

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

February 3, 2009

PRESENT:

Mayor Peter Kelly, Chair
Deputy Mayor David Hendsbee
Councillors: Steve Streach
Barry Dalrymple
Lorelei Nicoll
Gloria McCluskey
Bill Karsten
Jackie Barkhouse
Jim Smith
Mary Wile
Jerry Blumenthal
Dawn M. Sloane
Sue Uteck
Jennifer Watts
Russell Walker
Debbie Hum
Linda Mosher
Stephen D. Adams
Robert P. Harvey
Tim Outhit
Reg Rankin
Peter Lund

REGRETS:

Councillors: Andrew Younger
Brad Johns

STAFF:

Mr. Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Wayne Anstey, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Julia Horncastle, Acting Municipal Clerk
Ms. Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CALL TO ORDER.	3
2.	APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES.	3
3.	COUNCIL FOCUS AREAS:	
	<u>Governance & Communication.</u>	3
	<u>Community Planning.</u>	5
	<u>Infrastructure.</u>	7
	Federation of Canadian Municipalities Presentation to Staff Participants - Municipal Cooperation Program.	9
	<u>Transportation.</u>	9
2.	REGIONAL PARKING STRATEGY.....	9
3.	ADJOURNMENT.....	9

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kelly called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOVED by Councillor Wile, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal that the minutes of January 20, 2009 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. COUNCIL FOCUS AREAS (deferred January 27/09)

- PowerPoint Presentations outlining each of the focus areas were submitted.
- E-mail Correspondence dated January 26, 2009 from Ms. Valerie Payn, Halifax Chamber of Commerce was submitted.

Mr. Dan English, CAO and Mr. Brad Anguish, Director, Business Planning and Information Management, provided opening remarks in regard to today's presentation on Council's Focus Areas. Mr. English noted that on January 20, 2009 Regional Council adopted five key areas of focus, four of which would be presented in detail today, and that the Public Safety Focus Area would be presented on February 17, 2009. Mr. English also advised that Council has clearly indicated it wants all Focus Areas to give special consideration to environmental aspects and physical accessibility. He added that the purpose of today's presentations were to review the aspects of each focus area and for Council to provide feedback on whether staff have correctly captured Council's wishes in this regard.

Governance & Communication

Ms. Cathy Mellett, Acting Manager, Municipal Clerk's Office and Ms. Jennifer Church, Managing Director of External & Corporate Affairs presented the Governance and Communication Focus Area.

The conclusion of their presentation noted the following summary as the future direction for this area.

- Integrate and bring forward recommendations on re-alignment of Council Committees for decision by Council
- Develop a plan for consideration of Community Councils role/authority
- Implementation of any changes regarding Committees of Council
- District Boundary Review
- Community Council Review
- Develop Council Focus Area Communications Plan
- Implementation of Communications Strategy

At 10:13 a.m. Councillor Outhit entered the meeting.

At 10:17 a.m. Councillor Adams entered the meeting.

At 10:26 a.m. Councillor Hum entered the meeting.

Council members provided the following feedback in regard to the Governance & Communications Focus Area:

In response to a question by Councillor Blumenthal in regard to the process for changing the name of his district, Ms. Mellett indicated that she believed it could be considered as part of the District Boundary Review process. However, in reference to Councillor Blumenthal's concern that he had submitted this request to the Clerk's Office last November, Ms. Mellett advised that she would research this and get back to the Councillor.

At 10:31 a.m. Councillor Rankin entered the meeting.

- cautioned staff and council not to raise the bar too high as some priorities may have shift quickly, due to the current economic climate.
- would like to see a review of Peninsula Community Council happen sooner.
- a suggestion was put forward that staff follow up with Council members either in individual interviews or Committee of the Whole meetings to discuss specific issues such as District Boundary Review and the role and authority of Community Councils.
- staff also include appropriate stakeholders in their discussions
- it is always a challenge to get the 'good news' stories picked up by the media - hope staff will look at more ways around this problem.
- communication strategy is a two-way street - need to look at how the Municipality is engaging resident's opinions and if there is a component to support this.
- look forward to a discussion on Community Council - believe there are interesting models to consider.
- want to see a huge amount of public participation in regard to the District Boundary Review - last review, many people felt there was not much consultation, and decisions were forced on them.
- a question was put forward as to whether there is any action planned on the scorecard that Chamber of Commerce prepared
- it is time to get away from using the acronym, 'HRM' .
- it is important not to lose sight that Council previously identified Tax Reform as a priority.
- the District Boundary Review should be arms length from Council; should be carried out by an independent group and submitted to an independent body (i.e. Utility and Review Board).
- support a review of the Community Council process, and an increase in communications around Community Councils – few members of the public attend these meetings; there is little media reporting on the meetings; also, focus on the technology available to Community Councils to get their message out, and that what works for one district, may not work for another district (e.g. phone calls work better for some councillors, whereas e-mail may work better for others).
- suggestion that communications reduce using the acronym HRM where possible, i.e. external communications refer to 'Halifax', but for internal use, refer to the municipality as HRM.

- it was noted that many rural districts have only a monthly community newspaper, therefore staff needs to be cognizant of this when putting out advertisements of public meetings, etc.
- there should be one overall voters list.
- hope to see the report on the Committees of Council sooner than later, and that when it comes to Regional Council the report will have considered the cost/benefits of Council's committees.
- support maintaining the Municipality's name as 'HRM'.
- would like the communication strategy to include support for maintaining councillor external websites.

At 11:12 a.m. Council recessed.

At 11:23 a.m. Council reconvened.

Community Planning

Mr. Paul Dunphy, Director, Community Planning, provided the presentation on the Community Planning Focus Area. In his remarks he advised that there were two main goals that came out of the recent Council workshop, which are: 1. The ongoing implementation of the Regional Plan; and, 2. Implementation of HRM by Design. Mr. Dunphy noted the following direction Community Planning would be taking, as a result of the workshop consultation:

Short Term (1 year)

- Adopt HRMby Design for Downtown Halifax
- Continue to improve processing times for Planning Applications
- Complete 3 Community Visions (Spryfield, Penhorn/Woodlawn & Middle Sackville)
- Fiscal Health Analysis (Phase 2)

Longer Term (2 - 5 years)

- Implement Phase 2 HRMbyDesign (remainder of Regional Centre)
- Implement Community Vision Action Plans
- Heritage Master Plan
- Preserve traditional access points to water

At 11:34 a.m. Councillor Streach entered the meeting.

At this time the Mayor advised that the inclement weather was worsening, and he suggested that the public hearing scheduled for tonight's Regional Council meeting be rescheduled so that those involved will not have to come out this evening.

MOVED by Councillor Lund, seconded by Councillor McCluskey that the public hearing regarding Case 01157: Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law Amendments, Planning Districts 1 & 3 (St. Margarets Bay) on the February 3, 2009 Regional Council agenda be rescheduled. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the current weather conditions and whether Council should try and complete as much as possible of today's meeting agendas this afternoon, and then adjourn.

MOVED by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Streach that the Regional Council meeting convene immediately following Committee of the Whole.

After a brief consultation with Council members, Mayor Kelly advised that Council would now break for lunch and reconvene at 1:15 p.m. and this afternoon Council would decide how it wanted to proceed with the remaining Committee of the Whole items, and the Regional Council agenda. No vote was taken on the motion.

At 11:45 a.m. Council recessed.

At 1:09 p.m. Council reconvened, with Deputy Mayor Hendsbee in the Chair.

The Deputy Mayor advised that there was some interest expressed in adjourning the Committee of the Whole meeting at this time, and proceeding directly into Regional Council.

MOVED by Councillor Blumenthal, seconded by Councillor Adams that Committee of the Whole adjourn at this time, and Regional Council convene. MOTION DEFEATED.

At 1:18 p.m. Mayor Kelly entered the meeting and assumed the Chair.

Community Planning (cont.'d)

Council provided feedback on the Community Planning Focus Area, as follows:

- disappointed in how staff lead the Visioning process for Penhorn - the process has gone so far now there is little that the Municipality has control over.
- Peninsular Halifax seems to be the last in line for Visioning, and there are urgent issues that need to be addressed now, such as control over pocket infill that is not compatible with the neighbourhood, and commercial creep.
- in regard to social housing, need to see what other cities are doing in regard to addressing this and staff bring forward those options to Council
- support staff's efforts in streamlining the permitting process.
- look forward to seeing the CBCL report.

At 1:27 p.m. Councillor Sloane entered the meeting.

- only one reference was made to Transit; in future, every development should have Transit involved; as well, accessibility and environmental sustainability need to be considered in developments.
- not satisfied that the Community Visioning Process is giving good value for the effort being put into it; concerned about it and where it is leading.

Councillor Hum noted that Chebucto Community Council recently formed a public participation Committee on Birch Cove, and she questioned if there was a way to bring forward a process whereby a Councillor can initiate a project with the public, and have the support and expertise of staff, but that it not become a staff-driven project.

In response, Mr. Dunphy advised that this would be an issue of priority and resources. He suggested that if any Councillor has an issue of land use planning urgency, then they could forward a note to the Manager of Planning Services, and staff will follow up on it. He indicated that these matters would then be brought forward during their budget planning process to see if they could be accommodated.

- it is important to provide feedback to the committees involved in the visioning process, particularly when they are seeking assistance to help put their ideas forward.
- would like to see the Cost Servicing Study come forward soon.
- concur with the comment on support for the visioning committees; agree with proceeding with new committees as long as the existing committees are not forgotten, as more work needs to be done.
- it was noted that there are no options for housing downsizing for seniors in rural areas.
- have to start adopting strategies for affordable housing.
- schools on the Peninsula are not ready for an increase in population.
- concerned about the length of time it takes to process developments through Council and Community Council—too slow.

At this time Councillor Rankin suggested that Item 4 on the agenda—Regional Parking Strategy—be deleted, and that the remaining time be used to finish up the Focus Areas and the Regional Council agenda.

MOVED by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal that the Regional Parking Strategy agenda item be deferred, and that Council convene the Regional Council meeting immediately following Committee of the Whole. MOTION DEFEATED.

Infrastructure

Ms. Cathie O'Toole, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management presented the Focus Area on Infrastructure. She advised that main the goals which came out of Council's workshop on the Infrastructure Focus Area are: Community Facilities, Improved Streets, Roads and Sidewalk Conditions, Community Beautification, and Playground, Parkland and Garden improvements. Ms. O'Toole advised of the following direction that her department would be taking:

- Strategic Approach to closing the Infrastructure Gap, and to focus on Council's CF areas
 - Continue to update the Infrastructure List
 - Confirm the capital project evaluation matrix
- Continue to focus on recapitalization. The main recapitalization issue is getting more dollars in Streets and Roads

- Main strategic capability issues are the 4-Pad Arena, Central Library, and Cogswell Strategy
- Long Term: Continue to build on Asset Management

Council recessed at 2:45 p.m.

Council reconvened 2:53 p.m.

Councillor Mosher expressed concern about the inclement weather and suggested that Committee of the Whole adjourn at this time, and that Council convene the In Camera Council meeting and, immediately following that meeting, then convene the Regional Council meeting.

MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor Uteck that Committee of the Whole adjourn and the In Camera meeting convene, to be followed by the Regional Council meeting. MOTION DEFEATED.

Council provided the following feedback in regard to the Infrastructure Focus Area:

- if Council will be asked to support the Central Library during budget discussion, it is hoped that the previous requests of the smaller libraries will also be considered.
- hopeful that the Dutch Settlement Fire Station will come forward this year.
- concern was expressed that the bridge over Bayers Road was too narrow and not an 'accessible' bridge in winter due to winter weather conditions, and, in summer, due to flooding.
- would like to see better coordination between paving work and other infrastructure work.
- would like to see more money in the budget for road shoulder work that would be accommodating to both pedestrians and bicyclists.
- the seawall in Regatta Point and Sir Sandford Flemming Park is falling apart - hope that when the budget comes forward, this will be considered and a long term plan developed to deal with it.
- need to provide financial assistance to the groups that support HRM's recreation facilities.
- have to look at maintaining the parks and playgrounds that Council creates, otherwise it is lost money.
- the Business Improvement District Commissions are expanding - would like to see more funds for these.
- HRM needs either a policy or strategy for the number of private roads in the urban area.

At this time Mayor Kelly advised that there was a presentation item on the Regional Council agenda for this evening, but that with the concurrence of Council, he would like to deal with at this time. Council agreed to deal with the Regional Council agenda item *10.3.1 Federation of Canadian Municipalities Presentation to Staff Participants -Municipal Cooperation Program* at this time.

**Federation of Canadian Municipalities Presentation to Staff Participants -
Municipal Cooperation Program**

Ms. Geri Kaiser, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer addressed Council and introduced Mr. Stephen Boyce, a Councillor from the City of Moncton and a Federation of Canadian Municipalities Board Member.

Mr. Boyce, on behalf of the Federation of Municipalities was in attendance to present awards to Ms. Catherine Sanderson and to Mr. Bruce Fisher in recognition of their work on a volunteer program in Sir Lanka to help with the computerization and modernization of the finance departments at the local Sir Lankan governments of Galle and Kalmunai.

At 3:38 p.m. Council recessed.

At 3:46 p.m. Council reconvened.

MOVED by Councillor Adams, seconded by Councillor Streach that Committee of the Whole adjourn at this time, and the remaining items be deferred to next week, and that Council immediately convene the Regional Council meeting. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Transportation

This matter was deferred.

2. REGIONAL PARKING STRATEGY

This matter was deferred.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Julia Horncastle
Acting Municipal Clerk