



**HALIFAX PENINSULA PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES  
June 11, 2018**

PRESENT: Sarah MacDonald, Chair  
Grant Cooke  
Jason Cooke  
Ashley Morton  
Mathew Novak  
Margo Grant  
Councillor Lindell Smith  
Deputy Mayor Wayne Mason

REGRETS: Jeana MacLeod, Vice Chair  
Houssam Elokda

STAFF: Tyson Simms, Planner III, Planning and Development  
Sharon Chase, Legislative Assistant

*The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.*

*The agenda, reports, supporting documents, and information items circulated to the Halifax Peninsula Planning Advisory Committee are available online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca).*

*The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m., the Committee adjourned at 8:51 p.m.*

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. at St. Andrews United Church, 6036 Coburg Road, Halifax.

## **2. PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING**

**Case 20218:** Application by Dixel Developments to change the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy and Halifax Peninsula Land Use By-law to allow two towers, 30 and 16 floors, on a shared base, with a mix of retail uses, commercial uses and residential units, at the corner of Spring Garden Road and Robie Street.

The Chair invited Tyson Simms, Planner III, to present Case 20218. Simms reviewed the steps in the planning process and the role and opportunity for public engagement. He reminded the audience that no decisions will be made at this meeting and that he would provide his contact information if there were any further questions regarding the case.

Tyson Simms outlined the details of the development proposal which covers 1.2 acres and includes 250 residential units, commercial and office space, and underground parking. There are also three (3) registered heritage properties on Carleton Street, which will come to the Heritage Advisory Board under a separate proposal. This proposal falls under a Spring Garden Road Sub Area of the Peninsula Centre Plan Area. The specific considerations for this sub area were explained. The site context was reviewed: commercial, mixed residential surrounded by both medium and high density residential buildings. It is zoned C-2A, minor commercial zone, with an R2 zone on Carleton Street and is surrounded by R3 zoning. Height maps of the area were also shared, noting 35 feet maximum as of right. The Centre Plan guidelines and planning principles were explained.

Louis Lawen, Dixel Developments, introduced his company reviewing its history and highlighting other recent development projects. They shared the concept for the Spring Garden West development noting the importance of its central/gateway location. Lawen reviewed the timeline of this project from May 2105-now; highlighting their focus on public engagement throughout the process. They also noted some partnerships that have been formed as a result of this consultation and emphasized that this type of engagement would continue. Lawen noted that there would be a full restoration of the three (3) heritage homes and that the company had developed a heritage impact statement. They highlighted how this development addresses the key planning principles: transition, pedestrian orientation, human scale and context sensitive giving specific examples for each.

The Chair reviewed the ground rules for the public participation portion of the meeting and invited the audience to share their feedback.

**Gerry Post**, Dresden Row, provided written correspondence, dated June 11, 2018, endorsing the project which was distributed to Committee members.

**Elaine MacEachern**, Spring Garden Road, asked whether any existing buildings will be a part of this development.

**Margo Christie**, Spring Garden Road, noted that the area was not just getting these two buildings but potentially four large buildings. The existing high rises have large setbacks and green space around them giving a more residential feel. They felt the heights suggested were too high.

**Dawn F**, South Park Street, was excited by a creative development that has given consideration to live-ability, noting in particular the four-season public atrium and public spaces.

**L Toomey**, College Street, quoted from past Mayor's remarks concerning densifying the city while maintaining green space. They felt the two massive proposed projects need to be considered in their

entirety as the area will become very crowded. Summer Gardens was given as an example of a large building which does fit without overpowering the neighbourhood. People choose a neighbourhood for the lifestyle it provides.

**Alan Ferguson**, Saint Mary's University, noted the impact of developments on the building trades. They felt that Dexel is a responsible developer who creates high quality buildings.

**Chris P**, Dartmouth, stated that they had worked with Dexel on this project. They noted the extensive public consultation process and that the community was being represented and listened to. A vibrant community will be the outcome of density in the area.

**Adam Conter**, North End Halifax, noted that this is an opportunity to test how we can change development and take it to the next level. This is an opportunity to build density at a key intersection which can become a defining factor of our city. The development is creative and well thought out and the developer is willing to spend private capital for the public good.

**Wes Campbell**, Summer Gardens resident, loves their neighbourhood and fully supports the concept being presented and welcomes more people living in the area. They noted there are lots of public spaces in the neighbourhood and that development has to take place on what is remaining.

**Kristina McMillan**, Allan Street, asked if there is a need or demand for more office space. The heritage look and feel of the city is important and is what makes this city unique and attractive to young professionals and new residents.

**Alan Hayman**, Spring Garden Area, stated that the two large planned developments must be treated equally. These are impressive, massive and significant developments that should be supported. They align with the Centre plan documents. They noted two concerns, 30 storeys is out of character for the area and it will be very important to have a rodent control program in place during construction.

**Madge Skinner**, Victoria Road, commended the project and asked for clarification on what the restoration of the heritage buildings would entail. They did have concerns with the height of 30 storeys.

**Beverley Miller**, South Street, felt that outdated planning strategies were being used. They shared their experience living through two construction projects and detailed what is involved: length of time, traffic, blasting, noise. They noted that the Stantec Report pointed out that there was enough existing vacant land for 30 years of development.

**Tim Margolian**, South Park Street, would love to live in this development. They noted the obvious thought taken in the design for this scale of development and pointed out the high quality of this developer's projects. Margolian would like to see the two developments considered together.

**Ann Wachter**, Proctor Sacred Heart School, is delighted in the increase in density and feels the public spaces are a wonderful addition. They are happy to see affordable housing included. They are impressed by the openness and approach taken by the developer to be forward thinking.

**Dennis Philips**, Carleton Street, sees no reason or evidence for this project to be done. They feel it is not human scale or context sensitive; the podium is too large with no setback; it will create years of disruption; there will be a loss of sunlight and create a wind tunnel. As these issues would be imposed on residents they asked whether there would be compensation provided to individuals.

**Resident** of Allan Street, asked if this development is needed. The existing buildings are still usable and create a small community. Once they are gone they cannot be replaced.

**Alan Ruffman**, Ferguson's Cove, stated that the two developments need to be considered together. Shadow, wind and traffic studies should also reflect both projects done together. They felt that there is a

history of giving developers whatever they want and that this is an example of jumping the queue ahead of the Centre Plan. They highlighted the Robie Street corridor and its impact on development.

**Dennis**, Spring Garden Road, feels the architectural uniqueness of Halifax is being undermined and destroyed and would like to see more detail of the preservation of the heritage buildings.

**Ella Dodson**, north of Spring Garden Road, applauds the engagement that has been solicited but feels there are issues being missed: losing small businesses and the time it takes to develop these; historic culture is being impacted in neighbourhoods; and taking into consideration community values.

**Chris Annand**, Wellington Street, shared her experience living with noise and construction and suggested that amendments might be made to noise by-laws. There have been recent examples where developers have worked with residential neighbourhoods and set specific guidelines around noise which worked well and might be considered with this development.

**Graham Reid**, Armdale, feels that a 30-storey building is not context sensitive and that building design should be interesting from all angles and there is not much artistry found in Halifax developments. They noted that it is wasting resources when the existing buildings are still useful but being demolished.

The Chair called for any other speakers and as there were none closed the public feedback portion of the meeting.

Tyson Simms, Planner III, addressed some of the questions asked by members of the public.

- Staff have acknowledged that there is merit in looking at the proposals at the same time
- The site is 1.4 acres in size
- The 2017 draft Centre Plan noted 11.3 % office vacancies and encourages an office space cycle in the next 15 years
- Construction timelines can be stipulated in development agreements with construction mitigation plans put in place. Activity is then considered against what is submitted and must be followed.
- HRM has no program for affordable housing units at this time
- Wind and traffic studies have been submitted separately for each proposal and will be analyzed.
- Development agreements approved by local Community Councils are appealable.
- The heritage impact study has been submitted by the developer and is available to the public. It will be tabled along with the staff report to the Heritage Advisory Committee.
- The Carleton Street buildings will be retained but all other buildings would be removed and the lots consolidated.

Louis Lawen, Dixel Developments, explained that the heritage buildings would be restored to the original construction detail. It would include a full renewal of the buildings and site.

The public was thanked for their attendance and participation at both recent public meetings. Contact information for any further questions was shared.

### **3. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Sharon Chase  
Legislative Assistant