

REGIONAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

October 20, 2010

PRESENT: Mr. Fred Morley, Chair
Councillor David Hendsbee, Vice-Chair
Mr. William Book
Ms. Margo Grant
Councillor Peter Lund
Mr. Paul Pettipas
Mr. Floyd Dykeman
Ms. Cheryl Newcombe

REGRETS: Ms. Christina MacLeod
Councillor Gloria McCluskey
Mr. Sam Metlej
Ms. Carole Pelletier
Ms. Talia D'Alessio

STAFF: Ms Susan Corser, Team Lead, Community Engagement
Ms. Maria Jacobs, Planner
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

Table of Contents

1.	CALL TO ORDER	3
2.	APPROVAL OF MINUTES.....	3
3.	APPROVAL OF AGENDA.....	3
4.	BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - NONE	3
5.	CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS.....	3
6.	CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS.....	3
7.	REPORTS.....	3
	7. 1 Wetland Conservation Policy	3
	7.2 Community Visioning Project	4
8.	ADDED ITEMS.....	6
	8.1 Membership Update.....	6
9.	NEXT MEETING DATE.....	6
10.	ADJOURNMENT.....	6

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Fred Morley, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:06 p.m. in the Helen Creighton Room, 2nd Floor, Alderney Library, Dartmouth.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 15, 2010

Revision: Page 5, change the word “*must*” to “*should*” in regard to the Cherry Brook By-Pass

The Committee requested clarification on Page 7, second bullet, in regard to the intent of the phrase commencing with “*The goal would not be to generate a lot of revenue*” and the reference to “*...London, England style road tolls.*”

The Committee requested that the approval of the September 15, 2010 minutes be deferred to the next meeting pending clarification on the above item.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Addition: 8.1 Membership Update

The agenda, as amended, was approved.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - NONE

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS – NONE

7. REPORTS

7.1 Wetland Conservation Policy

Mr. Morley noted that the Committee had received a response from Minister Belliveau, previously circulated to the Committee, in regard to the Wetland Conservation Policy. Minister Belliveau had indicated that he would be interested in setting up a meeting with HRM Staff and members of the Regional Plan Advisory Committee to discuss the proposed policy. Presently, there has been no update in regard to the proposed meeting.

The Committee expressed concern with the current Wetland Conservation Policy moving forward in its present form without clarification on the issue of square footage/size and density for urban areas versus rural areas as well as the exact definition of a wetland. A further concern expressed was in regard to money generated,

in the form of compensation, for a wetland being altered/infilled going to a general fund rather than to a Land Rehabilitation Fund.

Mr. Morley requested that the correspondences be re-circulated to the Committee members and that staff be contacted in regard to organizing the meeting with Minister Belliveau. He also requested an update from the Mayor's office in regard to any response they may have received to the Mayor's letter of April 1, 2010.

7.2 Community Visioning Project

A copy of the presentation document was circulated to the Committee at this time.

Ms. Susan Corser, Team Lead, Community Engagement, Community Development, assisted by Ms. Maria Jacobs, Planner, Community Development, provided a verbal update on the Community Visioning Projects. They noted that ten (10) of the fifty (50) priority visioning areas have had the project commence or are nearing the implementation stage where Visioning Action Teams are being organized to work toward the implementation of the community vision.

Mr. Morley thanked Ms. Corser and Ms. Jacobs for their presentation.

Mr. Dykeman suggested that the Community Visioning plans/process be utilized to identify cost savings for HRM such as how services are delivered and whether they are at the level required/needed. He also suggested establishing a value for the exercises with a measure of some sort, such as projects that occur as a result of the visioning exercise that may not have otherwise occurred. Considering the financial situation of the province, which will affect transfers, it is time to consider how "we" will do with less.

During the ensuing discussion, the Committee raised the following suggestions for staff's consideration:

- ensure that the area Councillor is engaged from the initial stages onward
- use the Community Visioning Exercises as a means to identify capital priorities

Concern was expressed that some citizens may try to use the visioning exercises as a mode of deflecting/delaying other projects. Citizens against a certain proposal could comment that the Community Visioning Exercise should be done prior to considering / approving a proposed development or that the proposed development should wait for the Regional Plan review.

- the community visioning exercise may bring forward certain strategic opportunities, therefore; it would be beneficial to have the Community

Visioning Exercise done or in process for when significant initiatives come forward in a community

- if a watershed study is being done in an area, do the Community Visioning Exercise in conjunction with, or, immediately following
- engage the communities ahead of the actual visioning exercise by using social media as some of the Community Visioning groups have utilized the option which has been successful in obtaining input/exposure
- HRM should engage youth at the elementary and Junior /Senior High levels by going into the schools and asking the students what they would like to see in their community. Being engaged in their community may encourage the youth to remain in their community.
- it is important to manage expectations during the visioning exercises so that citizens do not interpret the process as a message that they will be getting certain things. Part of the process should be to help the communities help themselves and realize that the municipal government is not the only resource available to them.
- ensure the "priority list" for Community Visioning Exercises is flexible so that there is no queue jumping just for the sake of getting a project done. Adhere to the rules that were set down for the visioning exercises.
- the Community Visioning Exercise should not be another level in the bureaucracy that slows down the process

Mr. Dykeman and Mr. Pettipas noted that Community Visioning exercises will obtain the synergy, and achieve more harmony, through achievement. This is an opportunity to bring community development and fund-raising opportunities together with outreach to other community stakeholders who may be able to "partner" to support certain projects. If a company has a local interest, they will invest well.

- it would be effective and beneficial to have input from the community groups during the five year review of the Regional Plan.
- there is a balancing act when raising social capital, building the community up, and avoiding expectations that cannot be met. Add the approach of reaching out to other foundations/companies to the Toolkit and have that information available to the communities so that they can build their social capital and eventually be able to do things on their own.
- concentrate on building social capital and also cost reduction opportunities for HRM.

Councillor Hendsbee noted the importance of including the historical perspective of a community and an explanation of the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) for the area when commencing a community visioning process so that the residents understand how their community grew and why it grew as it did. Show the community their strengths and weaknesses as some will be surprised at what they learn from their own MPS.

Councillor Lund noted that the biggest challenge would be in how to fund the "visions" raised by the community without raising taxes. Many rural communities comment that they did not pay such high taxes prior to amalgamation and question what they are getting for the higher taxes as the next county is getting something they do not have. Emphasize that HRM is a community of communities.

Mr. Pettipas suggested exploring partnerships with community stakeholders such as offering naming rights to help raise funds to build a community centre or donating materials for a project. Provide options for funding projects rather than area rates.

MOVED by Councillor David Hendsbee, seconded by Ms. Cheryl Newcombe that the Regional Plan Advisory Committee recommend that staff provide an Information Report to Regional Council on the process of the Community Visioning Exercises done to date. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The Committee also suggested that an update on the Community Visioning Projects be part of the Regional Plan Advisory Committee's Annual Report to Regional Council.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Membership Update

In response to a question by Mr. Pettipas, the Legislative Assistant advised that Membership on all HRM Boards and Committees will remain status quo until further notice.

Mr. Morley noted that an update would be provided at the next meeting in regard to the new Committee of Council structure.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE - November 17, 2010.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Chris Newson
Legislative Assistant