

**REGIONAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
July 15, 2009**

- PRESENT:** Mr. Fred Morley, Chair
Deputy Mayor David Hendsbee, Vice-Chair
Ms. Maija Warnock
Mr. Robert Batherson
Ms. Margo Grant
Ms. Cheryl Newcombe
Councillor Peter Lund
Councillor Gloria McCluskey
- ABSENT:** Ms. Alison Baker (regrets)
Mr. Floyd Dykeman (regrets)
Mr. Paul Pettipas
Ms. Carole Pelletier
Ms. Katherine Ruta
- STAFF:** Mr. Roger Wells, Supervisor, Regional & Community Planning
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Fred Morley, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m. in the Helen Creighton Room, Dartmouth Library, 60 Alderney Drive, Dartmouth.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - April 15, 2009 and May 20, 2009

MOVED by Councillor McCluskey, seconded Mr. Robert Batherson that the minutes of April 15, 2009 and May 20, 2009, as presented, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Additions: 8.1 Wind Energy Initiative - Update - Shayne Vipond
8.2 CARSHARE Halifax - Margo Grant

MOVED BY Mr. Robert Batherson, seconded by Councillor Peter Lund that the agenda, 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

6.1 Correspondence - NONE

6.2 Petitions - NONE

6.3 Delegations

6.3.1 Middle Sackville Community Visioning

Ms. Ann Merritt, Chair, Middle Sackville Community Visioning Community Liaison Group, presented an update on the Middle Sackville Community Visioning project. She acknowledged the following volunteers and staff persons associated with the project: Mr. Tom Anderson, Ms. Jennifer Tsang, Mr. Nick Antoft, Mr. Walter Regan, Mr. Paul Nickerson, Mr. Shayne Vipond, HRM Planner, and Ms. Bronwyn MacKinnon, HRM Community Developer.

Highlights of the presentation were noted as follows:

- The Logo developed was: *"Many Neighbourhoods - One Community"*.
- The project commenced with the identification of the community history and assets; engaging the stakeholders (all residents of the area); identifying key themes; drafting a report; obtaining feedback on the report and then a final report for presentation to

the Regional Plan Advisory Committee and Regional Council.

- The completed vision is expected to be before the Regional Plan Advisory Committee in the Fall of 2009.
- The vision area map was a little different than that of other areas due to the urban centre that was identified in the Regional Plan; an area surrounded by a highway and proposed interchange. The Visioning group expanded the boundary to include consultation with adjacent areas that would be affected by the interchange.
- Two strong themes resulted from the extensive community consultation: 1. Protection of the Environment, 2. Retention of the open, rural feel of the neighbourhoods.

Ms. Merritt explained that due to the variation in population from low to medium density throughout the visioning area, the proposed plan of action was to have an area wide vision and action plan that would apply to all residents as well as area specific plans for those colour coded sectors identified on the map and explained as follows:

- Blue - did not want much change.
- Orange - the HRM boundary identified in the Regional Plan.
- Yellow - some stage of (development) permissions already obtained, however; the possibility exists to work with those communities.
- Green - the Landfill and Quarry areas.
- White - no conclusive decision was made.

Deputy Mayor Hendsbee entered the meeting at 3:16 p.m.

The goals and actions identified through the visioning exercise were:

- Quality of Life - retain the existing community character;
- Residential community - promote medium to low, mixed-use development in suitable locations;
- Encourage community identity through signage and beautification initiatives;
- Commercial and economic development - direct the location of commercial activity;
- Recreation and parks - identify and explore opportunities for parks/open space/trails/community recreational.
- Enhance the protection of water sources by enhancing buffers surrounding water courses;
- Infrastructure and transportation.

The next steps include the circulation of the draft report, review of comments received and preparation of the final report.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Merritt, Mr. Anderson and Ms. Tsang, provided the following information:

- Attendance at the public meetings was a uniform representation of the entire area.
- The white sections indicated on the map were areas that would not experience much change over the next few years, therefore; the feedback received was not sufficient to make definitive statements.
- The Blue areas of the map, Springfield Lake area to Upper Sackville, were very

- pleased with the current rural type of lifestyle. The lots are large and serviced by wells and septic systems; there has been an expression of interest in obtaining water services.
- Approximately 250 residents responded to a survey (postcard type) while only a few attended the public meetings. The low attendance at the meetings was attributed to the February meeting dates (stormy weather).
 - A meeting was held in the Lucasville Community Centre; good feedback was obtained.
 - Home Owners Associations were also requested to complete the questionnaires.
 - The proposed developments would be in the vicinity of the Highway 101 interchange located off Sackville Drive. The residents had mixed opinions in regard to the development/interchange. Those in support of the interchange recognized it as a means for faster access to the highway and the potential for more commercial development.
 - Emphasis was placed on the protection of the Sackville River system and the lakes. All areas expressed concern with the protection of water sources/environment. Residents want to be able to walk around the lake, in the woods, along the rivers and do not want to have to stay on the pavement and look through someone's backyard to see the lake/river; they want to continue enjoying nature in the same manner.
 - The yellow areas shown on the map had a certain level of subdivision approval (McCabe Lake North). Conceptual approval has been obtained for a large lot subdivision. The lower portion of the yellow area would be the section where the proposed Margesson Drive would come through. Meetings were held with the landowners/developers.
 - The blue areas, the core areas of Sackville Drive and Lucasville Road, were looking for sidewalks and more accessibility.
 - Concern was expressed by residents that they would be overwhelmed by development as it was done in the past. Through this process, there will be more of an opportunity to work with developers for a more desirable type of development.
 - The interchange will be located in the centre of the orange circle shown on the map; connection will be made to Glen Arbour off the Hammonds Plains Road. Margesson Drive should be open to the highway by 2010 and the other side completed by 2011/12.
 - Residents of the Kinsac/Beaver Bank area did attend some of the meetings and will be included on an e-mail contact list being developed.
 - The current population is 5,000 to 7,000 not including the Sunset Ridge or Twin Brook Subdivisions. The number could triple depending on the form of development.

Mr. Batherson stressed the need to preserve the community character and protect the environment as noted in comments made by the area residents. People will support the interchange/park 'n ride as it would make the commute easier for those traveling to work in Dartmouth/Halifax and for those seeking services that were not available in the area.

Mr. Roger Wells, Supervisor, Regional and Community Planning, congratulated the

Visioning Group for their work. He noted that the project was challenging due to the greenfield situation. The proposed interchange necessitated moving the Middle Sackville area forward on the visioning list so that development could be planned in conjunction with the interchange. Mr. Wells recognized the Group's success in engaging the Developers during the initial stage of the visioning process.

Mr. Shayne Vipond, Planner, referencing the yellow section on the map, advised that there were approximately 800 approved lots under conventional subdivision approval prior to the adoption of the Regional Plan. A newly proposed development, currently at the conceptual/design stage, would alter that somewhat in regard to density. He noted that the watershed study (analysis) for the area had been drafted and would be brought to the Committee.

Ms. Cheryl Newcombe noted that some lots in the yellow area would be serviced as a result of the extension of water service to the Lively Subdivision.

In response to Mr. Morley, Ms. Merritt advised that there was not a lot of desire from the residents in attracting manufacturing or large shopping mall types of commercial development. Further consultation will be held with the business community. Some residents suggested that the old quarry/landfill sites would be the best areas for commercial interests. She noted that everyone was in favour of buses and supported alternative / active transportation.

Councillor McCluskey noted that HRM needs the commercial assessment to help pay for transit services.

Mr. Morley, Chair, thanked Ms. Merritt and the Visioning Group for their presentation.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Employment, Population and Housing Projections for HRM: Updated Consultant's Report, 2009

Mr. Fred Wendt, Planner, presented an update on the housing, employment and population study commissioned in 2004 as part of the background research for the Regional Plan. The intent of the update was to determine if HRM was on track with the previous recommendations while also determining the impact of the 2006 Census data and the current economic downturn.

Mr. Wendt explained that, in regard to the economy, there had been strong growth in the Atlantic region and due to HRM's service based economy, it had not been affected by the wide fluctuations. There would be slightly less economic growth in the near term future followed by a "catch up" period in the years 2011 to 2016 then a return to steady long term growth.

In regard to population dynamics and employment growth, he noted that an available

labour force was needed for a strong economy. The population was expected to increase by 65,300 between 2006 and 2026 with 37,000 new jobs during the same time frame for an annual employment growth of 0.8%. By 2026 there would be 245,800 jobs in HRM.

Mr. Morley noted that 2006 was the worst year for population growth due to the western economy attracting workers from the east. That flow has now reversed slightly and the growth rates were back to a respectable level.

Mr. Wendt explained that the housing demand between 2006 and 2026, based on the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Commission's model for potential housing demand, would be as follows:

- half of all new housing would be low density (54%); 1209 units per year.
- there would be a short term increase in demand for apartments from 2001 to 2006; by 2026 the demand would be at 38%; 873 units per year.
- 5% demand for row houses; 125 units per year.
- 3% demand for mobile homes; 69 units per year.

Mr. Wendt noted that an increase in the seniors population over the next twenty years was estimated to rise to just over 80,000.

In summary, Mr. Wendt advised that there had not been a lot of change from the original study. The changes were noted as follows:

- 249,500 jobs by 2026; up 6% from the 2004 study.
- 438,585 people by 2026; down 1% from the 2004 study.
- 200,625 dwellings by 2026; down 1% from the 2004 study.

In response to a concern expressed by Deputy Mayor Hendsbee in regard to the school population projections put forward by the Imagine Our Schools Consultants, Mr. Wells advised that staff have provided the Halifax Regional School Board with all information regarding subdivision and future growth activity. The projections have been done by the Consultants and were based on school aged children over the next ten years while HRM has been working on a twenty-five year outlook.

Mr. Morley requested that staff provide an update to the Committee on the degree to which the data provided by HRM and the projections of the Imagine Our Schools Consultants were in agreement in order to ensure the most accurate projections.

Councillor Lund noted that another area of consideration should be the outflux of population from the downtown to the urban sprawl areas and then the reverse move back to areas such as Bedford West. He also noted that some residents in the Westwood Hills and Haliburton areas were considering moving due to traffic congestion increasing the commute by an extra twenty minutes.

Mr. Batherson suggested the need to have dialogue between the Real Estate and Development communities to consider the longer term as the market indicates that people want to move to rural areas while the Development community builds on five year projections.

Mr. Batherson retired from the meeting at 4:27 p.m.

In response to Ms. Maija Warnock, Mr. Wendt noted that there were still some areas available for new housing in the downtown areas of Halifax/Dartmouth, therefore; not a lot of tear down of neighbourhoods would be necessary.

In response to Deputy Mayor Hendsbee, Mr. Wells noted that there has been discussion concerning the potential of boathouses/floating communities in HRM.

Mr. Morley thanked Mr. Wendt for his presentation.

7.2 RPAC Report to Council on the Regional Plan: Discussion of Detailed Scope/Topics to be Included in Report

Mr. Roger Wells, Supervisor, Regional and Community Planning, presented information for consideration as part of the annual report to Regional Council.

Mr. Morley suggested the Committee consider a scorecard approach, similar to the Chamber of Commerce's Scorecard for Regional Council, as the format for the annual report. The Scorecard would include indicators on the progress made and assessment of that progress with a list of all things that have been done combined with comment on where HRM was doing well and/or areas for improvement.

The Committee concurred with the proposal for a Scorecard type annual report.

Mr. Wells advised that the final version of the annual report/scorecard should be ready for presentation to Regional Council by December 2009.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Wind Energy Initiative - Update

Mr. Shayne Vipond, Planner, presented a verbal update on the proposed recommendations on Wind Turbines. He noted that HRM has been working on the issue for over two years in an effort to balance all interests. Staff have presented to the HRM Energy and Underground Committee who have suggested that there be consultation with the community prior to presenting to Regional Council. Mr. Vipond advised that staff would return to the Regional Plan Advisory Committee following the public consultation.

In response to questions/comments from the Committee, Mr. Vipond provided the following information:

- Wind turbines would not be placed in the water as that would be a Federal area and not within HRM's jurisdiction.
- A Developer could put in a "Green Subdivision" using wind turbines if the distance requirements (591') were met.
- A wind turbine would have to be positioned (distance separation) so that if it fell, it would fall on the owner's property.

- Federal Acts would circumvent the placement of wind turbines; for example, the Shearwater Glide Path.
- An inventory of existing wind turbines including information on their exact location, size, height and setbacks does exist to the extent that HRM has been able to record that data.
- The turbine at the Dartmouth Superstore property appears to meet the proposed regulations.

Ms. Newcombe retired from the meeting at 5:13 p.m. Quorum was lost at this time.

Councillor McCluskey retired from the meeting at 5:15 p.m.

In response to Deputy Mayor Hendsbee, Mr. Wells and Mr. Vipond advised that they would have to check to determine whether the three existing residential turbines in his were approved under the proposed guidelines.

Deputy Mayor Hendsbee suggested a covenant whereby residential turbines would have to feedback power into the grid or have a backup battery supply to store the power.

Ms. Warnock noted that in the United States the electric meters run backward while turbine power is being used.

Mr. Vipond noted that grid stability would be an issue.

8.2 CARSHARE - HFX

Ms. Margo Grant requested that the Committee consider a presentation by CARSHARE Halifax for the August or September meeting as an alternative transportation option and possible partnership with the HRM fleet.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting was scheduled for August 19, 2009 to be held in the Helen Creighton Room, Alderney Library, Dartmouth.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Chris Newson
Legislative Assistant