

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

WESTERN COMMON WILDERNESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

April 28, 2010

PRESENT: Mr. Bill Matheson
Mr. Dusan Soudek
Mr. Michael Lamplugh
Mr. Lorne Logan
Ms. Susan Smith
Mr. Blake Maybank
Mr. Darrell Cooling
Mr. Phillip Cochrane

REGRETS: Mr. Alan Kitz
Ms. Jane Sears
Ms. Kelly Carlton
Councillor Reg Rankin

STAFF: Mr. Peter Bigelow, Manager, Real Property Planning
Mr. Jan Skora, Coordinator, Real Property Planning
Mr. John Charles, Planner, Real Property Planning
Ms. Melody Campbell, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Barb Allen, Legislative Support

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. at the Captain William Spry Centre.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – March 29, 2010

The spelling of ad hock on Page 4 should be ad hoc.

Correction to Mr. Soudek's comments on page 4 – Should read: Mr. Soudek asked if the Chebucto Peninsula Plan shown in the draft Master Plan would be adversely effected by having an OHV trail going through the planned wilderness area.

MOVED BY Mr. Maybank, seconded by Mr. Soudek that the minutes from March 29, 2010 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

MOVED BY Mr. Cooling, seconded by Mr. Lamplugh, that the Order of Business be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES - None

5. PRESENTATIONS, CORRESPONDENCE AND PETITIONS - None

6. REPORTS

6.1 Western Common Wilderness Common Master Plan

Mr. Matheson advised that approximately fifty people attended the open house at Brookside Junior High April 14, 2010. Mr. Charles, Planner, Real Property Planning, stated that since the open house comments have been submitted and are available on-line. He continued that there has been an extension for submission of comments until May 9th 2010. Mr. Charles said that he and Mr. Skora, Coordinator, Real Property Planning, are responding to the public submissions.

Mr. Matheson stated that it is the responsibility of the Advisory Committee to consider the public feedback before submitting a report to Western Region Community Council. He continued that the Western Region Community Council will be meeting May 31st, submissions would have to be submitted by May 20, 2010, which will give enough time for members to absorb and consider submissions and have the report prepared for Western Region Community Council by May 20, 2010.

Mr. Charles explained the process and timeline of getting the document to Regional Council.

Any changes resulting from comments will be included in the Master Plan. Mr.

Discussion was held on feedback given at the Open House and to comments submitted online at <http://www.halifax.ca/RealPropertyPlanning/WCWA/FAQ.html> Ms. Smith questioned whether the Advisory Committee would be able to read staff replies to public concerns and comments. Mr. Charles said staff responses' will be posted online.

Mr. Matheson said that because the deadline for public submissions has been extended the Committee should meet on May 10, 2010, if Committee members were available.

Mr. Charles and HRM staff went through the public feedback that has been submitted to date and spoke to how they will be addressed.

Kathy Oakley – Staff will outline way finding information for signage.

Graham Smith – The plan is basically preservation and there will be need for small development for parking at the trail head and potentially washroom facilities as it is a regional park.

Darrell Benoit – Refer to Section 6.2.2 of the Master Plan; HRM continues to work with the Province.

Corina Doary - A horse use of trail would not be encouraged as there is a By-law that restricts horses using trails to protect the safety of the rider. Staff advised that trail maintenance would have to be more extensive, ie. clearing headroom to accommodate horseback riding.

Matt Bernard – International standards will help with approved trail design.

Wendy McDonald – Staff set up small group discussions at the Open House designed to allow more people equal opportunity to have their questions answered. The Drysdale Bog will be protected under ownership and has a trail going over it in the Master Plan.

Martin Willson – These comments and the definition of “wilderness” was debated at length. Mr. Maybank advised that the name of the area is confusing. Mr. Bigelow advised that there is a distance as a buffer for foot traffic. Mr. Bigelow said that authorized ATV user groups will help police OHV use. Only members of authorized ATV groups would be permitted on the trails.

Discussion was had around suggestions for a more concise name. It was agreed

that “Western Commons Wilderness Park” might be more appropriate and could serve until a new name was chosen. Mr. Bigelow stated that the report could contain a recommendation that the park be renamed with something that makes it more easily recognizable. Mr. Maybank said that this is a unique park and needs an easily identifiable name. He added that a recognizable name would be beneficial for tourism.

Ms. Smith asked if the area was given wilderness designation could it be protected by the Province. Mr. Charles said this would not be the case as this will be a Regional Park which will contain parking and washrooms. It was noted that such amenities would not be permitted under Provincial designation as a wilderness area.

Derek Cann - Mr. Charles said that watershed preservation is at the heart of regional park development.

Mr. Soudek suggested that when the Western Common Wilderness Advisory Committee is disbanded there could be another group to continue to work on the plan as it moves forward.

Mr. Maybank suggested it could make sense to move the North entrance access from Phase Three (3) to Phase Two (2) of the plan adding that this be considered.

CPAWS Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – Mr. Charles noted that he has had conversations with Mr. Chris Miller, Ph.D. National Manager CPAWS around their submission. Mr. Charles spoke to the CPAWS submission stating that it supports the Master Plan moving forward more quickly than outlined in the draft plan. Mr. Charles said that if more funds were to become available it would shorten the timeline for the phases of development.

Mr. Charles said that CPAWS has been working with the Candidate Wilderness area and the Province. Mr. Bigelow said that there will be discussions with the Province around restricting access to protect lands. Ms. Smith asked if connectivity for wildlife could be better protected by the Province than the Municipality. Staff advised that it is more appropriate to have both levels of government involved.

In regard to CPAWS comments around “forest harvesting” in the section of the Master Plan entitled “forest management”, Mr. Charles advised that staff will refer to the Point Pleasant Forest Management Plan.

Mr. Maybank encouraged committee members to have people and organizations respond to the draft Master Plan as more feedback is beneficial

7. ADDED ITEMS

April 28, 2010

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – May 10, 2010

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Barbara Allen
Legislative Support