

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

MOBILE HOME PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 18, 2007

PRESENT:

Councillor Krista Snow, Chair
Councillor Steve Adams
Councillor Russell Walker
Councillor Brad Johns
Councillor David Hendsbee

REGRETS:

Councillor Becky Kent
Councillor Gloria McCluskey

STAFF:

Mr. Kevin Warner, Development Officer, Subdivision &
Land Use
Mr. Bruce Fisher, Manager, Fiscal & Tax Policy
Mr. Andre MacNeil, Financial Consultant, Fiscal & Tax Policy
Ms. PJ Temple, Team Leader, Tax, Grants & Special Projects
Ms. Julia Horncastle, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Melody Campbell, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:35 p.m. in the Councillors' Board Room, 4th Floor, City Hall.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED by Councillor Adams , seconded by Councillor Walker, that the minutes from May 15, 2007 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

6.1 Long term lease for park land in Woodbine Park-Jan Skora - Deferred to October

7.1 Email regarding unsightly premises

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councilor Johns, that the Order of Business be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. MOBILE HOME PARK BYLAW

4.1 By-law Terminology - Kevin Warner

Mr. Kevin Warner advised the request for changes to the terminology in the Mobile Park By-law has been received by the Province and forwarded to Cabinet. An update will be provided at the October meeting. An invitation will be issued to Mr. Gerald Hashey, Director of the Tenancy Board, for the October 9th meeting.

4.2 Double Taxation of Mobile Home Parks - Bruce Fisher - The Presentation encompassed Items 4.2, 5.2 and 6.1

Andre MacNeil provided a presentation on Assessment and Taxation of Mobile Homes.

- Mobile homes are taxed under the residential rate,
- Mobile homes are taxed to the homeowner, the park land (pad) is taxed to the mobile home park owner,
- Average single dwelling home yearly taxes are \$1900-2000; mobile home taxes are approximately \$450-500; taxes on land (mobile home pad) is average \$150 per year; apartments are approximately \$650-700 per year per single apartment,
- Tax rebates are available for single family homes, mobile homes (home owner only) and condo owners,
- Tax deferrals are available to anyone who owns home plus land. Mobile park homeowners would not be eligible for the tax deferral because they do not have title to the land. Condo owners, as well as single family homes, would be eligible due to the title of property,
- There are approximately 5500 mobile homes in HRM; 4000 in mobile home parks, 1500 on private property

Councillor Walker discussed the issue of increased lot rates due to increased taxes on mobile park owners. One park had an increase of 12% in lot fees. Lot rentals have increased by \$540.00 due to increased taxes. Councillor Snow added that lot rents substantially increased in Woodbine Park as well. There is concern that mobile home owners are paying taxes to HRM with the additional costs to the lot rental to cover the taxes by the park owner. This is considered by many mobile home owners as double taxation. Many mobile home parks do not have the same services as single family homes. There is no HRM snow removal or sidewalks. They have various levels of street lighting, water and sewer, and fire hydrants depending on the park. In regard to the deferrals, the Councillor suggested that mobile homes be eligible because if a home owner has a mortgage there is a lien on the structure.

Councillor Walker also questioned the park land value and how that is accessed. He stated it would stand to reason that the land would be worth more if all pads are full. Mr. MacNeil will look into the question as to land values.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested that HRM have a policy for lights in mobile home parks. It may be feasible for HRM to own street lights in the parks. Apparently some parks have HRM owned street lights while others have lights owned by the property owner. If a street light policy exists, it will be distributed to the Committee. If there is no such policy, a by-law will have to be put in place. Another issue to consider; is it legal for HRM to take over the street lights and what are the cost implications associated.

Councillor Johns questioned the quantity of services provided to mobile park home owners as compared to single family home dwellings. Do they compare? Is there a standard, if not, one should be implemented. The Councillor requested information to show comparisons.

Councillor Johns also discussed the water and sewer issues, are home owners charged the

environmental tax on their bills. It was clarified that each home is taxed on the type of services they have. It would depend on how much of the service (ie. water, sewer, or water and sewer) is available at each park. Area rates and Supplementary Funding taxes are determined by value so the mobile home and land each subject to the tax. LIC is on the mobile home only.

Councillor Snow requested information on revenue generated by taxes paid by mobile home parks (home owners and park owners). Finance will provide information back to the Committee. Councillor Adams stated that HRM mobile home owners are paying a relatively low rate. Councillor Hendsbee added that one lot size for an average single family home (1 acre) compares to approximately 4-5 mobile home pads, so it does generate a greater revenue to HRM.

Mr. Bruce Fisher clarified that the breakdown of tax rates, as indicated in the budget book, for mobile home parks is the same as the breakdown for single family homes.

MOVED by Councillor Adams , seconded by Councillor Walker, that staff provide information to the street light policy as it applies to lights in mobile home parks, if this a legally feasible to take over lights and the cost implication associated, as well as a breakdown of tax revenue generated by mobile home parks. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Mr. MacNeil informed the Committee that assessments are going to be capped at CPI for residential properties with the exception of leased residential such as apartments. The lot itself would not be capped, although the mobile home will be capped.

Councillor Snow suggested information be provided to homeowners on the tax rebate and deferral programs. Information will be provided to residents by newsletters and by adding the information to the Tenancy Information Act Booklet. PJ Temple will provide information for the October meeting.

4.3 Tenancy Act Information Booklet for Mobile Home Park Owners

Councillor Snow will add information for the rebate and deferral program to the Tenancy Act Information Booklet for Mobile Home Park Owners.

5.0 STATUS SHEET

5.1 Information Report - Long Term Lease for Land in Woodbine Park

Jan Skora to present at the October 9th meeting.

5.2 Staff Report - Proposed Amendments to the T-700 By-law for Mobile Home Park Tax Deferrals, Value Capping, Assessment Impact Review

This was discussed earlier in the meeting in conjunction with Item 4.2.

5.3 Summary Sheets - Outlining Highlights of Three Existing By-laws

This item was deferred to October.

5.4 Half-day session to review/edit three existing By-laws

It was agreed that Planning staff would draft the Mobile Home By-law by combining the three current by-laws and taking the best of the three to come up with the framework for the new by-law. Once the draft is prepared, the Committee will review and make appropriate recommendations and/or changes to the by-law.

5.5 Planning Staff to be assigned to the By-law amendments and consolidation project

Kevin Warner and Sharon Bond will assign a planner to the project.

6. DEFERRED ITEMS

6.1 Deferral of Mobile Home Park Taxes by Owner (Do they have ability to defer?)

This was discussed earlier in the meeting in conjunction with Item 4.2.

7. ADDED ITEMS

7.1 Email to Councillor Smith forwarded to the Committee

This resident owns the mobile home park. If a mobile home is sold or residents move out and the home is unsightly, can she take it under her responsibility to move trailer or require it to be properly maintained? In response, it is the mobile home owners responsibility to ensure the home is adequately maintained or removed.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Mobile Home Park Advisory Committee is October 9, 2007 tentatively

scheduled for 1.5 hours before Committee of the Whole session.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Melody Campbell
Legislative Assistant