

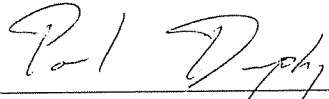


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4.1.1

Western Region Community Council
March 22, 2010

TO: Chair and Members of Western Region Community Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
Paul Dunphy, Director, Community Development

DATE: March 15, 2010

SUBJECT: Creation of St. Margaret's Bay Coastal Corridor Advisory Committee

ORIGIN

Motion of Western Region Community Council, May 25, 2009 (Item 10.2.1):

MOVED BY Councillor Lund, seconded by Councillor Rankin that the Western Region Community Council request an information report regarding the creation of a St. Margaret's Bay Coastal Corridor Advisory Committee. The report is to include a proposed Terms of Reference with Committee Composition for review and approval by the Western Region Community Council and is to follow the Community Forum Report: At the Crossroads -Visioning a Village Community Forum, prepared by the St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association (May 2009). MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Western Region Community Council defer the establishment of the St. Margaret's Bay Coastal Corridor Advisory Committee pending the outcome of several other planning-related initiatives currently underway or planned in the greater Upper Tantallon area.

BACKGROUND

The request to establish a Coastal Corridor Advisory Committee stemmed from input received through two Community Forums that were held in 2008 and 2009 respectively, and was one of numerous recommendations put forward through the sessions. The Forums were organized and hosted by the St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association (SMBSA) in partnership with the Bay's Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Association. The March 2008 Forum was titled "Responding to Change: Defining Core Community Values" and the March 2009 Forum topic was: "At the Crossroads - Visioning a Village".

Perhaps the most important action coming from the 2008 Forum was the initiation of an Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) amendment process to place better controls on large-format retail development in the St. Margaret's Bay plan area. A Development Agreement process was approved by Regional Council in February, 2009 to effect this community objective.

The 2009 Forum produced a consensus on a shared vision for "Tantallon at the Crossroads" through the development of a series of land use and design objectives. Staff is currently working with community representatives on this initiative, described in more detail in the following section of this report.

The purpose of the Coastal Corridor Advisory Committee, as stated in the Forum recommendations, would be to act as a "negotiator, ombudsman and public voice for community interests with developers and government".

Given on-going and pending planning initiatives concerning the St. Margaret's Bay area, as further outlined below, staff advises it would be prudent to defer the formal establishment of this body until these initiatives are complete or better defined.

DISCUSSION

Current and Pending Planning-Related Initiatives - St. Margaret's Bay Area

1. 2010 Community Forum: Tantallon Crossroads - Vision Implementation for the Village
Over the past number of months, staff from Regional and Community Planning and Infrastructure and Asset Management have been working closely with the previous Forum organizers (SMBSA/Chamber/Tourism) and other community resource expertise to prepare for the 2010 Community Forum on April 16th and 17th. The purpose of this event is a direct result of the recommendations provided at the 2009 Forum, and will seek consensus from community members and land owners on a series of detailed site design, building design and streetscape design guidelines that will form the basis for new MPS policy and land use by-law regulations for the Tantallon Crossroads village. Staff anticipates the MPS amendment process will commence immediately following the community forum.

2. Tantallon/St. Margaret's Bay Watershed/Servicing Study

Staff is presently evaluating proposals for this study, which will assist in determining the opportunities for future development within the watershed flowing to Head of St. Margaret's Bay, taking into account the environmental capacity of the land and receiving waters. The study is being led by Regional and Community Planning staff in conjunction with the SEMO (Sustainable Environment Management Office) and Halifax Water. It is anticipated the study will take approximately one year to complete and will include considerable public consultation.

3. Community Visioning Exercise - Upper Tantallon Rural Commuter Centre

Toward the completion of the Watershed Study, and using the information from that study, a community visioning exercise will be undertaken for the Upper Tantallon Growth Centre area. It will provide an opportunity for the greater Exit 5 community to think creatively about how it could function, how it might change and what it might look like over a 25-year timeframe. The vision will prepare the way for the official Secondary Plan Review for the area. The visioning process will be community-based, with staff resources provided by a number of HRM business units.

4. Provincial Sustainable Coastal Development Strategy

The provincial government has produced "The 2009 State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report", which describes the physical, ecological and socio-economic characteristics of the coast and examines in more detail six priority coastal issues: coastal development, working waterfronts, public coastal access, sea level rise and storm events, coastal water quality and sensitive coastal ecosystems and habitats. This report will form the baseline on which a Sustainable Coastal Development Strategy will be developed. This is a complex topic and will require more information gathering, public consultation and collaboration with the other levels of government. The time frame for completing the strategy is not known at this time, but is likely to be several years in the making.

5. 2011 Community Forum Theme: St. Margaret's Bay Coastal Corridor

Although only in the preliminary planning stages, community forum organizers are suggesting that the theme for the 2011 forum would focus on the coastal corridor of St. Margaret's Bay. It would seem logical then that the creation of an advisory committee would use the results of that forum as a framework for its mandate.

Conclusion

There are two reasons behind staff's suggestion to defer the establishment of the advisory committee for approximately one year to eighteen months.

First, given the pertinent on-going and pending planning initiatives underway in the greater Upper Tantallon area, it would be prudent to await the completion or substantial completion of these projects. By having the Watershed/Servicing study complete, the Community Visioning exercise complete or near-complete and results of the 2011 Community Forum known, this will

provide additional valuable direction to the role and mandate of the coastal corridor advisory committee.

Second, staff resources within the Regional and Community Planning section are stretched. We are committed to undertaking the Watershed/Servicing Study and subsequent Community Visioning exercise for the greater Upper Tantallon area, since these projects form part of the Council-approved program for Regional Plan implementation. Outreach staff resources have also been provided to assist community representatives prepare for the 2010 Forum. By allocating resources to a coastal corridor advisory committee at this time, it may mean that other Council-directed projects may have to be delayed.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

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

ALTERNATIVES

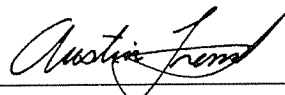
Community Council could choose to instruct staff to establish the Advisory Committee at this time. This is not recommended for reasons described in this report.

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.

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