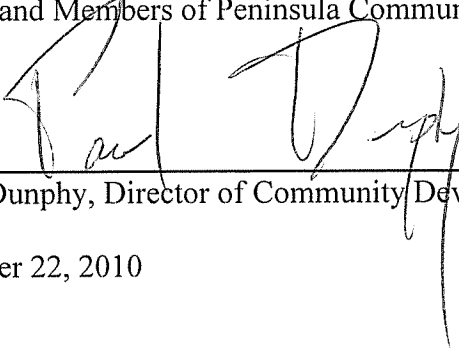


Peninsula Community Council
November 8, 2010

TO: Chair and Members of Peninsula Community Council

SUBMITTED BY:



Paul Dunphy, Director of Community Development

DATE: October 22, 2010

SUBJECT: Gross Floor Area Requirements, Halifax Peninsula Land Use By-law

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

April 20, 2010 Peninsula Community Council meeting:

‘Councillor Watts advised that she had intended to move notice of motion to request a staff report on the GFAR, however, she’s been advised that there is currently a report underway. Councillor Watts requested that this matter be added to the Status Sheet.’ (Council Minutes)

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The gross floor area requirements (GFAR) were adopted as amendments to the Halifax Peninsula Land Use By-law in September 2005 by the Peninsula and Chebucto Community Councils. They were part of an amendment package that was introduced to address the emergence of what have commonly been referred to as “quasi-rooming houses.” These are large houses with a high number of bedrooms, relative to their surroundings. Although they may appear to be actual rooming houses, they are difficult to differentiate within a zoning context from other housing types because the building functions as a single housekeeping unit.

The gross floor area controls were intended to address the issue of houses that were being built to the full envelope permitted by the Land Use By-law, through lot coverage and height requirements. These measures regulate the amount of habitable floor area that may be contained within a building relative to the size of a lot. The gross floor area requirements may be relaxed through a variance application that may ultimately be decided, if appealed, by Community Council following a public hearing.

Staff has been monitoring the application of the gross floor area requirements and since this matter was raised by Peninsula Community Council at the April 20, 2010 meeting. Particular attention has been paid to the variances and appeals that have been heard by the Council. As a result, staff has opened a Case File to review the gross floor area requirements.

The review of the gross floor area requirements will involve public participation, including a public information meeting that will be scheduled in the near future. Following that meeting, a report with recommendations will be brought back to Community Council with staff's recommendations. At that time, if Council wishes to consider adopting any amendments that may be recommended by staff, a public hearing will be required. This will provide a second opportunity for the public input.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The costs to process this planning application can be accommodated within the approved operating budget for C310 Planning & Applications.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Project and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Project and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is required since this report responds to Council's request for staff to open a case to consider amendments to the Halifax Peninsula Land Use By-law regarding the

Gross Floor Area requirements. The level of community engagement will be "consultation" and will be conducted in accordance with the Community Engagement Strategy and the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*.

The proposed amendments to the Halifax Peninsula Land Use By-law will potentially impact residents of the Peninsula.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/cc.html> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Richard Harvey, Senior Planner



Report Approved by: Austin French, Manager, Planning Services, 490-6717
