

# HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

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## HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OCTOBER 24, 2006

### MINUTES

#### PRESENT:

Mayor Peter J. Kelly  
Deputy Mayor Russell Walker  
Councillors: Steve Streach  
David Hendsbee  
Harry McInroy  
Gloria McCluskey  
Andrew Younger  
Bill Karsten  
Becky Kent  
Jim Smith  
Mary Wile  
Dawn Sloane  
Sue Uteck  
Sheila Fougere  
Debbie Hum  
Linda Mosher  
Stephen Adams  
Robert Harvey  
Gary Martin  
Reg Rankin  
Gary Meade

#### REGRETS:

Councillor Krista Snow  
Councillor Patrick Murphy  
Councillor Brad Johns

#### STAFF:

Ms. Geri Kaiser, Acting Chief Administrative Officer  
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor  
Ms. Jan Gibson, Municipal Clerk  
Ms. Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Kelly called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**MOVED by Councillor Wile, seconded by Councillor McCluskey that the minutes of October 3, 2006 and October 10, 2006 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**3. HRM BY DESIGN**

A staff report dated October 17, 2006 was submitted.

Two PowerPoint presentations were submitted.

Ms. Dale Godsoe, Chair of the Urban Design Task Force addressed Council and provided introductory remarks in regard to today's presentation. Ms. Godsoe reviewed background information on the role of the Task Force and noted that Mr. Collin MacKinnon, a Task Force member, was also in attendance.

At 1:10 p.m. Councillors Hum, Fougere, and Hendsbee entered the meeting.

Mr. Andy Fillmore, Capital District Urban Design Project Manager, addressed Council and reviewed three key points of the presentation which are as follows:

- C to put HRM By Design Project in context with other policy initiatives;
- C to talk about what the project is and is not
- C to review the two recommendations in the staff report.

At 1:17 p.m. Councillor Mosher entered the meeting.

Mr. Fillmore then turned the presentation over to Mr. Harold Mattie and Ms. Jennifer Keesmaat, advising that they were consultants working with the Task Force.

Mr. Mattie explained that his presentation was focussed on looking at the Regional Centre from a 'fresh eyes perspective' and that the project involves thinking about the look and feel that the City will have in the future. To do so, one has to know what is not working well in the City. Mr. Mattie then outlined the impressions the City had on him, as follows:

- C The extent of sprawl and big box development on the periphery, while the urban centre density is low. This raises the questions of how to make the regional centre more liveable while adding more density, and how to balance the conveniences of modern life with good quality public environments.
- C There is not a clearly defined coherent urban structure or it has been compromised; the

city needs appropriate scale and pattern; the Regional Centre lacks identifiable and distinct neighbourhoods and districts.

At 1:27 p.m. Councillor Smith entered the meeting.

- C The defining aspects of the Regional Centre that are unique and that give it distinction seem to be taken for granted.
- C Current policy and regulations do not seem to be resulting in intended outcomes; there should be a focus on the view planes from street level; have to ensure the view of the city is appealing as well.
- C opportunities for visual and physical connectivity seemed to have been missed.
- C The growing dependency on the car as a result of sprawl is compromising the pedestrian environment and inhibiting a vibrant street life.
- C There is an urban design infrastructure already in place and that needs to be better utilized.

At 1:35 p.m. Councillor Adams entered the meeting.

Ms. Jennifer Keesmaat addressed Council and in her presentation she outlined how the Task Force plans to undertake the study, the purpose and objective of the study, and the process they have created to ensure public involvement. In addition, she gave an overview of the outcomes of the first Forum that was held, and the upcoming forum which is planned for December.

At 1:46 p.m. Councillor Streach entered the meeting.

In her presentation, Ms. Keesmaat reviewed and elaborated on the following points:

- C The purpose of the study is to advance and implement the policies of the Regional Plan.
- C The objective is to give physical form to the policies and build a culture of support.
- C The process is designed for public engagement and oriented to implementation.
- C The process includes a work plan made up of six phases, and with four Forums planned between the months of September 2006 and August 2007. Each Forum will have an open house and a workshop. The Urban Design Task Force, the Steering Committee, and members of the public will be involved in the workshops. The first forum was held in September and the second one will be held December 4<sup>th</sup>. to 7<sup>th</sup>.
- C The principles of the study encompass the following:
  - C environment
  - C high quality development
  - C heritage resources
  - C transportation options and support for pedestrian movement
  - C support of mixed-use and diverse neighbourhoods
  - C growth should respond to the character of its context, and the process should foster a culture of support for the building/construction of quality urban design.

Ms. Godsoe addressed Council and reviewed the recommendations as contained in the staff report.

**MOVED by Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor McCluskey that Regional Council:**

- 1. Approve *HRM by Design's* public participation strategy as outlined in the October 17, 2006 staff report.**
- 2. Approve the methodology and schedule, as described in the October 17, 2006 staff report of Council's incremental adoption of *HRM by Design's* findings at key project milestones.**

A discussion ensued and the consultants and staff responded to questions. The following points were noted:

- C In regard to the focus on the City's heritage, it was suggested that attention be paid to ensure there would be no false heritage development.
- C A request was put forward that within the Principle of Environment, consideration be given to incorporating crime prevention measures such as appropriate lighting, site lines, and emergency phones - - elements that make the downtown feel safe.
- C Consideration be given to ensuring that all the waterfront areas are not built up; and more emphasis placed on view planes.
- C The impact on pedestrians of the wind tunnel created by the Queen's Square development in Dartmouth was noted.
- C The Consultants were asked to ensure that posters advising of the seconded Forum in December would be posted at the Woodside Ferry Terminal.

**THE MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Ms. Godsoe addressed Council once again and expressed appreciation for Council's attention to the presentation and support of the recommendations.

Committee of the Whole recessed at 2:50 p.m. and reconvened at 3:10 p.m. with the same members present.

**4. SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING JOINT WORKING GROUP REPORT  
(deferred October 10, 2006)**

This matter was deferred from a Committee of the Whole meeting held on October 10, 2006. The following motion had been put:

**MOVED by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Uteck that Regional Council withhold support for the recommendations of the Supplementary Education Joint Working Group, and confirm that education is a Provincial responsibility and should be funded through Provincial fiscal capacity, not through property taxation.**

Ms. Cathie O'Toole, Acting Director of Finance and Mr. Bruce Fisher, Manager of Fiscal and Tax Policy addressed Council and recapped the discussion on this matter from the previous Committee of the Whole. In his remarks, Mr. Fisher advised that staff was asked by Council to respond to the recommendations of the Supplementary Funding Joint Working Group. Upon review, staff determined that if the recommendations were approved, Council would be heading into a new type of relationship with the School Board in which it would share tax room, and staff are not sure this solution would be sustainable. He added that staff maintain that education is a provincial responsibility.

Mr. Fisher also noted that staff will be coming back with an information report on the Hogg Report, as requested by Councillor Rankin.

A discussion ensued with the following points being noted:

- C Concern was expressed that if supplementary funds are increased, the Province will reduce its share of funding.
- C It was noted that teachers and administrative staff are being paid out of supplementary fund when this should be coming from mandatory funds.
- C Support was expressed for the concept of supplementary funding but not for providing taxing powers to the School Board.
- C The Province has previously stated that if HRM and the School Board can come to some agreement, they will consider changes to legislation.
- C Although the funding is stationary, the students are not; inequity continues to exist.

In response to a question, Mr. Fisher advised that HRM is not paid a fee for handling supplementary funding.

- C Constituents have clearly stated that they are willing to pay for art and music but the Province should be paying for the rest of the programs.
- C Under the current system, Council has some control; the status quo may not be good, however, Council should not accept something worse than the status quo.

Councillor Mosher asked that her comments be noted for the record. She advised that she was in total support of enhanced education at this time. She believed that the School Board was not carrying out proper forward-thinking and planning or lobbying the right body. Councillor Mosher suggested that the School Board should get together with various school advisory committees, the Home and School Associations, and all applicable bodies and boards within the Province and use the data that explicitly shows that Halifax Regional School meets and exceeds test scores, from other areas that do not have enhanced education. The Councillor added that the data could be used to prove that supplementary education funding is not enhanced education funding but is what many people, years ago, considered as

mandatory.

Councillor Mosher advised that the School Board should insist the Provincial Government fulfill their mandate and lobby appropriately. She further explained that a strategy is needed to be developed to ensure education is fully funded by the Provincial Government. Councillor Mosher noted that a comment had been made that Council spends money on other areas that are not within its mandate. She indicated she did not agree with spending money outside of the mandate, but pointed out that when Council does do this, it has a say in the decision making process. Councillor Mosher advised that she raised this issue at a Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities Board of Directors meeting and they indicated they would be very pleased to have Ms. Carol Olsen attend one of their Board Meetings. In closing, Councillor Mosher advised that this issue is a Nova Scotia issue and that it should not be funded by regressive tax. It should be funded from other areas that the Provincial Government receives resources and that is within their mandate.

At this time the Chair noted that several items were added to the In Camera Agenda which is scheduled to immediately follow this meeting. He asked if Council wanted to continue with the discussion or defer it to the next Committee of the Whole, in order to allow for the In Camera meeting to start.

**MOVED by Councillor Younger, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee that Council continue discussion on this item until it is finished. THE MOTION WAS PUT AND DEFEATED.**

The Chair advised that discussion on this matter would be deferred to the next meeting of Committee of the Whole.

## **5. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 4:09 p.m.

Jan Gibson  
Municipal Clerk