

**HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF FINAL PLAN BIRCH COVE DESIGN STUDY**

**7:00 p.m.
March 22, 2010
St. Peter's Anglican Church Hall**

Present

Colin Darlington, Chair
Manon Gilroy
Terry Drisdelle, WFDC
Wayne Ingalls
Maria Medioli

Patricia Portman
Patrick Leroy, United Gulf Developments
Navid Saberi, United Gulf Developments
Mike Horwich

Staff Present

Paul Morgan, HRM
Susan Caldwell, HRM
Scott LeBlanc, HRM
Alan Taylor, HRM

District 16 Councillor

Councillor Debbie Hum
Councillor Mary Wile
MLA Diane Whalen
Councillor Kelly Regan

Ekistics

Peter Klynstra
Rob LeBlanc
Ross Cantwell

Regrets:

Councillor Tim Outhit

SUMMARY MINUTES

The meeting commenced at approximately 7:00 p.m.

1. Introductions: Paul Morgan

Paul Morgan welcomed everyone, including Councillors Debbie Hum, Mary Wile, MLA's Kelly Regan and Diana Whalen, who were present. Paul took a moment and introduced the Steering Committee and advised everyone that Colin Durlington would MC the question and comment segment of the meeting.

2. Background: Where we have been, where we are and where we are going

Paul advised that:

- this study originated from one of the recommendations of a wider study known as the Land Use Plan for the Western Shore of Bedford Basin.
- a Steering Committee had been established by the Chebucto Community Council consisting of area residents, property owners and developers.
- the role of the Committee was to ensure the public had opportunity to express their options and give direction to the consultants concerning the final plan.

- comments could be submitted to either himself or Terry Drisdelle via email or mail by Tuesday, April 6th.
- the presentation shown this evening along with other information leading up to tonight will be available on the Municipality's web site.
- once the Steering Committee has received and heard all the comments, a recommendation will be made to Regional Council.

3. Presentation of Preferred Alternative: Rob Leblanc, Ekistics

Rob Leblanc advised that the report presentation this evening will be posted on the Municipality's web site. He said that the process began approximately one year ago with a workshop which provided the foundation for the process. During the course of the past year, three alternative plans were presented at a public meeting before reaching a "consensus plan". He informed everyone that the "consensus plan" would be presented tonight.

Rob explained during the course of his presentation that his task included working with the community to help define a community vision for the entire Birch Cove area which is economically feasible and socially and environmentally responsive.

Upon completion of Rob's presentation, Paul reiterated what the committee would be doing, where to find the report and how to make submissions.

4. Public Comments and Questions

Colin Durlington introduced himself and advised that he would be the MC for this segment of the meeting. He asked that everyone asking a question or commenting on the presentation to please state their name and position for the record.

Mr. Wayne Rogers, said that he was an area resident and said that, with the development planned for this area the traffic flow would increase on the Bedford Highway. He asked why is the city engaging to increasing the traffic flow along the highway and not making any provisions to upgrade the Bedford Highway?"

Peter Klynstra responded that the traffic study done for this project suggested that improvements now under way on the Bicentennial highway and the new interchange being constructed will actually reduce traffic on the Bedford Highway.

Irene Phinney, resident who lives close to Kearney Lake Road, expressed concern about the increase in traffic and said that the Bedford Highway is jammed in the winter. She said that she does not know how all this development can be proposed without addressing traffic issues on Kearney Lake Road including how container trucks will be able to get through the proposed round about.

Peter responded that the analysis predicted that traffic levels will not get any worse. He also said that, "the idea of a walkable village core so people will not have to get in their cars to shop should

also reduce traffic slightly.”

Julie Hollett said that she was a resident and expressed concern that nothing had been mentioned about improvement to the public transit. She said that, “area residents know that transit needs to improve and asked how new residents will get downtown?”

Paul Morgan responded that the Municipality is investing considerable amount of money on improving our transit, to improve its level of service. One way to improve transit is increasing the number of people leaving closer together which can justify a higher level of service.

Dan McAvoy, resident of Prospect road area, said that HRM is proposing to locate a tire facility in Goodwood, near a wetland, which a lot of residents depend on for drinking water and asked, “why a meeting had not been held about this?”

Councillor Hum advised that this issue is being addressed at Provincial level and is not associated with the proposal presented this evening but assumes there will be a meeting regarding this issue. She said that she would pass along his concerns to Councillor Rankin.

Brian Worrall, an area resident, stated that the view plane down Kearney Lake to the basin would be obstructed by the railway line. He also expressed concern regarding traffic levels and the safety of the proposed round about.

Rob Leblanc responded that the rail line is about the same elevation as the road and the view to the basin can be achieved. He said that the Province has constructed and proposed a number of roundabouts which are designed for truck traffic and safety.

Mr. Worrall asked, how people would be able to cross the railway line?

Rob advised that the existing underpass will be maintained for pedestrian access and that a new overpass is proposed for vehicular traffic and a multi-purpose trail.

Judy Nicholson, an area resident asked how much consideration was given to the homes on the hill?

Peter Klynstra responded that a lot of consideration was given. He said their plan located development so as to protect significant views.

Cheyl Walker, a resident, questioned the time frame for completion of walking trails.

Paul responded that no time line can be given as the plan has not been approved and therefore no money has been budgeted.

Councillor Hum stated that the concept of the multi use trail proposed under Bedford Basin Western Shore study was approved by Council but no funding has been allocated yet.

Libby Baxter, an area resident, said that she has an unobstructed view of the Basin. She expressed concern regarding how the taller 12 story buildings would affect her view and how the 8 storey building proposed on the Wedgewood Hotel site would affect residents views.

Rob responded that any proposed density is going to obstruct some private view planes but the plan tried to establish and protect important view sheds and minimize as much private intrusion as possible.

A person stated that the roundabout needs to be larger to minimize traffic flow problems along the Bedford Highway and that the high rise should be in the back instead of the front to allow a better view of the harbour.

Noel Sampson of Dixon Avenue stated that, when he purchased his property approximately 20 years ago, the potential for development was 35 feet in height. An 8 story building is now proposed which is going to be dead centre in front of his view according to this plan. He expressed concern about protecting commuter views instead of views of important to the community. He asked how many housing units are proposed?

Terry Drisdelle responded that 400 to 500 residential units are proposed within the study area.

Harold Doucette resident expressed concern about the increased traffic on Kearney Lake Road and asked if consideration is being given to installing traffic lights at Grosvenor Road intersection?

Alan Taylor, HRM Transportation Planner, responded that the Larry Uteck interchange should divert a significant amount of traffic away from Kearney Lake Road and that additional studies are being done to find ways to improve service levels. He said that signal lights at the Grosvenor Road intersection would be too dangerous.

Paul Sharnard, resident of Dakin Drive and chairman of the Dakin Drive Recreation Association stated he didn't see any green areas or children's play areas.

Rob Leblanc responded that the church may sell a proportion of it's land to the HRM to create a park near the intersection of Dakin Drive which would be the safest location for children. There is also plenty of open space proposed through out this study area, as well as a multi-purpose trail proposed.

Alison Petten an area resident asked what other options were explored for the development on the waterfront and specifically whether consideration was given to making this a public park. She also asked whether development proposed at Wentworth and Dunbrack was considered?

Councillor Hum responded that the lands referenced at Dunbrack and Wentworth could be developed under the R-2 zoning provisions with single family homes, tow unit duplex homes or a church but there currently is no development application. Any other development proposal would have to be approved by the Community Council.

Ross Cantwell addressed the second question concerning the development density along the waterfront and how it had been decided. He said that China Town property is privately owned and could be re-developed without provisions for public access. In the Western Shore Plan, a strong interest was expressed for public access around the Basin, including boardwalks. The trade off was to get access to the property and the best solution was a road and overpass for both vehicles and a walkway. This required enough density to cost share in the required expenditures.

Patrick LeRoy, a representative of United Gulf Developments, presented an alternative proposal for

the China Town site in which one taller tower would be developed instead of two 12 storey buildings. He said that this would enhance views of the basin and would increase the area available for public amenity on the site. A creative sensitive architectural design would further enhance the appeal of the project.

Al Munroe stated there are rumors that the Halterm facility will be shut down and the container traffic redirected to the Fairview Cove Terminal. He asked about the potential impact of truck traffic that this would have?

Councillor Hum responded that this proposal is being discussed by the Port Authority but she has not seen a proposal that she would support. The Chamber has proposed a truck route beside the railway line but nothing has been accepted.

Albert Stevenson asked how high the water will be 20 years from now?

Peter Klynstra responded that the elevations proposed on the Birch Cove plan have accounted for a sea level rise.

A resident asked about the impact of this development on elementary schools in this area.

Paul responded that, at this point, a detail assessment can not be determined as the timing of this development is not certain.

Debbie Hume responded that new developments proposals often don't consider school impacts. However, the School Board is undertaking a review and looking at various proposals in the area to determine future needs. For families moving into communities, schools are often a significant concern. She said an update will be sought from the School Board and that consideration of impact will be given before development takes place.

Tom Willdey asked if a sewage treatment plant is no longer required and, if so, where will the future sewage go?

Peter stated that the public recommended that the plant be removed from the plan and sewage would be directed to the Halifax treatment plant.

Councillor Hum that HRM is moving forward on a five year transit strategy and that transportation issues will be addressed in the future as developments occur. It is too early in this process to address these issues but more details will be provided in a supplementary report.

Glen Taylor stated that, once the development is approved by Council property values in the area will increase substantially and that one tower versus two will lessen the impact of the view plane of the Basin.

Ken Wattson stated that the overpass proposed to permit access to China Town will cost millions of dollars. He asked why the public should pay when the developers are benefitting.

Ross Cantwell responded that a cost sharing arrangement is envisioned because the developer and the public would benefit from the over pass.

Ken stated that the Bedford Basin is not the ideal location for a marina.

A resident stated that this area is better suited for a garden, fishing pond, play ground and similar projects for the benefit of area residents and that Bedford Highway should be made three lanes to improve traffic flow.

Peter Klynstra advised that a park is proposed for Hogans Point which will be connected to the development by a trail.

Anne MacMillan, an area resident, asked if there are any parkland standards which would be applied to this development? She asked if this development is being proposed to raise tax revenues and stated that the city's greatest assets are the harbour and it's history, neither of which have been discussed.

Paul Morgan advised that there are parkland standards in the Municipality's Regional Plan and Subdivision By-law. He said that this planning process was initiated because people did not like the development taking place in the area and wanted municipal policies updated and that is what we are trying to achieve. The Western Shore study had stated that residents wanted a development similar to Bishops Landing.

Alisha Thompson, resident of 373 Bedford Highway, said that she had not been consulted about this plan and does not support a commercial development.

Wayne Rogers, an area resident, asked how much HRM has invested in this plan to this point and how much tax payers money will be invested in this project if it goes ahead? He asked if this project could be stopped?

Paul responded that the study was cost shared between the Municipality and the Waterfront Development Corporation at a total cost of \$180,000. At this point, he could not say how much money the Municipality would invest. No decisions have been made by Council on whether to proceed at this point and that opinions can be submitted before a decision is made.

A question was asked regarding the height of Bishop's Landing.

Paul responded that the maximum height is seven stories.

A resident asked if the Bedford Highway was being realigned for the round about.

Colin responded that it was not.

A resident stated that the China Town property has never been developed to this point because of the limited access and questioned why public money should be invested in access when the

development would obstruct his view?

Brain Noel, an area resident, suggested that Kearney Lake Road be realigned over the Wedgewood Motel site.

Peter Klynstra responded that this proposal would cost tax payers money because HRM would have to purchase the Wedgewood property.

Paul Morgan stated that a traffic study of the Bedford Highway is currently being undertaken which will consider the impacts of the Birch Cove and Bedford Waterfront development proposals. This study is expected to be completed later this year.

A resident stated that the city should spend money on improving traffic and other amenities.

John Christy stated that roundabouts can be effective in slowing traffic but require an unobstructed view. In this proposal, the overpass will require a person to cross two lanes of traffic which is not ideal in rush hour traffic and will require traffic lights at some point. Traffic lights will cause the traffic to come to a halt, causing a back up of traffic in the roundabout and the whole reason for a roundabout is to keep traffic flowing.

Bill Lang resident asked if the city can expropriate?

Paul Morgan responded that the city can expropriate for municipal purposes such as building roads.

Bill Lang responded that the city should consider expropriating the lands for recreational areas and showcases, such as an aquarium.

5. Closing Comments

Paul reminded everyone to submit their comments by April 6th to either Terry or himself and that all comments will be attached to reports to Council unless otherwise advised.

Councillor Debbie Hum thanked everyone for attending and for their input and encouraged everyone to make a submission to address the good and bad points about the plan. She advised that the Birch Cove Plan will be on display at the Keshen Goodman Library.