

**REGIONAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
Wednesday, February 20, 2008**

**PRESENT:** Mr. Fred Morley, Chair  
Councillor David Hendsbee, Vice-Chair  
Councillor Gloria McCluskey  
Ms. Cheryl Newcombe  
Ms. Bonnie Ryan  
Ms. Margo Grant  
Mr. Robert Batherson  
Mr. Paul Pettipas

**REGRETS:** Ms. Heather Bown

**STAFF:** Mr. Roger Wells, Supervisor, Regional & Community Planning  
Ms. Sandra Riley, Legislative Assistant

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:07pm in the Helen Creighton Room, Alderney Gate Library.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**MOVED by Mr. Morley, seconded by Councillor McCluskey, that the minutes of December 19, 2007 and January 16, 2008 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

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

Order of business was changed to deal with item 7.2 HRMbyDesign as the first order of business, followed by 7.1 and the rest as originally listed.

**MOVED by Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Ms. Newcombe, that the order of business as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - None**

**5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - None**

**6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS - None**

**6.1 Correspondence - None**

**6.2 Petitions - None**

**6.3 Delegations - None**

**7. REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS**

**7.2 HRM By Design - Downtown Vision**

Mr. Andy Fillmore, Project Manager, HRMbyDesign, introduced himself and Ms. Jacqueline Hamilton, HRM Manager of Heritage & Design, stating that the presentation would be on the strategy for Downtown Halifax and approval-in-principle is sought from the Regional Plan Advisory Committee. He pointed out that the Urban Design Task Force reviewed the same information a week ago and that the HRM Staff Steering Committee is also endorsing the vision. He advised that this motion will go to Council on February 26, 2008 and the goal is to have Regional Plan Advisory Committee, the Urban Design Task Force and the Steering Committee all in support of the vision to keep the project time line.

He stated that the Downtown Strategy has two pieces and the first half is the Downtown Vision containing the following five parts:

- The Guiding Principles for Downtown
- The Ten Big Moves For Downtown
- The Districts Based Approach
- Cogswell Interchange Planning and Design
- Legislative Changes to the Municipal Government Act.

He stated that the second half to the Downtown Strategy is the Policy piece.

Mr. Fillmore advised that there are two key changes in the 10 Big Moves:

- Area # 1 has been moved up to the primary spot
- The number 10 of the Big Moves originally talked about 'repairing and enhancing skyline' and has been changed to a 'transit oriented downtown'.

He stated that the District Based Approach has nine districts which will be governed by policy on these seven points;

- district character and identity
- absolute building height, building massing and upper storey setbacks
- heritage protection considerations
- detailed urban design guidelines
- open space recommendations
- recommended land uses
- others guidelines and requirements as deemed appropriate.

Mr. Fillmore spoke about Height Framework, Heritage Protection and Enhancement, Cogswell Interchange Planning and Design, and the Legislative changes to the Municipal Government Act, and responded to questions and concerns from the Committee regarding these items. He also advised that if the amendments requested to the MGA are not granted, there is a backup plan which is the Revised Development Agreement, which he explained to the Committee.

The Regional Plan Policy/Regulation/Strategic Initiative Amendment Criteria Checklist (HRMbyDesign) was tabled for all present to consider. Ms. Hamilton advised that a new checklist will be brought back to the Urban Design Task Force and the Regional Plan Advisory Committee in subsequent meetings; a policy chart that will compare the existing policies to changes being made.

The Committee had several questions regarding the maps and the presentation, to which Mr. Fillmore and Ms. Hamilton gave clarification. It was advised that there are some boundary changes in the maps, with these maps presented being the latest version.

Mr. Pettipas expressed that the design does not make sense, economically. He further expressed his concerns with the Cogswell Interchange amongst other issues.

After a lengthy discussion and concerns around two or three issues, the following motion

was passed:

**MOVED by Mr. Batherson, seconded by Ms. Newcombe that Regional Plan Advisory Committee approve HRM By Design's "Downtown Vision" as described in a Memorandum and document dated February 13, 2008, with the understanding that the Committee's concerns related to (1) The Site Plan Review process, (2) Economic Viability of the proposed policy direction, and (3) Cogswell Interchange Land Use options, will be satisfactorily addressed prior to the final report being presented to Council. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Mr. Fillmore proposed the following three dates and times for joint meetings of Regional Plan Advisory Committee, the Steering Committee, and the Urban Design Task Force:

- Wednesday, March 26, 2008 - Helen Creighton Room, Alderney Gate from 3-6 pm
- Wednesday, April 2, 2008 - Halifax Hall, City Hall from 11am to 2 pm
- Wednesday, May 07, 2008 - Halifax Hall, City Hall from 11am - 2pm.

#### **7.1 HRM Regional Transit Plan**

It was advised that Phase One of the HRM Regional Transit Plan was presented to the Regional Plan Advisory Committee previously and Phase Two on the Park & Ride, Express and Rural Transit Service would be presented today. The Park & Ride, Express, and Rural Transit Service is the plan to introduce public transit outside of traditional service areas, connecting communities to each other. Mr. Dennis Fletcher, Director of Transit Solutions, ENTRA Consultants, was introduced to the Committee and gave a brief overview of the report.

There were two books prepared for Halifax Regional Municipality by ENTRA Consultants that were circulated to the Committee.

"HRM Regional Transit Plan - Park & Ride, Express and Rural Transportation Services - January 2008 " included chapters in the following seven areas:

- Background
- Community Review
- Experience of others
- Service Standards and Performance
- Ridership Methodology
- Corridor Service Plans
- Implementation Plan

The second book was titled "Rural Transit Planning Guidelines - Users' Guide - February 2008, with the following chapter titles:

- Introduction
- Transit in the Halifax Regional Municipality
- Rural Transit Planning Guidelines

- Step 1 - Who will use this service?
- Step 2 - Where do people in my community want to travel?
- Step 3 - What type and level of service would best serve my community
- Step 4 - What vehicle type is most appropriate for my community?
- Step 5 - What are the capital costs for this service
- Step 6 - What are the annual operating costs for this service
- Step 7 - Budget Summary.
- Participation worksheets from numbers 1 through 6b.

A Question and Answer period ensued after the presentation. There were inquiries on the following issues that were sufficiently addressed: Implementation time frame; long term cost; fare costs; parking; environmental benefits; consultation; funding.

The Regional Plan Advisory Committee was satisfied with the responses and made the following motion:

**MOVED BY Ms. Grant, seconded by Mr. Pettipas, that the Committee recommend the HRM Regional Transit Plan be forwarded to Council. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

### **7.3 Nova Scotia Homebuilders Association presentation to Regional Council** **7.3.1 Affordable Housing in HRM (to be circulated)**

A document was introduced to the Committee entitled: Extract of Regional Council minutes of January 15, 2008. 10.3.2 - Nova Scotia Home Builders Association - Industry Update. Mr. Pettipas advised this item would be put forward to another meeting after the Committee has the opportunity to review and raise questions on the circulated handout. A discussion ensued with the result that Mr. Wells would advise next month whether this Committee would be expected to respond to Regional Council or whether the response should come from the Tax Reform Committee as Council did refer the presentation of Homebuilders Association to both committees regarding the Affordable Housing issue. He added that an Information Report would be going forward to Regional Council on February 26, 2008. He suggested a Staff presentation on Affordability in HRM at next month's meeting of March 19, 2008.

Mr. Pettipas advised that he would not be in the country for the next meeting, but would like an endorsement of the report. He added he would like the Committee's support on moving this forward.

Mr. Batherson stated he would be happy to do a Report based on the Nova Scotia Homebuilder's Report after it is clarified as to whether the tax and other incentive issues will fall to the RPAC or the Tax Reform Committee.

### **7.4 LiDAR Mapping Project - Oral update**

Mr. Wells stated he would do an update on the LiDAR Mapping Project in next month's

meeting. He advised that there would be an Information Report going to Council on Tuesday, February 26 as well.

**8. NEW BUSINESS**

**9. ADDED ITEMS:**

**9.1 HRM By Design “Checklist”**

Dealt with in Item 7.2

**9.2 Rural Transit “Checklist”**

Dealt with in item 7.1

**9.3 Correspondence for NWCC re: Community Visioning Program**

It was noted that correspondence arrived dated February 14, 2008 from Councillor Bob Harvey, Vice-Chair, Northwest Community Council. There had been Information Reports from Staff in September and December responding to requests by the Sackville Drive Business Association with questions about the visioning for Lower Sackville. The response was in the information reports and the last report was dealt with by Northwest Community Council on January 24, 2008 and resulted in the letter from Councillor Harvey back to Mr. Paul Dunphy, Director of Community Development, which was then forwarded on to the Regional Plan Advisory Committee for their information and action. The essence of the letter was that Community Council, concerned with the direction of the Community Visioning Program advised that Lower Sackville should be included in the next phase.

A brief discussion ensued and the Chair recommended that a letter would be submitted to North West Community Council giving the Committee's response. Mr. Wells pointed out that this will be on Regional Council's Agenda on February 26, 2008.

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next regular meeting of the Regional Plan Advisory Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, March 19, 2008.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:51 pm.

Sandra T. Riley  
Legislative Assistant