

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
DRAFT BIRCH COVE DESIGN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
PROJECT 01150 - Birch Cove Design Study (from Western Shore Bedford Basin Land Use Planning Study)

7:00 p.m.
November 9, 2009
St. Peter's Anglican Church Hall

Present

Colin Darlington, Chair
Manon Gilroy
Terry Drisdelle, WFDC
Maria Medioli
Mike Horwich

Wayne Ingalls
Patricia Portman
Anne Muecke, United Gulf Developments
Navid Saberi, Untied Gulf Developments

Staff Present

Paul Morgan, HRM
Susan Caldwell, HRM

District 16 Councillor

Councillor Debbie Hum

Ekistics

Ross Cantwell
Peter Klynstra
Rob LeBlanc

Guest

Donald Mason

SUMMARY MINUTES

The meeting called to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.

1. Opening Comments

Mr. Colin Darlington, opened the meeting by introducing himself as Chair of the Committee and asked the members to state their name and who they represent for the recording.

Councillor Debbie Hum introduced Donald Mason, as a guest and was welcomed to the meeting by the Committee Chair Colin.

It was stated that Navid Saberi would be the official representative for United Gulf Developments and Anne Muecke would be back up, as reflected in July 8th, minutes.

Agenda was approved as circulated.

Colin recommended that the minutes from the meetings be circulated much sooner. Debbie suggested that any comments on the minutes be presented during the next meeting and reflected in the report for Council. Councillor Hum advised that the report is to reflect what the members are for or against, along with any comments.

Mike and Colin agreed that where Patricia had not attended the July 8th, meeting that any comments she has would in fact be new business.

Councillor Hum motioned the minutes from July 8th be accepted and Wayne Ingalls seconded the motion. The Committee indicated that there are some editorials, which do not change the intent or the contents of the Minutes and that the editorials will be corrected before signing off.

2. Next Steps

Paul Morgan advised the Committee that before presenting the report to the public, the Committee needs to satisfy themselves that the report was ready go and addressed what we need to be addressed. He said that when people leave here tonight a certain amount of time will be needed to review the document and submit comments. Comments could be submitted electronically to Paul Morgan, Terry Drisdelle and Colin Darlington, who would then consolidate and distribute them to the Committee. The Committee could then decide whether or not it's time to go to the public or if a further committee meeting is needed.

Councillor Hum, as Councillor for citizen's of the area, expressed her concern and disappointment around the large gaps between meetings. She advised the Committee that she is not prepared to go out to the public at this time. She suggested the Committee allow ample time to review the plan and offer their input, and that the Committee meet again soon.

Maria suggested circulating members comments on the contents on the presentation and plan, which is to be the topic of discussion during the next meeting.

All comments are to be submitted electronically to Paul, Terry and Colin on November 19th, by 4:00 p.m. The consolidated comments are to be sent out electronically on the 25th day of November, which will be the topic of discussion at the next meeting on November 30th.

3. Presentation

Rob LeBlanc, Ekistics gave a presentation on where we've been, how we got to where we are today and summarize the three options.

Workshops presented ideas, which was put in a newsletter and distributed, which provided feedback; an on-line survey which provided feedback and is reflected in the Appendix in the report. The options were presented to Community back in June, which were reviewed during July's meeting and come up with a consensus plan.

Rob told the members that he met with Halifax Water and was told that at this point they can't see a sewage treatment as an option. There maybe the need in the future, which would be an in fill, so no development will not be permitted to go on that land, should it be required.

Committee expressed their concern over the increase in traffic on the Bedford Highway, especially during peak times in the am and pm. Councillor Hum asked that the traffic study be reviewed. This traffic concern is to go back to those concerned in the HRM traffic studies.

Rob distributed a fact sheet entitled “Birch Cove Steering Committee Comments from July 8th meeting” which summarized the issues addressed at the July 8th meeting as follows:

1. Transportation & Infrastructure:

- The overpass and combined multi-use trail shown in option 3 is preferred. With this road, it will be important to maximize onstreet parking for park and waterfront use. Explore whether a signalized intersection is needed.
- The roundabout option should be explored further for both traffic and pedestrian opportunities and constraints.
- Bus stops will be needed (south and northbound) near the intersection of Kearney Lake Road and Bedford Highway.
- Onstreet parking in the Village Core area on Bedford Highway seemed to be preferred (a few people didn't agree) if HRM traffic would agree. Parking only on the east side of the Bedford Highway was also discussed.
- Do not enter the parking garages for the Village Mixed Use development from the Kearney Lake Road intersection. Instead enter the garages from the north and/or south sides. This will ensure views of the harbour from Kearney Lake Road will not be impeded by the garage doors.
- Prefer to keep the existing underpass under the tracks as a pedestrian only entry to the waterfront.
- Daylighting the existing storm sewers is not practical due to health concerns of combined sewers in this area.
- Bike lanes and sidewalks should be provided on the Bedford Highway, as proposed by the Western Shore study, to move commuter traffic off the waterfront walkway.

2. Church Property

- Show the development option (not the park option in 2) to maximize the Church's property value.
- Explore the potential for transfer of development rights (TODR) to allow the area now used as a park to be preserved as park, if possible, while still maximizing the church's property value.

3. Wedgewood Motel

- Current height potential (35' above centre line of Bedford Highway) would block views for all property owners on the old Kearney Lake Road. Instead, limit height on the Kearney Lake road portion of the site to minimize intrusion into basin viewplane, and , shift density to eastern portion of the site to create potential for a residential mid-rise development. Try to minimize impact of private views for as few properties as possible with the towers configuration.
- Fill the hole on this site with underground parking for the tower.

- This site is not as well suited to retail. Instead, office and residential are the likely uses.
- Explore the option for the package STP on this property instead of the waterfront if it can work. Ideally a STP is not wanted by the community.

4. Strip between Rail and Bedford Highway

- The Village Centre must be mixed use with retail on the ground floor and residential or office above. The parkade for these buildings would be below the grade of the Bedford Highway and slightly above the rail line. Access to this parkade would be from the south or/and north
- The central plaza is to be developed by the developer and must remain flush with the road elevation so views of the harbour are maintained. The central plaza will be an urban public space for cafes, etc.
- On the Irving property, show the gas station on the plan but improve the layout to gel with the village character (look at the Kearney Lake Road gas station as a model). "Green" the gas station. Ensure the zone created will allow for flexible readaption of this site into a village core development.

5. Waterfront

- Show 2 towers (1 midrise, 1 highrise) instead of the 3 shown on the previous plans. Explore if 1 high rise tower would work without compromising the village character. Ensure space around the buildings is mostly public space accessible from the waterfront multi-use trail. Minimize at grade parking along the trail.
- Show the small marina and make provisions for a future ferry should it ever be warranted (recognizing that a shuttle ferry in the next 20 years is not probable).
- Show the STP option as a bubble on the plans to the north of the Chinatown site. This would be built on infill. If it ever is built, it must have a 'usable' green roof.

A member expressed concern with underground parking, as the area is in filled. Rob explained that this has been taken into consideration.

Patricia expressed concern that Council had previously agreed that no building along there would be higher than 35 feet. The concern was addressed stating the people who attended the workshop, wants a village plan, within walking distance, and the drawings were 12 to 13 stories high along the Waterfront. It was explained that the high rises would not be part of the village plan but along the waterfront.

Concern was expressed surrounding the Irving and Farmer Clem property. Ross met with the owners and they are prepared to work with the community to improve the quality of what they have to fit in with the theme, but changing of use is not an option. Suggestions was made to the owners of these properties on how to fit in with the new development.

Paul asked Ross how the new development on the Wedgewood property could be made economically viable. Ross responded that the tower could be made a little wider than is currently shown on the plan.

4. New Business

Communication

Members expressed concern about communications with the public needs to commence as soon as possible. Different options was discussed including bulletins to residents and businesses within the development area, media reports and releases. Councillor Hum suggested that allnovascotia.com be considered as a means of communicating with the public.

Councillor Hum informed Paul that the history of this project needs to be included in public communications. It was suggested that a 2 to 3 page summary be drafted for distribution to the general public. Rob agreed to prepare this document.

Paul said that he would try to have an HRM communications specialist attend the next committee meeting.

Colin requested that Paul begin drafting the report to Council with information pertaining to public communications.

Adjournment

Colin indicated that endorsed minutes should be summarized and the summary be submitted for approval.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:30 p.m.