

HARBOUR EAST COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES

March 4, 2010

PRESENT: Councillor Gloria McCluskey, Chair
Councillor Lorelei Nicoll
Councillor Jackie Barkhouse
Councillor Jim Smith
Councillor Darren Fisher

REGRETS: Councillor Bill Karsten

STAFF: Ms. Melody Campbell, Legislative Assistant

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HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
HARBOUR EAST COMMUNITY
COUNCIL MINUTES

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Councillor McCluskey called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with the Invocation being led by Councillor Nicoll.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - February 4, 2010

MOVED by Councillor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Smith, that the minutes of February 4, 2010, as presented, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Councillor McCluskey advised that Councillor Karsten has sent his regrets.

MOVED by Councillor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Barkhouse, that the Order of Business, as presented, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Status Sheet Review

4.1.1 Street Parking Close to Nova Scotia Community College

No update received. To remain on the status sheet.

4.1.2 Crosswalk Flags & Pedestrian Safety

No update received. To remain on the status sheet.

5. MOTIONS OF RECONSIDERATION - NONE

6. MOTIONS OF RESCISSION - NONE

7. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - NONE

8. HEARINGS

8.1 Public Hearings - None

8.2 Variance Hearings - None

9. REPORTS

9.1 Staff Reports

9.1.1 Case 15788: Amendment to Regional Subdivision By-law

- A staff report dated January 28, 2010 was before Council.

Ms. Jillian MacLellan, Planner, presented the report to Council.

The following points of clarification were provided to Council:

- a property is considered a flag lot if two buildings are already in existence
- each building on a flag lot must have their own connection to water and sewer

MOVED BY Councillor Barkhouse, seconded by Councillor Nicoll that Harbour East Community Council recommend that Regional Council:

- 1. Give First Reading to the proposed amendment to the Regional Subdivision By-law as shown in Attachment A of the report dated January 28, 2010 and schedule a public hearing; and**
- 2. Approve the proposed amendment to the Regional Subdivision By-law as shown in Attachment A of the report dated January 28, 2010.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

9.2 Members of Council - None

10. CORRESPONDENCE, DELEGATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

10.1 Correspondence - None

10.2 Petitions - None

10.3 Presentations

10.3.1 HRM's District Boundary Review

This item was addressed as the last item of the meeting. See Page 6.

11. MOTIONS - NONE

12. ADDED ITEMS - NONE

13. NOTICES OF MOTION - NONE

14. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public came forward to address Council at this time.

15. NEXT MEETING - April 1, 2010

Council recessed at 6:17 p.m.

Council reconvened at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor Kelly assumed the Chair to address Item 10.3.1 HRM's District Boundary Review.

10.3 Presentations

10.3.1 HRM's District Boundary Review

Councillor Gloria McCluskey welcomed those in attendance to the presentation of HRM's District Boundary Review and introduced the members of the Governance and Boundary Review Committee.

Mayor Peter Kelly, Chair, Governance and Boundary Review Committee, welcomed those in attendance and provided a brief background in regard to the Governance and Boundary Review initiative.

The following members of the Governance and Boundary Review Committee were also in attendance: Councillors Gloria McCluskey, Barry Dalrymple, Linda Mosher, and Reg Rankin. Regrets had been received from Councillors Jerry Blumenthal and Tim Outhit. Members of staff supporting the Committee and also in attendance were: Ms. Cathy Mellett, Acting Municipal Clerk, Mr. Paul Morgan, Planner, Ms. Sara Knight, Solicitor and Ms. Linda Grant, Administrative Clerk Assistant.

Ms. Cathy Mellett, Acting Municipal Clerk, commenced the PowerPoint presentation outlining the following questions for consideration by residents of HRM as part of Phase 1 of the review process:

- the size of electoral districts
- the role of Councillor
- the powers and size of Community Council and Regional Council
- how Council can best work to serve the citizens of HRM

Phase 2 of the review, to commence in the Summer of 2010, will consist of the boundary review and adjustments with additional public input sought in the Fall of 2010. HRM will submit its decision on the boundaries to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board by December 2010.

Mayor Kelly then called for members of the public to come forward with comments or questions.

Mr. Jay Guthord, Dartmouth, questioned the current challenges of Council at its present size. He expressed concern that if the number of Councillors decreased, each Councillor would be responsible for more people per district. He advised he believes that the current system is manageable. Mayor Kelly responded by advising that Councillors work approximately eight to twelve hours a day weekdays and weekends, adding that the workload can sometimes increase or decrease depending on the issues. The Mayor acknowledged that if there were a decrease in the number of Councillors, Council support may have to increase.

Mr. Dave Carter, Dartmouth, advised that he is inclined to believe that the current number of Councillors is fine. He suggested that it would be beneficial for the public to have the information from other Community Councils. Mayor Kelly advised that the presentations are now being provided at various Community Councils throughout HRM but information is not being released at this point as to not lead residents towards a choice one way or the other. Mr. Carter added that he does not want a smaller Council at this time.

Mr. John Snow, Dartmouth, compared the levels of government between Sweden and Canada noting that Sweden has two levels of government while Canada has three. He added that with the inclusion of the powers of the Community Council in HRM it could account for four levels of government. He suggested that the Community Council should be advisory in nature and it have no input to Regional Council. He stated that the Community Council should have an advisory role to Council. He stated that whatever structure is determined that the roles of the Community Councils and Council need to be understood. He added that many residents in the urban areas are not aware of Community Councils or their role.

Councillor Mosher acknowledged that many residents are not aware of Community Councils or their function. The Councillor suggested that a description of the role of the Community Council be added to the HRM website, including examples of what issues a Community Council addresses. She added that this information could be included for the next public meeting introducing the HRM District Boundary Review.

Mr. Murray Elliot, Dartmouth, noted the increased growth of HRM and expressed

concern regarding a potential increase in workload for the Councillors if the number of districts were to decrease.

Mr. Tony Lynch expressed concern that if the number of Councillors were reduced the workload could become too much each Councillor.

Mr. Colin May, Dartmouth, noted that the deadline for written submissions on the District Boundary Review is March 23rd. He stated that it would be great to have more of the public involved in the Community Council function. He advised the Committee that last year he visited a village in Britain, approximately the size of Lunenburg, that was represented by a Parish Council of five to six councillors and one mayor. He stated that each councillor had approximately 2600 residents compared to HRM Councillors having 20,000 in average. He advised that the Districts should be left at twenty-three. He noted issues such as cats and taxis are not the best use of Council resources. He urged HRM to work with the Premier and the Nova Scotia Government to eliminate the legislated HRM District Boundary Review. He suggested that the District Boundary issue be added to the ballot at Municipal elections. He suggested that Community Councils be given an increased mandate noting that many districts are growing in HRM and are requiring more services.

Mayor Kelly advised those in attendance that the District Boundary Review is mandated by law to seek the public's comments and direction and to report back to the Province.

Councillor Mosher suggested an extension to the deadline for public submissions. She added that many residents may be away on March break and unable to comment before the March 23rd deadline.

Mr. Richard Swim, Cole Harbour, advised the Committee that Council should be reduced to a maximum of fourteen to sixteen councillors including the Mayor. He stated that he watches Regional Council on Tuesday evenings and noted that at times there is argument instead of debate. He noted that discussion during Council meetings is very repetitious with Councillors making the same comments as were previously stated. He added that the current size of Council is unworkable and he noted that some areas in Canada have a population of 800,000 with only twelve councillors. He suggested that Community Councils become advisory to Regional Council while retaining some decisions on local issues, ie. neighbour disputes. He stated that it is unavoidable that some areas and populations may become larger with a decrease in the number of Councillors.

Ms. Alma Johnston, Dartmouth, advised she is in favour of keeping the status quo regarding district boundaries. She questioned the growth in HRM and was interested in receiving information regarding the growth areas of each district. Mayor Kelly advised

that staff contact her directly to provide the requested information.

Mr. Brian LeBlanc, Dartmouth, advised that the role of the Councillor is a dual role including administrative and representation. He added that the Councillor is the one voice to represent the resident and he noted that the residents have to be represented as best as possible. He advised that the size of Council is fine adding that for every Councillor there are approximately 16,000 residents. He added that the decision making of Council is fine, although it could make better use of decisions, such as in the case of development agreements. He noted that Councillors are overworked compared to other elected representatives adding that Councillors do not have the staff support as is the case in other levels of government. He stated that less representation can cause a disconnect between residents and government. Mr. LeBlanc stated that when working with a large number of people there is more diversity of ideas and various viewpoints. He added that when democracy is working well decision making can take longer. He stated that Community Councils should become responsible for citizen advisory boards and committees in order to have more public involvement in its decisions. He stated that Council needs to address fiscal responsibility and work at engaging its residents.

The Mayor called three times for any further speakers, hearing none, the floor was closed for comment.

Mayor Kelly expressed his appreciation to those in attendance for their comments and participation in the HRM District Boundary Process.

16. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Melody Campbell
Legislative Assistant