final mark and a requirement to graduate. He stated that the project required the students to find a real client which HRM tried to be on this annual basis.

The Third Bridge Planning masters students, Laura, Brian, Todd and Leifka provided their presentation titled Filling in the Middle. Highlights were as follows:

- Research has shown that having growth boundaries decreases the cost of living for everyone
- It was recommended that HRM create an Infill Task Force
- It was recommended that the HRMbyDesign site plan approval process be developed across the Halifax Peninsula

- Secondary dwelling units, affordable housing and density bonusing strategies were suggested
- Waiving taxes for three years for first time home buyers on the Halifax Peninsula was suggested as an incentive

In closing, the Third Bridge Planning students stated that, as a whole, they believed that their suggested strategies addressed this complex problem and could make a change.

A discussion ensued with the students responding to questions.

The students noted that local resistance may be mediated by encouraging public consultation earlier in the development process.

The students indicated that the Greenprint document was a good one, however, items that would attract families such as on street entrances and private back yard space could be included. They also suggested that a variety of housing options be included.

Regarding maintaining local schools, the students indicated that although HRM did not regulate schools, the municipality could plan along with them. They noted that magnet schools such as traditional, immersion and arts schools attract a wide demographic and aid in keeping local schools open and, therefore, attracted families to an area. They advised that regional schools such as Citadel High School also worked well.

The Chair thanked the students of Third Bridge Planning for their presentation.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Update on UDTF Work Plan and Schedule

- The 2010 Urban Design Task Force Work Plan was submitted.

The Chair advised that she had met with staff regarding the Work Plan; noting that the work the Task Force intended to do required a special and adapting process. She noted that the group had been tasked to look at the Regional Centre and to study neighbourhoods in order to develop specific criteria for detailed neighbourhood plans to be completed.

Mr. Fillmore indicated that the Task Force had a list of issues to address. He suggested that at the July 7, 2010 meeting the Task Force make an interim motion to Regional Council regarding the Neighbourhood Greenprint document. Mr. Fillmore also stated that if the Task Force wished to prevent further poor development, the group should try to look at overarching amendments and to think more about segway for when they presented to Council at the end of the year.

The Chair suggested that the next three meetings in May, June and July be extended to three hour sessions.

MOVED BY Mr. Garrett, seconded by Mr. LeRoy, that the Urban Design Task Force approve the 2010 Urban Design Task Force Work Plan as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4.2 Update/Discussion on Draft Letters from UDTF Regarding: 1) Suburban Service Boundary, 2) Downtown Circulator Shuttle

- A draft letter addressed to the Regional Plan Advisory Committee was submitted.
- A draft letter addressed to Halifax Regional Council was submitted.

Mr. MacKinnon indicated that the Task Force had not yet finalized to whom the letter regarding the downtown circulator shuttle should be addressed. He noted that HRM Transit staff had stated that they would not be moving forward on this item, however, the Task Force wished to inquire again. Mr. MacKinnon stated that he thought the letter should go to Regional Council and welcomed any suggestions members may have regarding the contents of the letter; noting that there was no immediacy.

Mr. MacKinnon stated that time was of the essence in reference to the letter addressed to the Regional Plan Advisory Committee regarding the Suburban Service Boundary as this item was going to be discussed again at their May meeting.

Regarding the downtown circular shuttle letter, Mr. Fillmore indicated that he had spoken with Mr. Paul Dunphy, Director of Community Development, and Mr. Ken Reashor, Acting Director of the Traffic Authority, and suggested that the Task Force may wish to engage HRM Transit staff in a discussion prior to sending their letter; noting that the draft correspondence had already got staff's attention.

Mr. Palermo entered the meeting at 2:21 p.m.

Mr. Austin French spoke to the letter regarding the Suburban Service Boundary; noting that the correspondence opened well and fell within the mandate of the Task Force. He advised that he did have concerns, however, with the paraphrasing of arguments and facts in the report presented to the Regional Plan Advisory Committee at their October 21, 2009 meeting. Mr. French indicated that staff have agreed to have a discussion with the Developers regarding these facts and that a second revised report would be going to the Regional Plan Advisory Committee in May, however, he was unable to provide further details at this time. In closing, Mr. French suggested that the Task Force focus attention on the communication contained in the first part of the letter.

The Chair advised that she was hearing from the Task Force that this was an important issue to them and they should do something. As she was concerned about timing, she requested that Mr. MacKinnon proceed with his letter writing.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

6.1 Correspondence - None

6.2 Petitions - None

6.3 Presentations

6.3.1 Graduate Student Presentation: "Filling in the Middle"

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting. Please see page 3.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Case Studies: "Urban Corridor" and "Urban Centre"

Mr. Luc Ouellet, Planner, provided the presentation on Case Studies: "Urban Corridor" and "Urban Centre"; noting that Dartmouth would be discussed. Highlights were as follows:

- There are no height controls in residential areas of Dartmouth
- The urban corridor of Dartmouth is the Wyse Road area
- The lot coverage maximum is significantly lower than in Halifax
- The predominant building type is low rise podium forms
- There are five zones in the Dartmouth Urban Corridor
- In the Urban Centre of Dartmouth a higher concentration was being envisioned
- There are three zones in the Urban Centre of Dartmouth
- The Wyse Road area has been studied and staff have results from the workshop
- Current planning regulations concentrate on land use rather than form

Mr. Richard Harvey, Senior Planner, added that the conclusion staff were considering was that these particular areas may require further concentration regarding what type of development should occur as mixed uses could often be prohibitive. He stated that it was all about encouraging the right kind of development.

Mr. Mitch Dickey, Planner, stated that the Wyse Road area was typical of some of the older streets in Dartmouth; noting that developers were sometimes put off by what type of building may be constructed beside them. He stated that the density standards in the area were also prohibitive. In closing, Mr. Dickey advised that there was a great deal of demand for HRM to do something about Dartmouth.

The Chair thanked staff; noting she was pleased to hear they saw this as a great opportunity.

7.2 Discussion: Urban Cores (Downtown Halifax & Dartmouth)

Mr. Fillmore stated that he was about to finish the final section of transect; noting that only two areas had been identified as Urban Core. He indicated that he was going to put the downtown Halifax approach into downtown Dartmouth, however, it would be adjusted to accommodate and reflect the realities of the area.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Distribution of Commentary re: Message to Cities: If You Don't like Sprawl, Don't Make it Worse, Says C.D. Howe Institute Study - Councillor Sloane

Councillor Sloane advised that she would be sending the Legislative Assistant a link to the article titled, Distribution of Commentary re: Message to Cities: If You Don't like Sprawl, Don't Make it Worse, Says C.D. Howe Institute Study. Councillor Sloane stated that it was a very interesting article regarding urban sprawl.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting was scheduled for May 5, 2010 from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:01 p.m.

Shawnee Gregory
Legislative Assistant