

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

September 27, 2011

PRESENT:

Mayor Peter Kelly
Deputy Mayor Jim Smith
Councillors: David Hendsbee
Lorelei Nicoll
Gloria McCluskey
Darren Fisher
Bill Karsten
Jackie Barkhouse
Mary Wile
Jerry Blumenthal
Dawn Sloane
Sue Uteck
Jennifer Watts
Russell Walker
Debbie Hum
Stephen Adams
Brad Johns
Tim Outhit
Peter Lund

REGRETS:

Councillors: Steve Streach
Barry Dalrymple
Linda Mosher
Robert Harvey
Reg Rankin

STAFF:

Mr. Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Randolph Kinghorne, Acting Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Sherryll Murphy, Acting Municipal Clerk
Ms. Krista Vining, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kelly called the meeting to order at 10:19 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – August 2 and 9, 2011

MOVED by Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councilor Nicoll that the minutes of August 2, 2011 and August 9, 2011 be approved, as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. ROAD NETWORK FUNCTIONAL PLAN

(i) Transportation Standing Committee Report

(ii) Staff Report

The following was before Council:

- A report from the Transportation Standing Committee dated July 8, 2011
- A staff information report dated September 1, 2011
- A copy of the Roadway Network Functional Plan presentation
- A copy of the District 11 and District 14 Bayers Road Widening Review meeting notes of September 14, 2011
- Submissions from Kathy Smith, Jessica Metter, Joel Maxuel, David A. Clarke, Ryan Turner, Johanna Weststar, Katherine Kitching, Carol Anderson, Patricia Brennan-Alpert, Sarah Emsley, Kyle DeYoung, Gillian McGinnis, Margaret Campbell, Chris Poulain, Jennifer Berry, Mary Peters, David A. Grantham, Ross Soward, Elizabeth C. Lauder, George Hornmoen, Chris Hansen, Aaron Bates, Angela Ghiz, Helena Piccinini-Vallis, Sebastien Labelle, Marina Campbell, Mark Smith, Daniel Rainham, Jen Hill, Claire McNeil, Joel Maxuel, Ryan Turner, Toni White-Goodridge, Jen Powley, Lois McVannel, Judy Dudar, Jessica & Blake McDonald, Timothy Crowley, Mildred MacDonald, Fr. Robert Danato, Nathan Rogers and Heather Ternoway

Mr. Ken Reashor, Director, Transportation and Public Works, delivered a presentation to Council on the five functional plans under the Roadway Network Function Plan.

Councillor Adams entered the meeting at 10:25 p.m.

Mayor Kelly requested clarification on the status of completion for Mount Hope Avenue and Bayers Road. Mr. Reashor advised that the interchange and extension to Woodside has been completed but not the section from Baker Drive to Cow Bay, which is why it has not been checked off the list. The Herring Cove Road project is to widen to four lanes and remove the present lane reversal system that goes from the Rotary. The first phase of the project is identified at the end of the five year plan in terms of starting the design work. Staff had indicated to Council during earlier discussions that they could use the existing road to provide better service by converting it to three lanes. He noted that curb would not be removed and HRM would not lose what was already built in terms of four lanes.

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Sloane that Halifax Regional Council adopt, in principle, the Road Network Functional Plan to guide the strategic expansion of the road network in tandem with the set of other transportation functional plans resulting from the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy with the following direction:

- 1. The Bayers Road widening project be removed from the Road Network Functional Plan.**
- 2. Staff be directed to research all possible sustainable transportation options to facilitate the movement of people on and off the peninsula that includes enhancing public transit, commuter rail, ferry service, active transportation and modifications that would make more efficient use of the existing road network system.**

Councillor Watts noted that if Council decides to approve the motion, it will be sending a clear message that HRM needs to seriously address transportation issues in the community. As well, that Council wants to explore in depth, and with a priority, all sustainable transportation options. Councillor Watts advised that she will be submitting a petition this evening with 1,137 signatures from residents asking that the Bayers Road area not be considered in any future plans for transportation and road development in HRM. Through public input and submissions received, the majority of residents have expressed that they are against widening the road and feel that HRM can do something different. Council is trying to encourage people to live on the Peninsula and have livable, walkable, attractive communities. Expanding an already major arterial road on the Peninsula would not support Council's plan. Councillor Watts provided examples of how widening the road would divide neighborhoods and have an impact on pedestrian movement.

Councillor Barkhouse entered the meeting at 10:46 a.m.

On a point of order, Deputy Mayor Smith requested clarification on HRM's process and whether the motion is in order. Both the Acting Municipal Solicitor and Clerk advised that the rules of order apply to Committee of the Whole as they do to Regional Council and all Boards and Committees of Council. It was further noted that the Transportation Standing Committee referred this matter without a recommendation to a Committee of the Whole session for discussion. The Clerks Office provided a motion memorandum outlining Regional Planning staff's recommendation for Council's consideration.

A further question was raised and Council recessed at 10:53 a.m. to review Administrative Order One and the Transportation Standing Committee July 8, 2011 report.

Council reconvened at 11:01 a.m. and Mayor Kelly ruled that the motion before Council was in order.

Councillor Uteck expressed concern that no community consultation, specific to the Road Network Functional Plan, had been undertaken and that Council relied heavily on consultation undertaken as part of the HRM Regional Plan. She commented that the final report before Council should have been based on community consultation. The Urban and Suburban areas have exceeded their targets relative to residential development and the Centre Plan is the only area not meeting its targets. She questioned why Council would chose to widen more roads given this outcome.

Mr. Reashor clarified that significant public consultation was undertaken through:

- the Regional Plan
- the design plan for Bayers Road
- the Province held a series of meetings over a year ago in three different locations

As well, the area Councillors have held another public meeting in the Bayers Road area. Mr. Reashor reassured Council that when staff reaches the detail stage of the project, further consultation will be completed.

Councillor Walker raised concern with removing the Bayers Road project from the Road Network Functional Plan. He commented that traffic is heavy at all times of the day along Connaught Avenue, particularly travelling up the street in the morning and down the street in the evening. He suggested dividing the street into two parts, Connaught Avenue up and Connaught Avenue down. HRM would only need to purchase two more houses in order to alleviate most of the traffic going down Connaught Avenue. Councillor Walker requested a deferral to allow a review of the entire Road Network Functional Plan.

MOVED Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Nicoll that the Road Network Functional Plan be deferred pending the completion of the Five Year Review of the Regional Plan.

Discussion was held on the deferral.

Councillor Blumenthal noted there are outstanding questions and concerns that have to be addressed:

- pedestrian accessibility and safety if the road is widened (ie. residents in wheelchairs unable to access pedestrian bridge over the road)
- the placement of the residents in the three apartment buildings on the corner of Connaught Avenue if the apartment buildings are torn down; residents will not be able to afford the rent in another building
- the effect on the residents who live between Connaught Avenue and Oxford Street as the street is narrow

Councillor Hum requested that staff identify the implications on the remaining projects under the Road Network Functional Plan and other Functional Plans if this matter is deferred. As well, she asked that staff identify the implications should Council approve the removal of the Bayers Road project from the Functional Plan (ie. potential changes to Bedford West and design changes to Kearney Lake Road).

Mr. Reashor advised that implications depend on the length of time it will take to do the Regional Plan update. Staff is currently undertaking the Peninsula Transit Corridor Study and implications could be dependent on the recommendations that come from this study (ie. a recommendation to not have a Bayers Road Corridor would mean that any road improvements that have yet to be built may have to be reconsidered). The Regional Plan and the land use identified in the growth centres were predicated on the Road Network System. Something would have to replace the Road Network System if Council did not have it in place. The short term implications would not be too disruptive but if extended for a longer period of time, then Council may have to defer items such as modifications to the Fairview Overpass. If expansion were to rely on the Bayers Road Corridor, then removing it would create an issue. Councillor Hum asked whether staff could provide a supplementary report outlining these implications.

Mayor Kelly reminded Council that a Motion to defer shall be debated only with respect to the desirability of deferring or consideration of the motion.

Further discussion was held both in support of and opposed to the deferral. Concern was raised with respect to the lack of integration and how the Functional Plans will be implemented.

Councillors in support of the deferral indicated that there are outstanding issues that need to be considered:

- incorporating Woodlawn Avenue and Victoria Road into the Functional Plan
- suggestion was made to having staff provide a cost benefit analysis identifying the priorities, for example if active transportation were increased from 6 to 11% what would this do to reduce the number of vehicles on the road

Councillors against the deferral noted the importance of addressing the Road Network Functional Plan at this time.

Councillor Outhit requested a friendly amendment to the motion of deferral that in addition to reviewing the Regional Plan Strategy, Council wait until the results of the Transit Alternatives Study is completed. In doing so, Council will know whether some of the widening projects and new roads may be required. Presently, in two out of the three designated growth areas in the Regional Plan, very little is being done to accommodate the increased traffic. Mr. Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, clarified that subject to the motion of deferral being carried, staff would include that aspect. Staff will be coming back to Council next week to discuss the Regional Plan review. The plan at this point is to do the review in the next 12-18 months.

Mr. Labrecque further indicated that the Regional Plan is a 25 year Regional plan. Before Council considers the fate of Bayers Road, staff recommends Council affirm those Regional Planning objectives; intended to be done in the first year of the Regional Plan.

Further clarification was provided by staff:

- Upon deferral of the matter, no further work would be brought forward to request road widening relative to Bayers Road until completion of the Five Year Review of the Regional Plan; studies would be brought forward (ie. peninsula transit study) for Council's consideration but staff is not spending any funds or moving forward on an initiative if that is the direction of Council
- The Transportation Reserve motion before the Transportation Standing Committee would be removed until after the completion of the Regional Plan; if a resident came forward wanting to sell their house, staff would bring this request forward to Council for consideration
- Staff is more comfortable with a deferral than the removal of the Bayers Road project, as the removal imposes a constraint; the risk to the overall plan is affected and staff would want to report back on this more comprehensively

The motion before Council was put:

MOVED Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Nicoll that the Road Network Functional Plan be deferred pending the completion of the Five Year Review of the Regional Plan.

MOTION TO DEFER PUT AND PASSED.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Cathy J. Mellett
Municipal Clerk