

**HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING
PROJECT NO. _____ - Birch Cove Plan Options Report**

**7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, June 10, 2009
St. Peter's Anglican Church Hall**

STAFF IN

ATTENDANCE: Paul Morgan, Senior Planner, HRM Planning Services
Alana Hines, Planning Controller, HRM Planning Services

ALSO IN

ATTENDANCE: Councillor Debbie Hum, District 16
MLA - Kelly Regan

Consultants: Rob LeBlanc, Ekistics
Peter Klynstra, Ekistics
Ross Cantwell, Colliers International

PUBLIC IN

ATTENDANCE: Approx. 31 +/- people

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

1. Opening Remarks/Introductions/Purpose of Meeting

Paul Morgan, Senior Planner with HRM, welcomed everyone for coming and indicated that he is co-managing the Birch Cove Design Study. Mr. Morgan introduced his Co-Manager, Terry Drisdelle, Waterfront Development Corporation. The Municipality and the Waterfront Development Corporation are co-sponsoring the study and have retained a group of consultants, lead by Ekistics, who would be presenting three design alternatives for Birch Cove area. Mr. Morgan advised that the Steering Committee members would be meeting in a couple of weeks time and will be reviewing the options and provide direction to the consultant with the option (or combination of options) to proceed with for final design. Mr. Morgan advised that background information on this study can be found on the HRM website: www.halifax.ca (go to the drop down menu to Regional Planning) and he gave out his email address: morganp@halifax.ca. Mr. Morgan introduced Kelly Regan, MLA, Steering Committee Members (by raise of Hands).

2. Presentation by Ekistics - Three Options

Rob LeBlanc introduced himself from Ekistics. Mr. LeBlanc reviewed the presentation outline, vision objectives and plan goals. He further reviewed the Birch Cove vision and strategic action plan, followed by a review of the planning process, public workshop outcomes, planning principles, plan caveats, and planning purpose. Mr. LeBlanc also indicated that there will be another presentation in the Fall for the public to see more of the detailed final design.

The following three options were shown and described in detail:

Concept 1 - Village Roundabout

Concept 2 - Village Cluster

Concept 3 - Waterfront Overpass

Mr. LeBlanc reviewed the upcoming project schedule and indicated that a sheet was passed out and it would be appreciated if they could fill out the sheet and provide feedback and pass it back before leaving. Mr. LeBlanc then opened the floor for questions/comments.

3. Questions/Comments

Wendy MacDonald was happy to see the trail and would like to see the trail connection to Bedford and Birch Cove.

Rob LeBlanc said as part of the Western Shore Plan, it looked at providing a multi-use trail all the way through and this is something that is part of the overall planning process. Ekistics has been asked to look at a smaller piece and in all options it assumes that the trail will continue on through the rotunda (??) and all the way to Bedford Waterfront.

Walter Regan, Sackville Rivers Association had the following comments:

- Agreed with Concept # 2 to daylight the brook
- Agrees with the concept of green roofs
- Indicated he'd like to see the sewer piped to into the City
- Likes the Lead Centre
- Asked if there would be a HADD for all infilling (Mr. LeBlanc said he's not sure how this will work just yet, right now they are trying to get a handle on the overall plan, but it is something that can be discussed further later on).
- Would like to see a beach by Hogan's in all options (Mr. LeBlanc indicated that in all options the beach would be expanded).
- Wanted to know if there would be a sewer pump out at the Mariana (Mr. LeBlanc said probably not)
- Would like to see storm water treatment (Mr. LeBlanc said it would be part of the green standards that would be looked at).

Rob LeBlanc mentioned that options can have interchangeable aspects.

Someone asked what the difference is between a low/medium/high rise building. Mr. LeBlanc indicated that low rise is typically 1 to 3 stories, mid rise is considered 3 to 12 stories and a high rise would be anything over 12 stories.

Councillor Debbie Hum, District 16 indicated that she wants to see the parkland in Option 2 acquired from St. Peter's kept as an option in all three options as this area is well used by the local residents and it creates a unique corner even though it's currently owned by St. Peter's Anglican Church.

Vivian Davis is concerned about the light and the way the sun is going work with the high rises on the waterfront, has there been studies to make sure the nice sitting areas, for instance in the middle, won't be totally in shade. Mr. LeBlanc indicated that in the summer the sun will cast some shadows and as the sun moves around the site the shadows move. It is early morning that will have an impact. A solar analysis will be part of the final plan.

Bob MacDonald asked what the water feature in the park would be. Mr. LeBlanc indicated that there is a valley that runs through here and understands there is a storm water connection that extends across and there is a fair amount of water running, even in the summer, into this area and they believe they can create a pond without the need for a pond liner.

Sylvia Wicks stated she is against further development on the Bedford Highway. The traffic in the morning is absolutely horrendous and all the plans will add to the dreadful traffic. She doesn't agree to the sewage treatment plant. Further up Bedford Highway at Fisherman's Market built a high rise and it blocks peoples views of the water. The only advance she can see to all of this is there may be more people attending St. Peter's Church.

Peter Klynstra, Ekistics, indicated that a traffic study is part of this study, and Atlantic Road & Traffic is part of the consulting team. The traffic engineer has looked at the traffic for the area and the new interchange that is soon to be built at the end of Larry Uteck Drive will take enough traffic off the Bedford Highway so that even with the development that is planned, the traffic will remain no worse than it is today, going forward.

Paul Morgan indicated that some of the developments Ms. Wicks referred to were built under HRM's land use regulations, where if one complies with the regulations, a permit can be given, and Council or the Public don't get to express their concerns. As a consequence of this, the rules will be modified and future buildings such as those referred to will be subject to approval of the Community Council and there will be opportunities for input.

Paul Morgan said that although everyone thinks that the traffic is getting heavier on the Bedford Highway every year the traffic counts are staying constant.

Mary Ann McGraw wanted to go back to the issue of the rotunda, realizing the study area doesn't go quite that far, the concern is that it is going to take a fair bit of resources to get proper access to the rotunda to reinforce the bank in front of the rotunda if the boardwalk is to be extended that far and unless some of the private infrastructure money and government money also used for this, she doesn't believe they will ever see it happen. Not to criticize what has been done, but encourages the study area be extended to include this, because she is concerned that if it is not made part of this then it will fall threw the cracks.

Sylvia Morgan wanted to know if she would be correct in assuming that this is an "adult" community as there is plans for open space, she sees no plans playgrounds, etc. Mr. LeBlanc said no, they have yet to develop programs for what might happen and there is a lot of public space, showing paths, gardens and fountains, but it could very well be suitable for a playground or basketball court or something like that. Ross Cantwell, Colliers International, added that he's a big fan for public amenities for kids, regardless of how this proceeds, it needs to be considered whether or not to create play areas for children close to high traffic areas. Most of the development is along the Bedford Highway and he expects that there will be mostly retail in the area. Demographically there will

probably be more adults and it's less likely to see a family neighbourhood, it would be similar to Downtown Halifax.

Hubert Morgan said it was mentioned that the demands for the piling would make the site beyond the track an expensive site and hence the need for the high rise development, does that not also lead to adult only development, or higher non-family situations. Mr. Cantwell said ultimately the market will decide in terms of the type of development that will go here. He would agree that it is less likely to see families here. Mr. Morgan said he is thinking of a site in Vancouver and that site involved various types of housing and he thinks if you want mixed development then it has to be part of the planning parameters. If you leave it to developers to size up the market it won't happen.

Mr. LeBlanc said they will review this point and take it into consideration.

Someone wanted to know about the noise. Mr. LeBlanc said in terms of housing along rail lines there are all kinds of evidence of housing developing, there are noise standards for buildings that can be used, there is also climate control for buildings and the example he gave to the steering committee was that he was brought up in a town in PEI where he lived next door to the hum of a diesel engine from Marine Atlantic and when it got shut down it was hard to sleep at night because you got use to the hum of the diesel. A developer will not develop a property if they think that this would be an issue. It will be up to the market. Some people will say there is not way I'd live by a rail way, other people would.

Someone asked if the profile could be shown with respect to heights. Mr. LeBlanc showed some views and said he could create some other views to be shown at a later time.

Some discussion took place on the models. Mr. LeBlanc indicated that the models shown were massing models only, not meant to indicate architectural design, exact placement of buildings, etc.

Someone asked why two concepts showed a signalized intersection and one showed a rotary. He also asked which option in Mr. LeBlanc's opinion is the more efficient traffic model. Mr. LeBlanc said he thinks it will go to the traffic engineer and they are getting feedback from him now. The only concern is that the option (with the roundabout) will actually increase the amount of threw put for both Bedford and Kearney Lake. The problem is the intersection into the underground parking garage.

Hubert Morgan indicated that previously in Rockingham there was a bakery, a village centre, etc. which has died out and the amenities are gone. This concept is going to recreate a village of this nature. Could you say anything about assuming we can achieve here what was destroyed before. Mr. LeBlanc said this is not a new trend, strip malls do not add to the character of the neighbourhood, the trend is now going back to the ideal neighbourhood, village feel, and incorporating a modernized village centre.

Ann Mueck, United Gulf Developments, in Option 3 she can see how a pedestrian can get to the waterfront but she can't see how, as a pedestrian, you get to the boardwalk from Kearney Lake Road, would a pedestrian have to go through underground parking? Mr. LeBlanc said that there would be a pedestrian connection under the tracks that would take pedestrians to the waterfront and it would also take vehicles through to the waterfront (shared threw way).

Sylvia Wicks said she would like to see a Post Office in the development.

Another person said she would like to see a Nova Scotia Crystal on the Waterfront. Mr. LeBlanc said what Ekistics is looking at is in terms of broad scale plans, making sure the ground floor is preserved for uses like that, but as part of the Ekistics study they will not be recommending what types of individual businesses go in. What they will be looking for is to start and define what might happen in the public spaces around these buildings. What happens in public spaces then encourage different types of retail, so it could be one of the uses in a scenario like that.

Wendy Baltzer asked if there is any stimulus or thought in re-developing the former village of Rockingham. Councillor Debbie Hum, District 16 said that one of the reasons why the Bedford Basin Study was started was because of things like this, as developers and property owners can do according to the existing land use bylaws. Council wants a multi-use trail, protection of sight lines, and get back to having that village type of community and having community input. Through this process Councillor Hum indicated she recommended, through Regional Council, that they look at Rockingham for a Streetscape Study. There are challenges, but there is a process where Council is trying to address these issues, such as through this study. As for Rockingham, she hopes that it can be addressed in the future.

4. Closing Comments

Paul Morgan indicated that the design brief will be posted on the HRM website (www.halifax.ca) early next week. Would like to have all comments back by the end of the month. The Steering Committee will be meeting in early July to give direction to the consultants.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.