

**URBAN DESIGN TASK FORCE
MINUTES**

January 10, 2007

PRESENT:

**Dale Godsoe, Chair
William Hyde
Paul Shakotko
Kendall Taylor
Margot Young
Linda Garber
David Garrett
Cathy Carmody
Paul MacKinnon
Bernie Smith
Stephen Terauds
Adriane Abbott
Councillor Sloane
Councillor Smith
Councillor Wile**

REGRETS:

Mr. Kevin Riles

STAFF:

**Ms. Jacqueline Hamilton, Manager, Capital District
Mr. Andy Fillmore, Project Manager, Capital District
Ms. Chrissy White, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Julia Horncastle, Legislative Assistant**

OTHER:

**Ms. Jennifer Keesmaat, Partner, Office for
Urbanism
Mr. Vincent Tong, Office for Urbanism**

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 pm in the Ferry Terminal Board Room, 5077 George Street, Halifax.

Ms. Jennifer Keesmaat and Mr. Vincent Tong, Consultants with the Office for Urbanism, joined the meeting by conference call from Toronto.

2. **INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

The Chair introduced Mr. Stephen Terauds and Ms. Adriane Abbott to the Task Force Members. Mr. Terauds will be joining the Urban Design Task Force in the place of Mr. Clarence Butler as the Heritage Advisory Committee representative, and Ms. Abbott will be representing the Cultural Advisory Committee.

3. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair.

MOVED by Mr. Garrett, seconded by Ms. Carmody that Mr. Paul MacKinnon be nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of the Urban Design Task Force. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The Chair called for further nominations. Hearing none, the Chair declared Mr. Paul MacKinnon as Vice- Chair of the Urban Design Task Force.

4. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES- NOVEMBER 1, 2006**

It was noted by Ms. Jennifer Keesmaat that her name, as well as the name of her colleague, Mr. Harold Madi were misspelled. Ms. Keesmaat and Mr. Madi's name will also be represented on the front page of the minutes to record their participation.

MOVED by Mr. Paul MacKinnon, seconded by Councillor Smith that the minutes of November 1, 2006 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. **APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

Added:

- 10.1 Imagine Bloomfield Event
- 10.2 Newsletter #3 comments

Moved:

The Chair asked that item 7.1 be moved to 1:15 pm.

The Chair asked that item 8.2.1 be moved to immediately after the approval of the agenda.

MOVED by Mr. Bernie Smith, seconded by Mr. Paul MacKinnon that the Order of Business be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES- NONE

8.1.2 Healthy Housing-Healthy Communities

Ms. Kate Thompson, Project Coordinator, Healthy Housing, conducted a presentation on Spryfield's Healthy Housing, Healthy Community Project: Building Healthy Public Policy.

- A hand-out was circulated on the above noted topic.
- A Power Point accompanied the presentation.

The goal of the project is to address how to design communities that support human health needs to promote a better quality of life. Ms. Thompson provided an overview explaining the goals. Some important points were as follows:

- Our communities look the way they do because new development is guided by land use plans and regulations. In HRM, local community plans will be developed with public input.
- The project involves engaging Spryfield residents in discussions about the influence of our built surroundings on our daily lives.
- The project is fostering good working relationships among residents, Health Professionals, Planners, and Developers to improve the health and well being of local Residents.
- Research shows that the form and design of our communities affect our quality of life.
- The project promotes the development of safe and pleasant places that endorse exercise and provide options for persons with disabilities. Places with a choice of physical activities encourage healthy Communities.
- The project supports public participation and input.

- The project supports healthy child development by promoting Communities where children can bike, walk and exercise. This will result in a healthier and happier children.
- The program promotes great places to live. If there is a variety of shopping, places of employment, homes and recreation combined with compact street layouts linked with a greater level of safety, this will encourage less usage of cars.
- The program embraces welcoming neighbourhoods and natural environments for all ages as well as a good public transportation system.

Responding to questions from the Task Force, Ms. Thompson advised:

- Healthy Housing has received a positive response from Developers, and feedback suggests that the model can be used in different forums.
- Specific numbers and ratios for sidewalks and roads are yet to be determined, but people have been invited to provide suggestions to Healthy Housing staff on this matter.
- Densities will change among urban, suburban and rural areas.
- Research has shown that there is a tremendous amount of consistency with this particular model and the mandate of the UDTF.
- The indication section of the model needs more discussion, research and benchmarks.
- Public Health Professionals attended the Healthy Housing workshops and the project has worked with Chebucto to reach the majority of their conclusions thus far.
- The model does not concentrate on economic liability as much as socialization. The focus of the model has been on community revitalization and health. Economics is lacking at this point, but it is something to consider in future development agreements and partnerships with Developers.
- Community engagement and measurement is extremely important for the success of this plan. although every aspect of the plan does not reflect what every HRM community may want, it provides the basis for what a revitalized, healthy community should look like.
- Partnerships should be made with Developers to make this plan look desirable in order to ensure economic sustainability.
- There have been two streams developed on “hot button issues”. One stream concentrates on dialogues, and the other concentrates on a variety of art techniques. The dialogues concentrate on transportation, density, public spaces and mixed uses. There will also be a dialogue developed on environment.

With no further questions regarding the presentation, Ms. Thompson and Ms. Willison

left the meeting at this time.

7. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

7.1 Development Economics

This presentation was deferred to the next agenda as Mr. Riles was not in attendance.

8. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS

8.1 Correspondence

8.1.1 Discussion of letter from district 12 PAC regarding a seat on the UDTF

A letter from the District 12 Planning Advisory Committee was circulated to the Task Force regarding a request for a seat on the Urban Design Task Force.

Mr. Fillmore advised that Councillor Sloane is a member of the District 12 Planning Advisory Committee and therefore there is sufficient representation of that group on the Task Force. Councillor Sloane assured the Task Force that she would keep the District 12 PAC informed. The Chair also suggested inviting members of the District 12 PAC to attend meetings of the UDTF as members of the public so they could remain informed in that way as well. It was agreed by the Task Force that they would not invite a member from District 12 PAC to join the team at this point.

9. REPORTS

9.1 Review and discussion of Forum #2

- A handout was circulated on the above noted topic.

Ms. Keesmaat walked the Task Force through the findings. Some important points were as follows:

- The second forum was held the week of December 4-7th, 2006. A draft of the Urban Design Framework was presented to the forum participants, and workshops were held through the week to identify ways the Vision and Principles can become manifest in the areas discussed.
- Introductory presentations were made to talk about Urban Design Principles and intensification. These presentations were designed to provide the participants with a tool to continue on in the discussion process.
- 5 groups were formed and each group concentrated on a different area. The groups were made up of a strong representation of residents from the particular areas they were discussing.

- The objectives were to find areas of transferability that had an immanent opportunity where development could manifest within the next decade, and to identify what the character of these areas should/could be and what criteria is necessary to bring that character to life.
- The discussion surrounded case studies and were hypothetical projections.

The 5 areas of concentration were as follows:

Downtown Halifax Area:

- This area generally followed the HRM Capital District boundaries, and was quite a challenging area.
- The key areas in the Downtown were identified as areas in need of an identity, areas that are in transition, and stable areas.
- The group identified that there do need to be height controls on existing view plane by-laws, and heritage demands more clarity.
- The criteria listed on page 2 above noted handout should be utilised to evaluate where and when height is appropriate. Maintaining sky view was important to this group.
- The group discussed the environment at the street level and questioned if it was a good environment for pedestrians, is it a safe area that could be effectively utilised.
- The group suggested generating 3-d modelling to represent the impact of specific proposals in the Downtown area.

After a brief discussion ensued surrounding the procedure around Committee of the Whole, some important points were as follows:

- The recommendation to Committee of the Whole will be at a criteria and ideas level. The Consultants still need to extrapolate the implications and evaluate their applicability across the Regional Centre.
- Committee of the Whole will not be involved in the Forum #2 aspect of the plan until May 8, 2007. At the February COW the focus will be on time lines and signing off on the deliverables of Forum #1.
- There still needs to be a large amount of work done on Forum #2. The purpose of the discussion today was to update the committee and get their feedback. There will be plenty of time to discuss the findings at a future date.
- It would be impossible to plan for every neighbourhood within the boundaries of the plan, but the final document will be made up as case studies with illustrations that will lead the UDTF to make conclusions.
- March 7, 2007 is the Task Force deadline for the refined materials that will go back to the April 15, 2007 public forum.

The 4 remaining areas discussed at Forum #2 were as follows:

Jubilee/Quinpool Road:

- The objective is to turn this area into a strong main street area, taking away some of the suburban feel of the street.
- The Quinpool Centre as well as the St. Patrick's High School site were identified as significant areas for re-development. These sites would allow for additional accommodation of density.
- Commercial upgrades need to be a part of the plan as well as adding vegetation and protecting pedestrian quality.
- An important idea that was raised was restoring the entire Halifax Commons area by restricting traffic by re-gigging the traffic route to move around the Halifax Commons. In order for this to be successful there would need to be an entire master plan for that area.

Gottingen Street:

- There is significant heritage in this area that is under utilised. There needs to be a transformation in this area without changing the character. A strong commercial district needs to remain, but the area should also continue to be a strong environment for different types of housing, including transition housing.
- Urban Design solutions were explored for the Uniacke Square area, and an increase in density was suggested for this area.

Downtown Dartmouth/Dartmouth Cove:

- Emphasis on protecting the areas heritage and the industrial marine use of the area. There was also an emphasis on topography.
- This area should have a Village character with a regional draw.
- The urban design framework should be refined in this area to provide opportunities for open space and trails.
- The group recommended the stepping of buildings to ensure that the views of the harbour are maintained.

Wyse Road:

- This area needs to undergo a fundamental transformation.
- Design initiatives were proposed to make this area serviceable for both neighbourhoods and regional amenities.
- The potential to connect a new road to Victoria and Wyse road to feed more traffic into this area was recognized.

- The group proposed enhancing pedestrian connections and suggested exploring programming options for a commuter bus to transport people across the bridge.
- Emphasis on an extension of the street grid.
- 3 districts with different characters were identified.

Ms. Keesmaat informed the group that the above information on Forum #2 was meant as a brief overview and more details will follow in future meetings.

In response to questions from Members of the Task Force, Ms. Keesmaat advised:

- A report on forum #2 will not be ready for the February 7, 2007 meeting but a synopsis will be provided. The report will be in the agenda package for the March meeting so committee members will have time to review it beforehand.
- The suggestions brought forth by Forum #2 are hypothetical, however; they do represent goals. This will be a process that will take decades to complete as is a plan for the next generation, but it is the goal of the plan to see some change within the next decade.
- Caution must be practised surrounding releasing any of this information to the public. The public needs to be aware that these plans are strictly case studies that will take years to vet, perfect and possibly implement. If illustrations are released about the discussions in the forums, it may cause the public to assume that these plans will come into effect in the near future.
- The Task Force asked Ms. Keesmaat to provide a 1-2 page synopsis on the framework of recommendations that could arise from the forums. This document should contain the opinion of the Consultants regarding how they see the items discussed at meetings becoming a document that will go to Committee of the Whole.

9.2 Final Vetting of Forum #1 Outcomes

- Forum #1 Outcomes will go to Committee of the Whole on Feb. 27, 2007.
- A synopsis was circulated to the Task Force on the above noted item.

A discussion ensued about the effectiveness of including Council in every phase of the plan. Mr. Fillmore assured the Task Force that it was the initial intent of the plan to bring Council along incrementally and it is important to keep Council informed so they become participants in the process. Council has accepted a schedule that was presented to them in a staff report in October so it is necessary to follow this process. This path was chosen because If Council is not kept informed throughout the

entire process then there is a risk that they will become distanced from the plan. The Task Force is following the Regional Plan model that worked very successfully.

Ms. Keesmaat informed the Task Force that the 4 Campaigns outlined in the Forum #1 Outcomes document are meant to serve as a broad objective that flow out of the Vision Statement that will demonstrate what the character will to be in the Regional Centre.

Councillor Smith advised that Forum #1 should go to Committee of the Whole as an information item and not as a recommendation. He believes suggestions and feedback from Council are appropriate, but not a recommendation.

The Task Force will have to be prepared to add more meeting dates if there needs to changes to the plan if Council recommends a change.

It was suggested that the Councillors who represent the areas discussed in the case studies should be informed of the results.

The Vision and the Principles are the two items that have been brought forth for approval for today, not the 4 Campaigns.

Mr. Garrett had concerns that the environmental mandate has not been represented in the work to date.

MOVED by Councillor Sloan, seconded by Mr. Hyde that the final vetting of Forum #1 Outcomes be approved. MOTION DEFEATED.

After a brief discussion, the Task Force agreed to move the vetting of Forum #1 to the February 7, 2007 agenda for approval. This item was moved due to the fact that the Task Force only received the supporting documentation at the meeting, and they wanted time to review the results.

It was requested by Mr. Taylor that there be some time set aside in the next agenda to discuss sustainability.

Ms. Margot Young expressed concern with past research on Parks and Transit Use conducted by the Consultants and asked if the Task Force could look at the key elements of a draft report before it is presented to the Task Force in its final stages for approval. Ms. Keesmaat informed the committee that the panels should provide the information that Ms. Young is requesting and advised that Mr. Harold Madi could provide more information on the discrepancies. Ms. Keesmaat also advised that those discrepancies should not affect the Vision and Principles.

The content of the Panels will be what is seen in the final report. These Panels are in preparation for the website and they will be available at the Public Libraries soon. The Task Force will receive a copy of the Panels when they are ready.

After a brief discussion regarding confusion on what will be going to Committee of the Whole for approval, the Chair advised that only the Vision Statement and Principles will be approved at this time, not the campaigns.

The Chair requested a staff report on all of the issues discussed in today's meeting.

9.3 Replacement for Architect/Designer

The Membership Selection Committee will appoint a new Task Force member to replace Mr. Geoff Keddy. The new member will be selected from a list of applicants who will be evaluated by a scoring matrix.

10. ADDED ITEMS

10.1 Imagine Bloomfield Event

On Thursday, Feb. 1, Imagine Bloomfield will be hosting an event, which is an evening lecture by Margie Zeidler, who is a property developer in Toronto. The lecture is titled "In the Spirit of Jane Jacobs: Development with Imagination" and will take place at the Dalhousie School of Architecture, Main Auditorium (basement, room HA-19), 5410 Spring Garden Road. The lecture will begin at 7:00 pm.

Also, on Saturday February 3, 2007 there will be an Imagine Bloomfield Design Charette. This is a public participation session that will allow participants to see what the Imagine Bloomfield Planning Team has developed from their research, consultations and visioning sessions in the community. Participants will have the ability to "help design the ideal Bloomfield" with the help from Margie Zeidler.

There was a letter written to the Coast concerning the lack of representation by the Urban Design Task Force, so it is important the group remain informed about events like this and attend if possible.

10.2 Newsletter # 3 Draft

Mr. Fillmore asked that the Task Force to have comments to him on the Newsletter by the end of the week.

11. NEXT REGULAR MEETING

The next meeting will be held on February 7, 2007 in the Halifax Ferry Terminal Board Room, 5077 George Street, Halifax.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm.

Chrissy White

Legislative Assistant