

# HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

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## DISTRICT 12 PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES October 11, 2006

**PRESENT:** Heather Ternoway, Chair  
Beverly Miller, Vice Chair  
Clary Kempton

**STAFF:** Randa Wheaton, Planner  
Stephanie Parsons, Legislative Assistant

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in Halifax Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax and introduced the Committee Members. She advised that the purpose of the meeting is to receive comments from the public and outlined the rules of procedure for the meeting.

2. **CASE 00895 - REQUEST BY B.M.P. PROJECTS DEVELOPMENT LIMITED, ON BEHALF OF 3083833 NOVA SCOTIA LIMITED, TO AMEND THE HALIFAX MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY AND PENINSULA LAND USE BY-LAW TO PERMIT A MIXED USE RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AT 2594 AGRICOLA STREET, HALIFAX)**

C A proposal fact sheet dated October 11, 2006, with an attached staff report dated September 1, 2006 was before the Committee.

Ms. Randa Wheaton advised that the purpose of the meeting is to introduce a proposal to amend the Halifax Community Planning Strategy and Peninsula Land Use By-law to allow a Development Agreement. She went on to provide an overview of the planning process for Land Use By-law Amendments.

Mr. Roberto Menendez, BMP Projects Development Limited, provided an overview of the proposal. The following was noted:

- The concept includes commercial space and art studios on the main level;
- The commercial space is fragmented to make it more affordable;
- The entrance for the residential area is on the north side;
- The residential component is fully accessible to accommodate persons with disabilities;
- One issue that arose is that residential buildings require a landscaping component.

**Mr. Peter Lavelle, North End Halifax**, expressed concern that the exterior of the building would not be maintained and asked if brick was considered. He also asked when they expect the building to be completed.

Mr. Menedez advised that brick is 20 percent more expensive than the clapboard and that proper maintenance are required. He added that they intend to complete construction by December 2007.

**Ms. Elizabeth Murphy, North End Halifax**, asked for clarification on the number of units and the number of parking spaces.

Mr. Menendez advised that there are 24 units and that there are 12 parking spaces.

**Mr. Scott Healy, North End Halifax,** expressed concern that there are only 12 parking spaces and indicated that additional parking spaces are required for the artist and two commercial spaces. There is limited parking currently available and more development means more cars. He asked for clarification on the parking space requirements.

Mr. Menendez advised that the parking space regulation depends on the location. In this case it is one to one. It is his opinion that there is a reasonable amount of parking spaces. He further added that there are 12 spaces for bicycles and that there is no space to increase the amount of parking.

**Mr. Frank Evans, North End Halifax,** stated that it would be great to have additional parking but as a business owner in the area he thinks the amount of parking that is being offered is adequate. The architectural drawings look good, and he hopes that there will proper street lighting. He is happy to see a development like this in the area.

**Mr. Tasso Dikaos, North End Halifax,** asked for clarification on the size of the commercial space and the rental cost. He further added that the Department of Community Services only allows \$550 for rent will there be a subsidy or will the rental fees have to be reduced.

Mr. And Mrs. Menendez advised of the following:

- The commercial space is 1100 square feet;
- All parking is underground;
- There is no additional space to provide commercial parking;
- Currently the parking spaces are rented to Aliant employees;
- The bachelor apartments range from \$550 - \$634,
- One bedrooms from \$ 634 -\$ 750 and two bedrooms from \$750 - \$800, all inclusive.
- The Department of Community Services provides a subsidy.

**Mr. John Trites, North End Halifax,** stated that he has concerns with the amount of parking spaces that are being provided as there's no parking currently available in the areas. This building will have an impact on the entire area. If the artists are going to be loading their materials on Agricola Street there will be an impact to traffic. He also expressed concern with noise coming from the roof top patio. He further asked if the units were available for lease to the general public.

Mr. Menendez advised that the open space will be regulated by the superintendent of the building and will be closed at 6:00 or 8:00 p.m. He clarified that 10 units are reserved for The Department of Community Services clients. The tenants are referred by Social Services and are further screened by the landlord the same as non-social services clients.

**Mr. Chris Reardon, North End Halifax**, stated that there is inadequate street parking in the area which will add to the existing problem. There is a large density of affordable housing in the area and that a main stream rental would be more appropriate.

**Mr. Glen Fraser, North End Halifax**, commented that parking is an issue, he cannot even find parking in front of his house. A commercial residential development will add to the parking problems especially since the five Aliant employees who use the excising space not longer will have parking spaces. The Aliant building currently dominates the block with no green space this building extends the current problem and will dominate the site planes.

Ms. Beverly Miller, Vice Chair asked for clarification on the normal landscaping requirements for the site.

Mr. Menendez advised that if the development was completely commercial and parking there would be no green space requirement. The requirement for landscaping comes into effect because we are including a residential component on the upper level.

Ms. Wheaton advised that open space and landscaped open space are two separate requirements. The landscaping requirement must be from grade to five feet above grade. The developers are providing landscaped open space via a roof garden which does not meet the requirement of landscaped open space.

**Ms. Molly du Heyar, North End Halifax** stated that a ventilation system is going to be required for the artist studios. Parking is community issue which partially linked to Aliant employees. She suggested that the developers are trying to incorporate too much into a small building.

Councillor Sloane entered the meeting at 7:00 p.m..

Mr. Menendez advised that the building will be ventilated. The space is fragmented to make it more accessible. Ms. Menendez added that a market study was conducted to determine the average size of an apartment and the amount of rent that is charged.

**Mr. Fred Connors, North End Halifax** commented that the building would be a welcome addition to the neighbourhood. The City as a whole has a shortage of parking which is not business owners' problem to solve. Creating a pedestrian neighbourhood would attract more services to the neighbourhood. Therefore, the parking issue is minor.

**An unidentified speaker, North End Halifax**, commented that the building is appropriate for the neighbourhood and pedestrian friendly. From an urban design perspective and the character of the area the massive scale is too intense. In the interest of safety she suggested that drive way be setback from the street.

Responding to the Vice Chair, Mr. Menendez advised of the following:

- The square footage of the units varies as follows:
  - One bedrooms - 450 - 643 square feet.
  - Two bedrooms - 808 square feet
  - Nine bachelors at 550 square feet
  - Three bachelors at 593 square feet
- One hundred percent of the units are accessible 3 of those are fully accessible for persons with disabilities.
- Ten units are designated for the Department of Community Services Clients

**Ms. Elizabeth Murphy North End Halifax**, expressed concern with parking in front of the right away. It is difficult in the winter when there is no parking.

**Mr. Chris Reardon, North End Halifax**, stated that the massing is disproportionate, there will be a lot of people in that building, the building should be set back from the street and that the project does not create a pleasing environment it monopolizes the environment. In addition he asked for clarification on where the disabled would be egress from the building and how much public funding was provided.

Mr. Menendez advised that the By-law allows a zero setback and that twenty five percent of the funding comes from public funds. The total cost of the project is estimated at 1.6 million dollars.

**Mr. Peter Lavelle, North End Halifax**, commented that it is a great project however they need to work with staff to help alleviate the traffic at this corner and increase bus access. The parking issue is getting worse, and the driveway needs to accommodate deliveries and ensure that persons with disabilities can get onto the side walk. In closing he indicated that he would have liked staff to provide more detail.

Ms. Wheaton advised that the project is in the early stages and is a work in process. Staff is still negotiating with the developer. Some of the answers to your questions cannot be answered until a staff report and draft development agreement is prepared.

### **3. CLOSING COMMENTS**

The Chair called for any further comments, and there being none, she thanked all for attending and encouraged anyone with further questions after the meeting to contact Ms. Randa Wheaton.

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Stephanie Parsons  
Legislative Assistant