



**DISTRICT 7 & 8 PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 18, 2016**

PRESENT: Mr. Brenden Sommerhalder, Chair
Ms. Sarah MacDonald
Mr. Michael Bradfield
Mr. Joe Metlege
Mr. Grant Cooke
Councillor Jennifer Watts
Councillor Wayne Mason

REGRETS: Ms. Katherine Kitching, Vice Chair
Ms. Sunday Miller
Mr. Adam Hayter

STAFF: Mr. Mitch Dickey, Planner
Mr. Andrew Reid, Legislative Assistant

OTHERS: Mr. Greg Johnston, Architect Paul Skerry Associates

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to the District 7 & 8 Planning Advisory Committee are available online: <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/D78PAC/160118d78-agenda.php>

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. and was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. in the Maritime Hall, Halifax Forum and introduced the Planning Advisory Committee and its purpose in hosting the public meeting.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

2.1 2.1 Case 18388 - Application by Mythos Development Ltd. to amend the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) for Halifax and Land Use By-law (LUB) for Halifax Peninsula to develop a multiple unit residential building at 6389, 6395, and 6399 North Street, Halifax.

Mr. Mitch Dickey described the proposal in terms of site context, planning context for the MPS and Peninsula North Secondary Plan. Mr. Dickey described the original proposal, which was recommended to be rejected by Regional Council. He noted that Council had pursued the alternative recommendation to initiate the public participation process. He stated that Council had recognized staff's concerns about height, design, transitions to adjacent properties, and how the building would sit in the streetscape. Council directed these points be addressed in a revised proposal. He described the revised proposal as a nine storey building containing 106 units. Mr. Dickey highlighted that at this stage, the Planning and Development unit has not reviewed the proposal or yet formed an opinion on the proposal. Mr. Dickey noted that the revised site plan featured an additional property to the site. He displayed renderings at North and Oxford Streets and Seaforth and Oxford Street and described where the application was in the process. Mr. Dickey noted that a number of submissions had been received that would form part of the record in addition to the minutes of the public meeting. He described future steps in the application process, which would potentially include a public hearing at Regional Council.

Mr. Greg Johnston, Skerry Architects, described the potential impact of the development. He described the site as fronting on three streets with two major thoroughfares. Mr. Johnston described the area as dense and a highly desirable place to live. He noted nearby public amenities. He noted the setbacks and stepbacks of the proposal and presented a shadow study of the proposed building. He also described a number of 5 and 6 storey buildings in the vicinity of the site, stating that the area was aging and had not seen a new construction project in some time.

The Chair explained the ground rules and called the names recorded on the speaker's list.

Mr. Pat White, of Seaforth Street, described the initial application as 7 storeys and 75 units with staff recommendation against the proposal. Mr. White described the staff issues with lot coverage, setbacks, height, massing and transition. He also described meetings of residents with the developer in terms of height, shadowing, and traffic. He questioned why the revised application would add 2 storeys. He stated that the building did not fit the neighbourhood and suggested a 3 and a half to 4 storey building be built instead.

Ms. Joan Fraser, resident of Seaforth Street, opposed the proposal. Ms. Fraser commented that there have been no additional consultations with the developer since September 2014. She described the site's neighbourhood context and stated the proposal violated urban design principles developed in the Centre Plan process. She stated the development should not proceed before the Centre Plan is completed, or the footprint of the proposal is considerably less.

Ms. Leslie McMillan, of Seaforth Street, stated concerns relative to the shadow impact on Seaforth Street and Summit Street. She stated that parking was a further issue and stated concern for on street parking given the suggested number of parking spots for residents in the proposal. She also stated concern for potential blasting with the construction of the parking garage. Ms. McMillan stated concern for traffic impediments due to construction. She suggested the parking garage entrance be located on North Street instead of Seaforth Street, due to the latter's residential nature.

Mr. Mike Tanner, resident of Seaforth Street, highlighted the number of neighbourhood children in the vicinity of the parking garage entrance and stated that Seaforth Street was often times impassable during the winter. He stated that his first feedback to the developer had been agreeing to 4-5 storeys. He noted the developer was clearly told by the community that a certain height was acceptable to alter the planning strategy. He voiced no concern for the modern aesthetic; however, disagreed with the height and stated concerns for traffic, shadow impact and loss of sun.

Ms. Sheilagh Fougere, of Dublin Street, stated that the revised application had a 40% increase in units, three times the height and two times the building footprint as the existing building. She noted that the precedent buildings referenced by the applicant's presentation were on former industrial lands and not residential. She stated that the application did not bring a significant enough benefit to the community to warrant the site specific amendment in terms of parking, mass, setbacks and height. She stated that the proposal was not to human scale and she noted concern for precedent being set.

Ms. Sarah Cooke, resident of Berlin St., requested an explanation on how the revision was proposed given the original, which was of a lesser height, was recommended against by staff. She questioned the Peninsula North Secondary Planning Strategy and requested if the other precedents given by the architect were pre-1993. She stated support for the community as being walkable and conducive to cycling. She also voiced concern for the added traffic. She questioned if a traffic statement report had been prepared. In terms of design criteria, Mr. Dickey responded that the HRM by Design process currently only applied to the downtown Halifax precinct. He noted that a traffic study had been submitted and an additional study would be performed.

Ms. Evelyn Sutton, of Seaforth Street, stated concern for loss of sunlight and the traffic impact. She echoed previous statements that the proposal was not to human scale.

Mr. Talan Iskan, of Almon Street, stated no opposition for density but was concerned about the height of the proposal. He stated concern for the development becoming an eyesore and disturbing the scenery in the neighbourhood. He further stated concern to potential wind tunnels created by the high-rise. Mr. Iskan stated that other means were available for increasing density than increasing the permitted height.

Mr. Irvine Carvery, of Maynard Street, encouraged residents not to compromise on concerns respecting height. He stated concern for shadow impacts. He encouraged residents to voice their concerns to the Planning Advisory Committee.

A resident noted that North Street was a major artery, with 15,000 cars each day. He voiced concern for increasing traffic in the neighbourhood and vehicles shortcutting.

Mr. Michael Murphy, of North Street, noted concern for the affordability of the development.

Ms. Liz Cunningham, drew similarity with a separate proposal—the St. John's site proposal—stating that both were out of scale for the neighbourhood.

Ms. Susan Tooke, of Elm Street commented regarding height and shadow. She stated that nearby residents would lose solar potential. She stated that legislation was required to guarantee a right to light.

Ms. Heather Hansen, of Seaforth Street, expressed concern regarding the development in terms of loss of sunlight to her sideyard and backyard. She stated that there were many students walking in the neighbourhood who would be affected by the increased traffic. She stated she was opposed to bargaining or compromising on the proposal's height.

Mr. Lindell Smith, of Gottingen Street, stated that there was no comparison between this development and others in the area. He questioned if the development would affect residential property tax, and how the proposal would provide for diverse residents in terms of a plan for affordability. Mr. Dickey responded that the impact was largely market-driven and there was no study in the Halifax area that measured this.

Ms. Susan Meyers, of Vienna Street, stated she was affected by the existing six storey building on Seaforth Street and that the proposal would influence more than those neighbours adjacent to it. She stated that the proposal would have a direct impact on the privacy of residents' backyards. She suggested that the nine storey building was out of place. She stated support for a proposal adhering to the 35 ft height, as per the municipal plan. Ms. Meyers also stated that Oxford and North Streets were both residential streets near the site and were not major thoroughfares.

Mr. Bill Chernin, of Oxford Street, stated concern for loss of sun and the potentially dangerous traffic impact. He also stated concern for noise, noting the proposal's balconies.

Ms. Leslie MacMillon, questioned the Peninsula North Secondary Plan in terms of the ability to rezone. Mr. Dickey responded that within each secondary plan, there is further division with unique rules. This particular site, area 2, is predominantly R-2 zone and has no ability for an apartment building by development agreement, whereas in other areas this may be possible. He noted the rules were deliberately written with little flexibility in this respect in 1993. Mr. Dickey stated that Council will consider the appropriateness of the request and if something changed since 1993 to warrant the rules being changed.

Ms. Ray, of Duncan Street, echoed residents' concerns, stating the neighbourhood should be walkable and noting concern for the unprecedented height of the proposal. She voiced concern for traffic safety. She disagreed with the nine storeys and stated that Council should uphold the current policy.

Mr. Richard Rudnicki, of Elm Street, stated that the size of the proposal was out of scale for the neighbourhood and he would like to see a proposal of a lesser scale. He stated that Council had a responsibility to maintain harmony in the neighbourhood and questioned why certain proposals were able to advance.

Ms. Melanie Bryan, of Elm Street, questioned the age of the existing building and if it had any heritage importance. She stated there were a number of examples where older buildings were renovated, including St. Joseph's School and Halifax Grammar School. Mr. Dickey responded that the building was constructed in the 1930s-40s and that it did not meet the Municipality's heritage criteria.

Ms. Ariel Harper Nave, of Russell Street, highlighted the St. Joseph's Square development in her neighbourhood, stating it had no precedent in the neighbourhood. She stated the development had created a dangerous traffic scenario. She stated the proposal should not move forward.

Ms. Michelle Daniel, of Windsor Street, echoed concerns regarding the proposal relative to the St. John's Church development. She stated that the proposal would change the nature of the R-2 community and that there were other locations available to put this kind of development.

A resident stated concern for the height of the proposal. He stated that the traffic impacts of the proposal would be considerable and questioned how on street parking might change because of the development. Mr. Dickey responded that no study had yet been performed regarding on-street parking.

Mr. Pat White questioned the existing six storey building and suggested that the precedents used by the applicant were inappropriate. He stated that the community should not compromise on height.

Ms. Joan Fraser stated that residents' interest in the development sent a message to Council. She further highlighted that Stage 3 of the Centre Plan included a public participation forum. Mr. Dickey highlighted that shapeyourcityhalifax.ca featured information on the Centre Plan process and encouraged members in the audience to participate in the process. He highlighted the applicability of the feedback given to the Centre Plan.

Mr. Ross Evans, commented that the height of the building would prohibit solar panels in proximity.

Ms. Beaty Popescu, of Summit Street, echoed previous residents' concerns, stating that the neighbourhood was of a human scale and many were motivated to live there because of the open space and access to light.

Mr. Greg Johnston, representative of the applicant, thanked the public for their feedback.

3.0 ADJOURNMENT

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:27 p.m.

Andrew Reid
Legislative Assistant