

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

REGIONAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

January 19, 2011

- PRESENT: Mr. Fred Morley, Chair
Councillor David Hendsbee, Vice-Chair
Councillor Peter Lund
Ms. Cheryl Newcombe
Ms. Christina MacLeod
Mr. Paul Pettipas
Mr. William Book
Ms. Margo Grant
- REGRETS: Councillor Gloria McCluskey
Mr. Floyd Dykeman
Ms. Carole Pelletier
Ms. Talia D'Alessio
Mr. Sam Metlej
- STAFF: Mr. Roger Wells, Supervisor, Regional and Community Planning
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Pam Lovelace, Legislative Support

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:11 p.m. in the Boardroom of the Alderney Library, 60 Alderney Drive, Dartmouth.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 17, 2010

Change: Page 8: “22%” to be updated to “20%” as per the recent CMHC numbers.

MOVED by Ms. Newcombe, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee, that the minutes of November 17, 2010, as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Additions: 9.1 Membership Update – Legislative Assistant
9.2 Standing Committee Update – Councillor Lund

The agenda, as amended, was approved.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - NONE

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS - NONE

7. REPORTS

7.1 Economic Strategy Update

Mr. Fred Morley, Greater Halifax Partnership, presented a verbal update on the Economic Strategy. A copy of his presentation was circulated at this time.

Ms. Margo Grant entered the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

In response to questions/concerns raised by the Committee, Mr. Morley provided the following information:

- student enrollment at local Universities and Colleges had seen a period of decline and then an increase in 2010
- In regard to branding Halifax, many businesses use “Halifax” as a selling proposition, however; there does appear to be a sense of confusion, in regard to the different terms being used, that needs to be mitigated. The unique attributes of Halifax is the brand: Halifax is tuned into environmental issues; smart growth in a careful, thoughtful way; its position by the ocean is a major selling feature.

Councillor Hendsbee noted that Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is the legal name not the brand; Halifax is the brand.

- The Atlantic Gateway and transportation sector are areas of opportunities as transportation is one of the successes in Halifax's economy. There is a lot of activity in the gateway area as noted by the strong comeback in the Halifax Port numbers over the last year. Part of that strength is based on the increased traffic from China, and; Halifax's air cargo facilities/cold storage area being the second largest next to Miami. The impact to Halifax's port would result from any drop in thru traffic to the US/areas west as cargo staying in Halifax is roughly 20%.

Councillor Hendsbee commented that one of the limitations may be that there is only one rail line and one track which is bound by CN.

- HRM's advantage is that it has a rail line as many communities do not.
- Halifax has learned from the last Economic Strategy to focus more on implementation of the plan and building provincial/federal partnerships as they are key players to assist with economic development issues. Building the Halifax economy will build the Nova Scotia economy. Urban growth is a driver and all partners need to take advantage of that.

Mr. Wells noted that Nova Scotia has a service oriented economy and therefore lacks the huge peaks and valleys experienced by large manufacturing centres. This leads to a more stable economy that is safe for investors. An alignment of strategic alliances will drive the implementation plan forward.

- the Economic Strategy/Implementation Plan will include analysis and benchmarks of performance based on measurable specific to each goal such as population growth, economic growth numbers and possibly the Genuine Progress Index (GPI)

Members of the Committee noted the merits of having a provincial government with the majority of its representation in Halifax proper.

- the proposed Convention Centre project could provide the impetus for Halifax to become a financial urban centre and there appears to be a great interest in moving offices to Halifax

Members of the Committee noted the importance of building/promoting HRM's/Halifax's social capital and youth retention.

- the Province has a significant labour force retraining strategy that could assist those who are overqualified and working in low growth sectors

Mr. Morley concluded his presentation advising that the Economic Strategy is expected

to be presented to Regional Council in early February and, once approved, a copy will be circulated to the Committee.

7.2 Five Year Regional Plan Review

A copy of the draft Regional Plan Review Scoping Exercise Process was circulated at this time.

A copy of HRM's Corporate Plan 2010-2011 was circulated at this time.

Mr. Roger Wells, Supervisor, Regional and Community Planning, presented a verbal update on the Regional Plan five year review Scoping Exercise Process.

During the ensuing discussion, the Committee raised the following comments/concerns:

- concern was expressed in regard to the timing of the proposed Public Hearings, Winter of 2013, as that would be shortly following the October 2012 Municipal Election. The result of the election could, potentially, result in a new Council who would have less knowledge of the progression of the Regional Plan.
- there may be further requests for water service and district expansions and the issue of private septic lines under public roadways may come forward
- asset mapping is very important and should be taken into consideration
- septic treatment options such as clustered systems and changing technologies should be considered.

In response to questions raised by Members of the Committee, Mr. Wells provided the following information:

- there are measurement tools that can indicate whether or not a reasonable cost savings was obtained
- staff is continuing its review/work on the twenty-three (23) Functional Plans such as the Waste Water Management Functional Plan to determine how HRM will expand services over the next ten to twenty years.
- the Regional Plan Advisory Committee will be asked to comment on determining the implementation process for all twenty-three (23) Functional Plans, for example, the Transportation Master Plan has other functional plans that fall under it with approximately 100 recommendations that would require significant coordination in order to be implemented
- issues such as wind turbines and land use are also being reviewed

The Committee thanked Mr. Wells for his presentation.

8. MOTIONS - NONE

9. ADDED ITEMS

9.1 Membership Update

Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant, explained that the Regional Plan Advisory Committee (RPAC) is now a Sub-Committee of the newly formed Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee of Council. The Standing Committee will make the appointments to its Sub-Committees. The Councillor appointments have been done, however; she did not have the commencement date for those appointments. The advertisement for citizen volunteer opportunities was placed in the Saturday, January 15, 2011 paper with a closing date of January 31, 2011. The citizen appointments to the RPAC will be done by the Standing Committee. The appointments are to be completed by March 31, 2011. Until those appointments are made, and ratified by Council, membership on the RPAC remains Status Quo.

Ms. Newson added that it is her understanding that all currently serving members of the RPAC have expressed interest in re-serving on the Committee, therefore, their names will be brought forward to the Standing Committee for consideration along with any new applications received as a result of the volunteer recruitment process. She noted that the Standing Committees also have the option of appointing one of their members, a Councillor, to serve as Chair of their Sub-Committees, therefore, there is a possibility that there may be a new Chair for the RPAC. She emphasized that this is only an option for the Standing Committee's consideration and not a requirement.

Ms. Newson retired from the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

9.2 Standing Committee Update

Councillor Lund provided an update on the Standing Committees advising that Councillor Nicoll, who was in attendance, was the Chair of the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee.

Councillor Lund retired from the meeting at 5:40 p.m.

10. NOTICES OF MOTION - NONE

11. NEXT MEETING DATE

The February 16th meeting date was cancelled and rescheduled to March 2, 2011. The regular meeting date of March 16, 2011 is to remain.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Pamela Lovelace
Legislative Support