

URBAN DESIGN TASK FORCE
MINUTES

March 05, 2008

PRESENT:

Ms. Dale Godsoe, Chair
Mr. Paul MacKinnon, Vice-Chair
Mr. Bernie Smith
Mr. Frank Palermo
Mr. David Garrett
Ms. Linda Garber
Mr. Kendall Taylor
Mr. Kevin Riles
Councillor Mary Wile
Councillor Jim Smith
Councillor Dawn Sloane

REGRETS:

Ms. Adriane Abbott
Ms. Cathy Carmody
Mr. Stephen Terauds
Mr. Bill Hyde
Ms. Margot Young
Mr. Paul Shakotko

STAFF:

Mr. Andy Fillmore, Project Manager, Capital District
Ms. Jacqueline Hamilton, Manager of Heritage & Design
Mr. Austin French, Manager, Planning Services
Mr. Paul Dunphy, Director, Community Development
Ms. Thea Langille, Project Implementation Coordinator
Mr. Richard Harvey, Senior Planner, Planning Applications
Ms. Tiffany Chase, Communications Specialist, Heritage and
Urban Design, Capital District
Ms. Sandra T. Riley, Legislative Assistant

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Godsoe called the meeting to order at 11:15 a. m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** - None

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

The Chair requested an amendment to the order of business so that Item 6.5 will be addressed before 6.3 and 6.4.

MOVED by Councillor Smith, seconded by Mr. Taylor that the Order of Business, as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. **BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES** - NONE

5. **CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS** - NONE

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

6.1 **Update on February 26, 2008 Council approval of Downtown Halifax Vision**

Mr. Paul Dunphy, Director of Community Development updated the Committee on Council's approval of the Downtown Halifax Vision. He advised that Community Council asked for additional legislative powers to implement the HRMbyDesign program. He remarked that there have been meetings with the Province and that HRM Legal staff are preparing Legislative Amendments to submit to the Province. He stated there would be other meetings scheduled between the Mayor and the Premier as well as the City Manager and the Deputy of Service Nova Scotia. He commented that the types of policies and legislation requested included tighter controls over demolition of heritage properties. He added that things are progressing with a high level of support for a balanced package.

6.2 **Presentation by Greater Halifax Partnership regarding downtown development capacity**

Mr. Stephen Dempsey, President and CEO of Greater Halifax Partnership gave a presentation to the Committee on the above stated topic. The outline for the presentation is as follows:

- Background
- Goals
- Process
- Research and Growth Projections
- Findings
- Gaps and Challenges
 - Challenge 1: High density buildings
 - Challenge 2: Partnership's projected capacity accounts for office space only
 - Challenge 3: Long-term sustainability
 - Challenge 4: Cogswell Interchange
 - Challenge 5: Minimum re-development ratio of 1:3
- Recommendations
 - Implement "As of Right" development guided by a form-based code
 - Protect current viewplane and sight lines from the Citadel ramparts
 - Allow development agreements with additional height bonuses based on the developer's ability to meet other public policy objectives where there is additional capacity to build beyond height guidelines up to viewplanes
 - Do not limit height in areas where there are no impeding viewplane or rampart guidelines
 - Protect the traditional central business district for office and commercial development needs
 - Immediately undertake the planning and consultative process for the re-development of the Cogswell Interchange
 - Conduct a site-by-site analysis for re-development sites focussing on the economic feasibility of the 1:3 re-development ratio.

A discussion ensued and Staff addressed questions and comments from the Committee for clarification. Mr. Dempsey stated that he would like to have another discussion with the Committee in a future meeting regarding this issue.

6.3 Update on Project Consultant's work and Staff's work

No update provided at this time.

6.4 Upcoming Public Consultation

Mr. Fillmore advised of the distribution of a document of the Consultant's Final Report and the Policy piece being written by Staff, for Public Comment on April 07, 2008. He advised that these documents will be in the public realm for approximately three weeks, at which time there will be a Public Open House to hear comments on the materials. A Q. and A session will follow to clarify public concerns.

6.5 Critical Path and Next Steps

Ms. Langille, Project Implementation Coordinator for HRMbyDesign outlined the future meetings for the Committee as follows:

March 5	Update on Plan & Bylaw approach
March 17	First Draft of SPS and LUB Completed
April 2	Joint Meeting UDTF/SC/RPAC - presentation on SPS and LUB for Downtown Halifax
April 7	Circulate SPS and LUB for Public comment
April 17	Open House for Barrington
April 30	Heritage Advisory Board - review and recommendation for Barrington Street and Heritage components.
May 7	Joint meeting UDTF/SC/RPAC
May 27	1 st Reading Regional Council
June 24	Public Hearing/Ad sent to newspapers

The Staff clarified for the Committee questions and concerns expressed of dates and events stated in the Critical Path.

7. CORRESPONDENCE PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS

7.1 Correspondence submitted by Beverly W. Miller was circulated to the Regional Plan Advisory Committee re: Deficiencies with Present UDTF Proposals for the Downtown.

The Committee will review and bring Ms. Miller's letter forward in another meeting.

7.2 Pete LeValle

Mr. LeValle's correspondence will be brought forward in the next Committee meeting.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Staff Report dated March 05, 2008. Subject: Project Update - REVISED

8.2 Halifax Downtown - Draft: UDTF Update - 23-Nov. 07

8.3 Halifax Downtown - Draft UDTF Review - 3-Mar-08

The Chair advised that this Staff Report and the accompanying Halifax Downtown Drafts are very detailed and need to be reviewed and considered in a longer meeting. She stated that the following presentation would be to gain an understanding of the material circulated.

Mr. Fillmore and Mr. Harvey gave a slide presentation of the above noted Staff Report and items 8.2 and 8.3, with the following points:

Staff Report:

1. Approval of the Downtown Halifax Vision
2. Downtown Halifax Development Capacity Analysis
3. First Draft of the report: "Downtown Halifax Urban Design Strategy"
 - a. The Maximum Heights Map
 - b. The Built Form Envelopes
 - c. Built Form Design Guidelines
4. Upcoming Public Consultation
5. Critical Path and Next Steps
6. ADDED ITEM: Barrington Street HCD Financial Incentives

Mr. Fillmore pointed out the differences in the two maps circulated, stating that the one circulated during today's meeting is the newest version.

Mr. Harvey presented and explained the Built Form Envelopes before the Committee. He advised that the Built Form Design Guidelines should be covered in the next meeting.

A detailed discussion ensued with the Committee sharing comments and concerns, on the above presentations, with clarification from Staff. The Committee commented that they would like to observe 3-D models of the presentation rather than the 2-dimensional copies circulated, to enable more clarity on what works and what does not work. They were also advised that Wind Studies would be brought before the Committee from the Task Force in a future meeting.

It was suggested that the planned joint meeting of March 26, 2008 should be broken down into two separate meetings to ensure both Urban Design Task Force and the Regional Plan Advisory Committee have the opportunity to review all materials circulated.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

On April 02, 2008, the Task Force will have a joint meeting with the Steering Committee and the Regional Plan Advisory Committee, from 11 am to 2 pm at Halifax Hall, City Hall.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:57 p.m.

Sandra T. Riley
Legislative Assistant