

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Public Information Meeting
Case 20923

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

Thursday, August 10, 2017
7:00 p.m.
Halifax Forum (Maritime Hall)

STAFF IN

ATTENDANCE:

Paul Sampson, Planner, HRM Planning and Development
Iain Grant, Planning Technician, HRM Planning and Development
Cara McFarlane, Planning Controller, HRM Planning and
Development

ALSO IN

ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Lindell Smith, District 8
Applicants - Myles Baldwin, Shane Beehan, Jillian Demmons, Tyson
McDow

PUBLIC IN

ATTENDANCE:

Approximately 39

The meeting commenced at approximately 7:03 p.m.

1. Call to order, purpose of meeting – Paul Sampson

Mr. Sampson introduced himself as the Planner and Facilitator for the application, and the applicants.

Case 20923 - Application by Myles Baldwin, Shane Beehan and Jillian Demmons for a development agreement at 2720 Gottingen Street, Halifax to allow for a restaurant and pub (Narrows Public House).

The purpose of the Public Information Meeting (PIM) is to: a) identify the proposal site and highlight the proposal; b) give the applicant an opportunity to present the proposal; and c) receive public feedback and input regarding the proposal that will be used to prepare the staff report and go forward with this application. No decisions are made at this PIM.

2. Presentation of Proposal – Paul Sampson

Mr. Sampson presented the proposal for 2720 Gottingen Street, Halifax outlining: a) the site context with photos; b) the proposal and a site plan rendering; c) the designation (Medium Density Residential) under Section XI, Peninsula North Secondary Planning Strategy, and relevant planning policy (Policy 6.8 – Development Agreements for Heritage properties) under City-Wide Heritage Resources, of the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS); d) the zone [R-2 (General Residential) Zone within the Halifax Peninsula Land Use By-law (LUB)]; and, e) explained what is and the purpose of a Development Agreement.

Presentation of Proposal – Myles Baldwin, Shane Beehan, Jillian Demmons, and Tyson McDow - Applicants

The applicants presented the history (which allowed for Heritage designation) and background of the property at 2720 Gottingen Street, Halifax as well as their experiences, struggles and inspirations to arrive at this stage in their proposal of a Public House as a local gathering place for the community. An overview was given of details proposed for the Development Agreement and floor plans/patio design renderings were shown (will also be available on the applicants' website following the PIM). After consultation with the residents, the proposal includes a privacy fence and the hours of operation were reduced.

3. Questions and Comments

One resident asked who is eligible to appeal the decision of Council. **Mr. Sampson** - If Council refused the application, the applicant would be able to appeal; if approved by Council, any aggrieved person/group could appeal within the 14-day appeal period timeframe.

Mark, Bloomfield Street, likes the idea but wondered about parking and deliveries. **Mr. Baldwin** – Currently there is on-street, one-hour parking. There would be three parking spaces in back and enough space for deliveries there as well. The menu would include seasonal dishes; therefore, visits to the local farms would be made by the applicants which would reduce deliveries.

Brent Schmidt, St. Margarets Bay Road – Henry House is an interesting model to be inspired by but there is a contextual difference - surrounded by mixed uses as opposed to this one surrounded primarily by residential. In the presentation, a residential unit was mentioned but there isn't a plan for people to live there. If it was a residence and a bar, it would give the impression of being more appropriate to be next door to residential. It also raises a question about balance in the neighbourhood. **Mr. Baldwin** – The proposed residential unit in the home made sense from a development agreement stand-point. It was suggested to give the space a use as opposed to leaving it vacant. A residential unit on the top floor would be great as it would reduce the overall costs and property tax. The house lends itself well to what is being proposed. A balance was made in terms of occupancy, staffing, cost of the business and to sustain that home. The proposal is a positive change in terms of balancing economic development progression along with preservation and celebration of the history.

Elizabeth Pacey, Gottingen Street, opposes the proposal. She had a document received from the public session the applicants hosted at their house. It suggested that they are saving the house from demolition as the house is too old to use as for typical residential rental property. Her Victorian mansion at 2730 Gottingen Street is quite a bit older than the subject house. She plans to rent the rooms as residential units to support her livelihood, increase the residential component of the neighbourhood and feels this proposal would be extremely disruptive (contrary to what Policy 6.8 states) to her project. No one will want buy or rent a property next to a house which is basically a bar. Policy 6.8 also requires the integrity of the neighbourhood be maintained. She feels this would destabilize a perfectly good residential block and neighbourhood which is being considered as a conservation area. She is also hoping to build some residential Edwardian houses on the two properties that back the Fernbank property. Selling or renting these properties would also be affected by a bar next door. The applicants' document also mentions a lot of space to the north of their property but there is very little space there. The room in her house where she writes is closest to the proposed patio. The proposal should not have been advertised as a restaurant. She was not aware that the heritage designation the applicants sought would be used for the intentions of Policy 6.8. **Mr. Baldwin** – The proposal is for a respectfully run Public House which is very different than a bar. **Mr. Beehan** has been very forward and open with the policies and format. The restaurant portion will be a strong focus. **Mr. Baldwin** – The hours will be reduced

and there will be no amplified music on the patio or inside the house. In terms of the aesthetic/restoration of the property, a genuine effort was made resourcing the area and the home.

Shawn Selfridge, Bloomfield Street, knows Mr. Baldwin as a very respectful and generous neighbour. The intention behind the time and care to renovate this location is very ambitious for three young guys working in the service industry. They reached out to the community and have been transparent about their intentions. There is a tradition in Nova Scotia not to celebrate others' success. Airbnbs operate in the neighbourhood leading to strangers in the area nightly. This establishment will be operating under regulations.

Steve Hart, Fuller Terrace – What happens if the applicants want to make a change to the development agreement that was approved by Council? **Mr. Sampson** – The development agreement can include floor plans and specify the uses for each floor of the building. Depending on the wording of the agreement, a substantial amendment would have to go back through a public process similar to this one but if the change was deemed non-substantive in the agreement, Council could approve the amendment by resolution. **Mr. Hart** would love for this to work. He believes people are concerned about the noise factor and asked that the applicants work with their neighbours. He applauded them for saving the building. **Mr. Beehan** – The development will be bound by the development agreement. We have developed a set of principles and community respect is at the top of that list.

Mr. Selfridge – Could parameters be put in place to include specifics for noise decibels? **Mr. Sampson** will check into that. It was stated that there will be no amplified music. **Mr. Baldwin** – Decibel level should be fine as long as music/entertainment isn't amplified. These are things that can be discussed and written into the agreement.

Julian Carvery, Creighton Street is in full support of the proposal. Businesses have been developing in the area. Large events in the area have not been as much of a problem as one might suspect. He believes a lot of the fears of having these kinds of businesses in the neighbourhood are a bit exemplified.

Sandra Patterson, Gottingen Street, lives directly next door and feels the proposal will disrupt her life for many reasons: safety (people coming and going in front of her house), noise (no soundproofing in the walls of the home), bringing alcohol into the neighbourhood with a women's shelter a few doors down, increase in traffic (already congested) and will decrease her property value. **Mr. Baldwin** – In terms of the safety, the establishment will be respectfully run and there will be respect for the neighbours. The applicants are open to discussions as the process continues. The Airbnbs are a safety issue because there are different people coming and going on a daily basis. **Mr. Beehan** – This proposal is a cultural expression, a neighbourhood community focus place. **Mr. Baldwin** did talk to the Executive Director of the women's shelter as well as the employees. They did not express any concerns. He plans to follow up with the Director as the process continues.

Francis Morley, Gottingen Street, is opposed to the proposal and feels the applicants didn't carefully consider the impacts of the proposal on the immediate neighbourhood. He understood it to be a small-scale business and found out later that it will be a pub/bar. The front yard was changed to accommodate a patio. He is concerned about safety, privacy, noise and traffic (during hours that are normally quiet), drinking and gathering, parked cars in front of buildings along the street, deliveries of food and liquor, etc. during the day. There is also the shelter that houses women struggling with substance abuse. A drinking establishment so close to residential homes isn't appealing and is not welcomed. If not for the recently acquired Heritage designation, would the applicants be permitted a liquor license for the same property? **Mr. Morley** submitted a letter for the record. **Mr. Sampson** – The heritage registration process is separate from the planning

process. This public meeting is the first HRM has held. There will be three more meetings (two committee meetings and a public hearing at Halifax and West Community Council). **Mr. Baldwin** – In terms of the landscaping, it was a massive undertaking and not completed yet. A genuine effort was made to reach out to the residents including the creation of a website.

Beth Lachane, Bloomfield Street, loves the idea and supports it. She is impressed with the work done to the house.

Ken Malay, Black Street, supports the proposal 100 % and believes it will be a positive addition to the neighbourhood.

Shari-Lynn Hiltz, Bloomfield Street, supports the proposal. Mr. Baldwin has been a responsible neighbour in the past. Loves the thought of a place to go and socialize without the loud music.

Rosemary Porter, Tulip Street, Real Estate Agent, believes a development like this would help the neighbourhood and increase the property values. It sounds like a respectful kind of pub with reduced hours and no amplified music. In terms of the shelter, there were established bars in the area when the shelter opened. Speaking on behalf of the previous property owners, they were thrilled about the proposal and are in support of it.

Jeremy Arsenault, Black Street, is in favour of the proposal and feels better about this proposal as to the large scale developments that have been occurring. The capacity, hours and no amplified music are reasonable. It would be nice to have a place to meet his neighbours.

Justin Walsh, Black Street, is in support of this project.

John Wimberly, Maynard Street, expressed his empathy for the immediate neighbours, but some people in the community would welcome this project. It would create more diversity in the neighbourhood and is something he would like to see.

Steve Sherwood, Timberlea, is in favour of the proposal. It would be nice to eat and be able to hear a conversation at an establishment. This should not cause the traffic/vehicles to increase and will bring value to the area.

Lia Rinaldo, Northwood Terrace, fully supports the proposal. Over the past decade, the businesses have enriched the neighbourhood and have made it safer. Change is inevitable. The proposal is for a classic pub/public house.

Councillor Smith – Thanked the applicants for their presentation and the residents for coming to express their comments and concerns.

Bradford Jewers, Northwood Terrace – The community has become more cohesive. He would have grave problems with living next door to the establishment. Consideration has to be given to: the neighbours, the potential of 114 people at the establishment between 4:00 pm and 9:30 pm, if there will be a residential unit, if the commercial venture is sold and is still a registered heritage property (could be demolished within 2 years), what will be written into the development agreement to protect the proposed venture from becoming more elaborate than what it is being proposed at this time and the safety of our children in the area (there is a number of one way streets and the current traffic). **Mr. Sampson** – Demolition is related to a heritage property. If demolished, the development agreement would be deleted because the proposal is contingent on it being a heritage property. If the house remains, the development agreement runs with the land; therefore, future property owners could operate a pub.

Peter Lavell, Belle Aire Terrace, doesn't like the idea. This proposal cannot be compared to the

Airbnbs and B&Bs. This proposal has the potential for 135 people a night. Forty years ago the neighbourhood worked with City of Halifax staff to establish the R-2 Zone and have been working for the past 25 years to hold onto that Zone. The two immediate neighbours are against the proposal, but the applicants continue the process. It is wonderful that heritage is being preserved and that the applicants are passionate about the proposal. Clearly there are a lot of neighbours who like it. The concerns expressed tonight are because of worry for our neighbours. **Mr. Baldwin** - There is a lot of mixed sentiment in the room. This is a somewhat democratic society and this is a democratic process. It had to be approached genuinely and honestly. The applicants are passionate about the proposal, believe that what is being put forward is positive for the common good and will do the best to make it work for the people directly impacted by the proposal.

4. Closing Comments

Mr. Sampson thanked everyone for coming and expressing their comments.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.