

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

REGIONAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 02, 2011

- PRESENT: Mr. Fred Morley, Chair
Councillor David Hendsbee, Vice-Chair
Councillor Peter Lund
Ms. Cheryl Newcombe
Mr. William Book
Councillor Lorelei Nicoll
- ABSENT: Councillor Gloria McCluskey
Ms. Carole Pelletier
Ms. Talia D'Alessio (regrets)
Mr. Sam Metleg
Ms. Christina MacLeod
Mr. Paul Pettipas
Ms. Margo Grant (regrets)
Mr. Floyd Dykeman
- STAFF: Mr. Roger Wells, Supervisor, Regional and Community Planning
Mr. Shayne Vipond, Senior Planner
Ms. Pam Lovelace, Legislative Support

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Fred Morley, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:18 pm in the Helen Creighton Room, Alderney Library, Dartmouth.

Quorum was not achieved.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 19, 2011

Approval of January 19, 2011 minutes were deferred to next meeting.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS - None

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - None

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – None

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence – None

6.2 Petitions - None

7. REPORTS

7.1 Project 00953 Wind Energy Facilities in HRM

Mr. Vipond provided a verbal presentation on the Wind Energy Facilities in HRM. He requested feedback from the Regional Plan Advisory Committee.

The Committee entered a discussion with the following questions and comments noted:

- Mr. Morley asked whether or not the anti-wind sentiment is representative across jurisdictions.
- Mr. Vipond explained that Nova Scotia is touted as having one of the most progressive wind energy policies in North America, however the anti-wind turbine movement can be found representing many community interests.
- Councillor Lund asked where the suburban interests lie within the proposed rural /urban program.
- Mr. Vipond responded that the integration for municipal services and the potential for compact development plays into the regional urban program as it has potential for growth.
- Mr. Morley requested information on how the flight paths at Shearwater were taken into account.
- Mr. Vipond explained that the federal acts provide protocol for federal jurisdictions.

- Councillor Hendsbee asked how the home based micro-unit wind turbines fit into the program. These are small turbines that can be bolted to a roof.
- Mr. Vipond clarifies the difference between the stand alone units that are not attached to buildings, and under this program those units fall under building construction codes.
- Councillor Lund asked about the noise issue and conjectured that if the noise was too great for neighbouring properties, those property owners can issue a complaint through the noise By-Law.
- Councillor Hendsbee requested information on how a daycare fits into the sensitive and non-sensitive categories.
- Mr. Vipond explained that because daycares operate during the day and people do not sleep there during the night, they would be considered non-sensitive buildings.
- Mr. Book asked where the criteria came from to determine the minimum distance requirements.
- Mr. Vipond assured the Committee that staff have reviewed numerous studies on wind turbine effect on health and environment.
- Councillor Hendsbee suggested that the larger turbines emit less noise and therefore, may require less distance from the adjacent property.
- Councillor Hendsbee asked if the plan would give preferential treatment to those who are erecting turbines closer to power lines, as it is more advantageous and less restrictive.
- Mr. Wells assured the committee that the main concern is to protect the sleeping public regardless of where the power transmission lines are located.
- Mr. Book asked what the significant public concern is to wind turbines. Mr. Vipond noted that noise, vibrations, and loss of property value are the main concerns.
- Councillor Hendsbee suggested that wind farms might have a different application altogether considering the density and rural location in which they are erected.
- Mr. Vipond noted that the plan recommends the following restricted zones: regional parks, protected areas, wilderness and conservation areas, including the western commons.
- Councillor Hendsbee asked if the Pockwock watershed area would fall into a restricted zone. Mr. Vipond said it would not.
- Councillor Hendsbee asked if people purchasing property near a wind turbines have recourse. Mr. Vipond said it's a buyer-beware situation.
- Councillor Hendsbee raised the point of encouraging sustainable communities and business clusters to be self-sufficient and how these communities could utilize the land at the base of a large wind turbine.
- Mr. Vipond told the committee that this plan only deals with wind turbines and their use restrictions, not the land around them.
- Councillor Lund asked if there would be an exclusion zone along the coast.

- Councillor Hendsbee asked if the wind turbines could go in the water. If the water is federal jurisdiction are there other examples in Canada where wind farms are being built in the coastal water line.
- Councillor Hendsbee asked if the suggested wind turbine regulations are similar to regulations of telecommunications towers.
- Mr. Vipond pointed out that telcom towers fall within federal jurisdiction.
- Mr. Wells said that HRM staff is trying to work with Transport Canada.
- Mr. Morley asked how the HRM regulations compare with other provincial rural jurisdictions across the country.
- Mr. Wells said that they have been in discussions with the provincial Minister of Energy to suggest that the province adopts provincial regulations for green energy. The province delegates those responsibilities to the municipalities. There is a lack of standardization across the province.
- Councillor Hendsbee suggested that HRM could create its own municipal regulations and recommend them to the province.
- Councillor Hendsbee asked if treatment facilities could erect a turbine and Mr. Vipond said yes as long as the facility is far enough away from residences and follows the new regulations.

Councillor Nicoll, Chair of the new Standing Committee on Community Planning and Economic Development spoke about its Terms of Reference, which are still being considered by the Standing Committee. She suggested that the Standing Committee could act as the voice for the Advisory Committee. Councillor Nicoll suggested that more discussion could take place with the province for example, and the Standing Committee could be there as support for these discussions.

Councillor Nicoll suggested that the Union of NS Municipalities be engaged on the issue of wind turbine regulations.

- Mr. Book asked if other municipalities would feel that HRM is impacting their policies if the HRM moves ahead to adopt a policy without consultation with the other municipalities.
- Mr. Morley affirmed that the committee will move forward but at this time a motion can not be made since quorum has not been reached.
- Ms. Newcombe asked if the other committee members could meet with Mr. Vipond to learn about the issue and be prepared to vote at the next RPAC meeting. Mr. Vipond agreed that this may be a good idea.
- Councillor Nicoll asked if Mr. Vipond's presentation could be given to the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee.
- Mr. Book asked about public opinion of wind farms and what the main issues are surrounding the installation of wind turbines on property.
- Mr. Vipond said that noise is the biggest complaint, however some people are concerned with serious health concerns. There is no consensus on the impacts of wind turbines on human health.
- Councillor Lund provided detailed revisions and comments on the report.

8. **ADDED ITEMS - None**
9. **NEXT MEETING DATE – March 16, 2011**
10. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:06pm.

Pamela Lovelace
Legislative Support