

**REGIONAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
January 21, 2009**

PRESENT: Deputy Mayor David Hendsbee, Vice-Chair
Ms. Cheryl Newcombe
Mr. Paul Pettipas
Mr. Robert Batherson
Councillor Peter Lund

**ABSENT
WITH REGRETS:** Ms. Bonnie Ryan
Councillor Gloria McCluskey
Ms. Maija Warnock
Mr. Fred Morley, Chair
Ms. Margo Grant

STAFF: Mr. Roger Wells, Supervisor, Regional & Community Planning
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Deputy Mayor Hendsbee, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:10 pm in the Media Room, 1st Floor City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - November 19, 2008

MOVED by Mr. Robert Batherson, seconded by Mr. Paul Pettipas, that the minutes of November 19, 2008, as presented, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Additions: 8.1 Correspondence: Letter from Mr. Phil Pacey, Heritage Trust Association.

MOVED BY Mr. Robert Batherson, seconded by Mr. Paul Pettipas, 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

5.1 Alternative Transit Options for the Burnside Business Park

Mr. Roger Wells, Supervisor, Regional and Community Planning, advised that former Councillor Krista Snow requested that the issue of alternative transit options for the Burnside Business Park, originally raised by her, be removed from the Committee's agenda.

MOVED BY Ms. Cheryl Newcombe, seconded by Mr. Paul Pettipas that Item 5.1 Alternative Transit Options for the Burnside Business Park be deleted from the agenda. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence

The Committee agreed to provide opportunity for a presentation by Mr. Pacey of Heritage Trust at their February 2009 meeting. The Legislative Assistant was requested to contact Mr. Pacey with the details.

6.2 Petitions - None

6.3 Delegations

6.3.1 Regional Parking Strategy

- An Executive Summary was before the Committee.
- A report dated January 21, 2009 was before the Committee.

Ms. Roxane MacInnis, Transportation Demand Management Planner, Regional Transportation, Infrastructure and Asset Management, presented. She introduced her team members Mr. Roddy MacIntyre, Traffic Engineer, Traffic & Right of Way Services, Mr. Russell Webb, Revenue Analyst, Metro Transit, Finance Services, Mr. Jerry Blackwood, OPS Manager, Revenue, Finance Services, Mr. John Marsh, Team Lead, Finance, Ms. Karen Chambers, Supervisor, Parking Enforcement Coordinator, Ms. Tiffany Chase, Communications Specialist, Heritage and Urban Design.

Mr. David McCusker, Manager, Regional Transportation, and Mr. Ken Reashor, Manager/Traffic Authority, were also in attendance.

Ms. MacInnis and her team responded to questions of clarification from the Committee as follows:

- Staff has not researched the profitability of public parking in regard to the Regional Parking Strategy.
- HRM owns but does not manage the METROPARK; the only revenue HRM receives from that parking would be property taxes.
- There is a demand for HRM to provide off street parking, however; on street parking is more economical.
- METROLINK parking facilities are included with the municipally owned parking.
- HRM has the highest parking standard (number of parking spaces required per 1000 square feet) in the country. One of the suggested recommendations is for a maximum parking standards. Mr. Roger Wells explained that the Municipal Government Act does not permit HRM to dictate a maximum parking standard, only the ability to set a minimum standard.

Councillor Lund expressed concern with the expansiveness of some parking lots and that development, such as gas bars, have occurred within that space.

Ms. MacInnis advised that HRM has a lot of free parking relatively close to the downtown and in order to move forward with the parking strategy methods have to be found to decrease the demand. She noted that some cities, such as Saint John, New Brunswick, had parking authorities and suggested that HRM may want to consider control of parking under their own charter. Deputy Mayor Hendsbee noted that HRM was preparing a list of possible amendments for the fall legislature and perhaps the parking strategy could be added to that list.

In regard to revenue collected from parking meters and fines, Mr. Blackwood advised that parking meter/enforcement revenue would be separate line items under fiscal services.

Ms. MacInnis indicated that the study was to development and manage a direct revenue toward Transportation Demand Management (TDM) projects and to develop a strategy for

downtown Halifax and other centers. She noted that HRM received funding from the federal government through the EComobility funding for TDM projects.

Mr. Paul Pettipas suggested that any charges/revenue generated by development, in regard to parking matters, be directed toward mitigating the environment.

Deputy Mayor Hendsbee noted the popularity of the METROLINK parking facilities and suggested that consideration may have to be given to the construction of parking structures. He inquired about alternatives to surface parking restrictions such as permitting small vehicles (Smart Cars/motorcycles) to double park, or; implementing a smaller parking capacity to accommodate the smaller vehicles. He further suggested the Centennial Pool parking area as a possible site for a parking structure. Further suggestions for consideration were:

- Tax exemptions for private parking facilities.
- That off highway vehicles be permitted to use the corridor trail parking so that residents could commute to a transit stop via a smaller vehicle.
- That HRM work with the Halifax Stanfield International Airport / Halifax Dartmouth Bridge Commission authorities to implement a parking pass (similar to a MACPASS) that could be utilized at public parking facilities.
- Geothermal attributes that could be contributed.
- Permeable, green parking lots that would allow water to percolate through the ground and source separation of storm water runoff.

Ms. MacInnis explained that HRMbyDesign suggests very strict guidelines in regard to parking structures over surface lots and that Regional Council would have final approval of those projects. There is a requirement for redeveloped sites to meet current and upcoming changes.

Mr. Jerry Blackwood advised that the Municipal Government Act prohibits the municipality from entering into tax exemption type agreements. He also noted that private parking lot owners would be paying the commercial property tax rate.

In response to Deputy Mayor Hendsbee, Mr. Webb noted that research was ongoing into enhancements to single post parking meters that would permit the option to pay via electronic means.

In response to Mr. Batherson regarding budget implications, Ms. MacInnis advised that the proposal for the creation of a Parking Manager was not contained in the budget implications section of the report as the position would most likely entail duties assigned to an existing staff person and was still two to three years away from implementation. She further explained that increasing municipally owned parking lots would have long term costs associated with the projects and would be part of the annual budget process; the recommendation to Council for approval in principle has no cost associated.

Ms. MacInnis explained that there were no time frames included in the Regional Parking Strategy presentation as there are a number of other projects that would determine those

time lines such as projects involving Metro Transit; the implementation of the twenty-five (25) year Regional Plan as well as the completion of the centers and any Land Use By-Law (LUB) changes required. She noted that public consultation has been done and residents have indicated that they would prefer more transit rather than having to drive their vehicles to work.

In response to Mr. Pettipas's concern with the apparent contradiction between controlling parking yet widening streets to mitigate traffic congestion, Mr. David McCusker, Manager, Regional Transportation, explained that the Regional Plan envisions the greater demand in trips to be by transit/active transportation. There will be growth in traffic due to growth in the region and the areas identified for improvements to meet those demands were Chebucto and Bayers Road.

Mr. Pettipas suggested that further incentives for mass transportation be considered for large employers such as DND (Department of National Defense), similar to the U-Pass for students. Mr. McCusker commented that further transit initiatives were on hold until the completion of the transit garage as currently there was no capacity for additional buses.

Mr. Pettipas further noted that HRM should be cognizant that there is only one taxpayer, and no new mode of financing coming forward, when applying parking fees as those fees would be passed along to the consumer/business person. He strongly encouraged mass transportation incentives for larger employers.

Deputy Mayor Hendsbee noted that HRM required more dedicated bike lanes and suggested that parking be limited on the bike lane side of those streets. He further requested that alternative parking options be considered during the winter parking ban and fall street cleaning periods; accessible parking needs be considered, and; that parking structures include plug-in capacity for the new electronic vehicles.

The Committee thanked staff for their presentation.

MOVED BY Mr. Robert Batherson, seconded by Councillor Peter Lund that the Regional Plan Advisory Committee recommend that Regional Council adopt, in principle, the Regional Parking Strategy to guide the implementation of changes to parking provisions within HRM. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6.3.2 Halifax Dartmouth Bridge Commission - Third Harbour Crossing

This item was deferred to the February 18, 2009 meeting.

6.3.3 Annual Report to Regional Council

Mr. Wells circulated two documents outlining the work of the Committee to date. He noted that the most substantive change to the Regional Plan had been in regard to: parkland dedication, the Bayers Lake Shopping Center area and view corridors for the Dartmouth Cove development. There have been only three amendments to the Regional Plan since

its original approval. Mr. Wells advised that he would have a more detailed scope of the Committee's activities for the next meeting.

Deputy Mayor Hendsbee noted that the Committee also dealt with the Regional Transit Plan in February 2008.

Mr. Wells noted that the Chair of the Regional Plan Advisory Committee would present the Committee's report to Council at the end of March or early April.

6.3.4 Membership

The Legislative Assistant advised that there were four terms expiring in March 2009 and encouraged those who intended to re-apply to do so as soon as possible.

Mr. Wells noted that in the case of any new members, staff would provide an orientation session.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Marine Drive Valley and Canal Community Council - Secondary Planning Strategy for Beaver Bank

- A report dated November 25, 2008 was before the Committee.

Deputy Mayor Hendsbee explained that the intent of the recommendation was to have a joint visioning exercise including Beaver Bank with Middle and Upper Sackville due to the upcoming Margesson Drive/Interchange projects.

Mr. Wells explained that Beaver Bank was identified in the Regional Plan as an area of limited growth due to the road capacity issues and was not included on the list of fifty (50) communities to undergo the visioning exercise.

MOVED BY Mr. Paul Pettipas, seconded by Mr. Robert Batherson that the Regional Plan Advisory Committee defer this item pending a staff report outlining the implications, if any, of moving Beaver Bank ahead on the visioning exercises. Report requested for the February meeting. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Correspondence from Heritage Trust

- A letter dated December 15, 2008 from Mr. Phil Pacey was before the Committee.

MOVED BY Mr. Robert Batherson, seconded by Mr. Paul Pettipas that the Regional Plan Advisory Committee agree to hear a presentation by Mr. Phil Pacey, President, Heritage Trust, at the February meeting.

The Committee requested that Mr. Pacey be advised that comments were to be specific to Regional Plan amendments and within the mandate of the Committee.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Ms. Cheryl Newcombe exited the meeting at 4:40 p.m. Quorum was lost at this time.

9. **NEXT MEETING DATE** - February 18, 2009

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Chris Newson
Legislative Assistant