

## HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

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### HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

February 26, 2008

**PRESENT:** Mayor Peter Kelly  
Deputy Mayor Stephen D. Adams  
Councillors: Krista Snow  
David Hendsbee  
Gloria McCluskey  
Andrew Younger  
Bill Karsten  
Jackie Barkhouse  
Jim Smith  
Mary Wile  
Patrick Murphy  
Dawn Sloane  
Sue Uteck  
Russell Walker  
Debbie Hum  
Linda Mosher  
Robert Harvey  
Reg Rankin  
Gary Meade  
Sue Uteck  
Steve Streach

**REGRETS:** Councillors: Harry McInroy  
Sheila Fougere  
Brad Johns

**STAFF:** Mr. Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer  
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor  
Ms. Julia Horncastle, Acting Municipal Clerk  
Ms. Melody Campbell, Legislative Assistant

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 1:09 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - NONE**

**3. HRM BY DESIGN - APPROVAL OF "THE DOWNTOWN HALIFAX VISION"**

Ms Dale Godsoe, Chair of the Urban Design Task Force, introduced the presentation entitled HRM by Design, Approval of "The Downtown Halifax Vision"

Mr. Andy Fillmore, Regional Planning, provided a power point presentation entitled HRM by Design, The Downtown Vision.

The project purpose is:

- C clear, predictable and streamlined development approval process
- C design standards for architecture and public spaces
- C improved heritage protection and assistance
- C a positive development climate increasing residential and commercial density, and yielding a vibrant and prosperous downtown
- C an improved and enlarged supply of public open space

The Vision

- C a sustainable city
- C a city of livable and complete neighbourhoods
- C a distinct and unique city
- C a city of exciting places
- C a beautiful city

The Downtown Vision

- C the guiding principles
- C the 10 big moves for downtown
- C the district-based approach
- C legislative changes
- C Cogswell Interchange redesign

The 10 Big Moves

- C defined and distinct downtown districts
- C increased living and working opportunities in the Downtown
- C a protected and vibrant historic heart
- C integrate the Cogswell and Cornwallis Park gateways
- C provide a variety of new and improved open space anchors and connections

- C great streets that support a culture of walking
- C improved appearance and quality of existing buildings and structures
- C remediating the interface and quality of existing buildings and structures
- C reinforce visual connections and civic pride
- C new developments designed to be well mannered and pedestrian friendly
- C a transit and active transportation oriented downtown

#### Next Steps

- C distribution of DRAFT Downtown Halifax Strategy (proposed early April 2008)
- C public open house and comment period (proposed mid-April 2008)
- C public hearing on Downtown Halifax Strategy (proposed June 2008)
- C Council adoption of Downtown Halifax Strategy (proposed July 2008)
- C Completion of DRAFT Regional Centre Strategy (proposed Autumn 2008)
- C Council adoption of Regional Centre Strategy (proposed Winter/Spring 2009)

Mr. Paul MacKinnon, Vice-Chair, UDTF, thanked Ms. Godsoe for her efforts and HRM staff for the work put forward on this report. Mr. MacKinnon advised Council of the recommendations by Urban Design Task Force.

#### **MOVED BY Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Smith, that Regional Council:**

- 1. Approve HRM by Design's "Downtown Halifax Vision" as recommended by the Urban Design Task Force included in the report as Attachment #1;**
- 2. Request that the Province enact legislative changes to enable a new planning process for downtown development as outlined in Attachment #4;**
- 3. Initiate planning and design work in support of the redevelopment of the Cogswell Interchange.**

Councillor McCluskey thanked staff and the UDTF. She stated the vision is a great plan and she supports it 100%; however, Dartmouth should have been included in the initial stage. She stated the RFP needs to go forward on the Cogswell Interchange as well as clarification of the wording "affordable housing" should be provided.

Councillor Wile thanked staff and the UDTF adding that she supports the recommendation. She noted that the task force has many volunteers providing hours of time and expertise to the project.

Councillor Younger stated he supports the plan and stressed the need to go forward with the Cogswell Interchange RFP. Councillor Younger raised concern regarding private property owners. The Councillor posed a question on how to ensure that the private business owners will be on board and willing to make changes to their building facades.

In response to Councillor Younger, Mr. Paul Dunphy, Director, Community Development, replied that Spring Garden Road went through this same process a number of years ago. As Spring Garden Road changed, business started improving which increased the building owners desire to improve their building facades.,The changes will require a clear vision in order for business owners to get on board. If the regulations are in place, development will follow.

Councillor Harvey stated that this is great opportunity to develop the downtown. Councillor Uteck requested clarification on building heights. Mr. Fillmore indicated that building heights are not set in stone and are still being addressed. View planes and office square footage for greater capacity are still being taken into consideration. It was noted that some developers have purchased land. Mr. Fillmore replied that planning amendments can be made.

Councillor Streach noted that the plan is well done. He added that private investment must be considered as well as government funding. The project is a great template for other communities in HRM and other communities throughout the province. He added Council must support the Legislative changes that will be required.

Councillor Hendsbee added that the plans such as the Regional Plan, Cultural Plan and 2020 projects must be acknowledged. He added his concern regarding the elimination of the appeal process, if there is a major variance, who has the power to make the decision He stated the variances should come to Regional Council. Mr. Dunphy advised that the appeals process is being discussed and recommendations will come back to Council in the coming months.

Councillor Hum stated that this is great for the downtown. The presentation should be promoted internationally. She also questioned if there is UDI support for the vision. Mr. Fillmore advised that they were showing their presentation in Winnipeg in July. He advised that UDI supports the UDTF plan and discussion is ongoing.

Councillor Walker questioned if this will require capital costs or operating costs. Mr. Dunphy replied that the plan will require Capital and Operating. The Councillor also inquired when height restrictions would be determined. Mr. Fillmore advised that this would come to Council early April, noting at this point, Forum 4 is the closest to the anticipated height restrictions. Councillor Walker questioned which cities were removing their pedway systems. Information will be prepared for Council regarding the pedway systems.

Councillor Younger added that Halifax is promoted as a Climate Controlled Winter Convention Destination because of our pedway system. Destination Halifax uses the pedway system as a marketing tool as it promotes HRM as a destination site.

Councillor Sloane stated the downtown feeds the Municipality. There has been great feedback, the public consultations have been very well attended. The next step is preparing and issuing the RFP for the Cogswell Interchange. She expressed appreciation to the UDTF, staff and the public for their input.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**4. PROPOSED BY-LAW C-800, RESPECTING REGIONAL CAPITAL COST CHARGES FOR SOLID WASTE FACILITIES**

Due to time constraints Proposed By-law C-800, Respecting Regional Capital Cost Charges for Solid Waste Facilities was deferred.

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Julia Horncastle  
Acting Municipal Clerk