

**OLD SOUTH SUBURB HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
STAKEHOLDER STEERING COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
April 27, 2016**

PRESENT: Mr. John Lawen  
Ms. Elizabeth Pacey  
Ms. Aurora Camaño  
Mr. Dylan Ames  
Ms. Kerry Gosse, Chair

REGRETS: Mr. Brian Vallis

STAFF: Mr. Seamus McGreal, Heritage Planner

*The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting. Supporting documents and information items circulated to the Old South Suburb HCD Stakeholder Steering Committee are available online: <http://shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/old-south-suburb>.*

## **CALL TO ORDER**

This meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m. in Room 302, Halifax Central Library.

Mr. McGreal advised the committee that this is a special meeting of the Old South Suburb Heritage Conservation District Stakeholder Committee to review the draft Plan and Bylaw. Two property developers have an expressed interest in specific development projects within the boundaries of the District. The Black Binney Place project proponent was invited to present to the Committee but declined because key people involved in the project were out of town the meeting date. Dexel Architecture submitted two proposals for developments on Barrington Street and Bishop Street. However, the submissions were made to staff a day prior to the Committee meeting date and, as such, there is insufficient time for the Committee to review and discuss the proposals at this meeting.

*Motion: In two weeks, the Black Binney Place and Dexel Architecture be invited to present and listen to the deliberations of the Committee concerning their proposals. (Dylan Ames)*

Seconded by Aurora Camaño. Unanimous vote.

The Committee determined that May 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> would be appropriate dates for the next meeting.

Mr. McGreal asked that comments from Committee members, concerning the draft Plan and Bylaw, be submitted directly to him via email and not copy the other Committee members. This time for deliberation is at the Committee meetings not over email.

Ms. Pacey asked about the editorial changes she had sent to Mr. McGreal. He advised her that some of the changes were incorporated in the wording of the plan and some were not.

### **Discussion concerning Heights and Rear Wings**

Mr. McGreal asked that the Committee to consider proposed changes to the height framework. Ms. Pacey expressed concern that some of new heights may encroach into the view planes, particularly the Superstore on Barrington. The height cap was 45 ft (13.716 m) on one of the most important blocks in the District along Barrington Street between Bishop and Morris.

Mr. McGreal explained that the hatched areas on the map are measured differently. The existing measurement of 13.716 m actually equates to approximately 17 m when using the standard method of calculating heights in the Downtown Halifax Land Use Bylaw.

Ms. Pacey suggested that the Standards & Guidelines, adopted by HRM, should be consulted when determining appropriate heights within the Heritage Conservation District. She provided excerpts of certain standards and guidelines to the Committee for its consideration, notably guidelines for open space and cultural landscapes (including heritage conservation standards).

Ms. Gosse asked that an electronic copy of the Standards & Guidelines be sent to all members. She suggested that the Standards & Guidelines were not intended to be taken as literally as being read.

Ms. Pacey wants to ensure the 45 ft height remains on the Barrington blocks. She wants to see the most important block protected from encroachment by higher buildings.

Mr. Lawen suggested that in the case of new developments the guidelines tend to treat them the same as a heritage buildings. The plan should show them as vacant lots, as they are not heritage properties.

Mr. McGreal explained that the Committee should consider working with the existing heights framework when determining new heights. We also need to shift the discussion from redevelopment in the Old South Suburb to appropriate infill, especially on heritage properties. One third of all properties within the District are not considered heritage significant in the draft Plan. This constitutes over one half of the total area of the proposed District since non-heritage properties tend to be on larger lots. Integrated development on heritage properties provides even greater potential for new development in the area.

Mr. Ames asked if there is a map to show where in-fill is needed.

Mr. McGreal explained that there is a vacant lots map which is part of the Downtown Plan. He will send this to the Committee.

Mr. McGreal explained that existing rear wings, including ells, are part of many heritage buildings throughout the District. We need to determine if the heights framework is adjusted to include rear wings as part of the main heritage building or if greater height is allowed on top of these features of the buildings.

Mr. Lawen asked that if these ells cannot be seen from the street, why they matter.

Ms. Pacey explained that it is not just about what's seen from the street. It's about maintaining the whole exterior's historical look.

Ms. Gosse agreed that it is not just what is seen from the street. It's about the heritage of the whole building.

Mr. McGreal explained that this may be a contentious issue as property owners may want to be able to change the rear of the buildings and yards.

Ms. Gosse suggested that if the rear wings are not considered historic then they can be replaced.

Ms. Pacey suggested that Statements of Significance be prepared for each heritage property. Mr. McGreal explained that this will be done as part of the Plan implementation.

Ms. Gosse asked the Committee to leave the ell discussion for a future meeting. We need to keep an open mind. Everyone's opinion is valuable.

### **Discussion concerning Demolition and Substantial Alteration**

Mr. McGreal explained the approach to demolition and substantial exterior alteration in the draft Plan.

He explained that when an application is received by the municipality to demolish a registered heritage property or contributing heritage resource, a public hearing will be required. If Regional Council denies or approves the demolition based on the advice of the Heritage Advisory Committee, there can be an appeal to the Utility and Review Board within a certain time period. If the Board upholds Council's decision, the permission will issued (or not issued) in accordance with decision of Council. If the permission is denied then the property owner cannot demolish after three years.

The draft Plan uses the same approach to substantial exterior alterations of registered heritage properties or contributing heritage resources: a public hearing is required and permission can be appealed.

Ms. Pacey asked why an illustration of a replacement building is not required as part of a demolition application like it is in the Barrington Street Plan.

Mr. McGreal explained that this provision is a red herring since an applicant can always change their plan for the new building after the demolition and there is no legal mechanism to tie them to their original concept.

*Motion: Demolition and substantial alteration of registered heritage properties and contributing heritage resources would require a public hearing, approval of council and the three-year delay period, section 18 of the Heritage Property Act, will not apply to registered municipal heritage properties. (Kerry Gosse)*

Seconded Dylan Ames

VOTE: 4 to 1. Approved.

Mr. McGreal clarified that the existing Downtown Halifax heritage design guidelines for new construction within a heritage context will apply to all new construction, whether abutting a heritage property or not. If the new construction is not directly abutting a heritage building then the new construction shall related to an adjacent heritage building along the same street within the District.

Ms. Pacey asked about specific comments that she had submitted to Mr. McGreal. Specifically, the Standards & Guidelines would take precedence over the design guidelines if there is a conflict between the two.

Mr. Lawen explained that some property owners have expressed concerns to him about height. Can they be here and speak?

They can't speak to the Committee during Committee meetings but they can listen. They can also present if they make the request and the Committee agrees.

Mr. Lawen asked how many demolition applications are currently active in the District.

Mr. McGreal explained that there are three on Bishop Street, three on Barrington Street (including two registered heritage buildings), and one on South Street.

Ms. Pacey asked about the "stay" on certain properties.

Mr. McGreal explained that the Mayor sent a letter to the Province requesting an amendment to the Heritage Property Act that would allow municipalities to adopt a bylaw to delay, by no more than one year, certain types of development within an area identified as a potential heritage conservation district. However, this provision will likely only apply to future districts and not the Old South Suburb.

Mr. McGreal explained that St. Matthew's Church, the Old Burying Ground and Government House will be part of the Old South Suburb District and these properties will be removed from the Barrington Street District. There will also be a financial incentives program to help property owners maintain their properties.

The Black Binney Place project proponent and Dixel Development will be invited to present at the next meeting as their development proposals are known issues to the Committee.

Ms. Gosse explained that the property developers can listen to the Committee discuss the heights framework as it related to their projects.

Mr. McGreal explained that we want to make sure that this plan is working for everyone. He would like the Committee to work toward a motion to accept the plan soon.

Ms. Gosse explained that the next meeting should be a review and the following meeting can be a decision.

*Kerry Gosse: Motion to adjourn*

Aurora Camaño seconded. Passed. 8:00 pm.