

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Public Information Meeting
Case 20102

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

Thursday, January 12, 2017
7:00 p.m.
Captain William Spry Centre

**STAFF IN
ATTENDANCE:**

David Lane, Planner III, HRM Planning & Development
Iain Grant, Planning Technician, HRM Planning & Development
Jennifer Purdy, Planning Controller, HRM Planning & Development

**ALSO IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Councillor Stephen Adams
Tom Emodi, TEAL Architects + Planners Inc.
Ross Grant, TEAL Architects + Planners Inc.

**PUBLIC IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Approximately 50

The meeting commenced at 7:02 p.m.

Opening remarks/Introductions/Purpose of Meeting

David Lane, called the meeting to order, introduced himself as the Planner guiding this application through the process and explained that HRM has received an application by TEAL Architects, on behalf of FH Construction Ltd., to amend the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy to allow for an up to 10 storey mixed-use building at 383 Herring Cove Road by development agreement. He advised that Regional Council has requested that staff host a public information meeting for the purpose of receiving community feedback on the application.

Mr. Lane provided a slideshow presentation of the property explaining the site contains approximately 26,000 sq. ft. with 430 ft. of street frontage. The property is currently vacant and was previously used as a gas station. In the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy the site is designated Minor Commercial and zoned Minor Commercial (C-2A) in the Halifax Mainland Land Use By-law. The site is intended to service several neighborhoods with a range of retail, professional, office and personal service facilities, not unlike the existing uses seen today along this section of Herring Cove Road. The existing By-law would permit a maximum 4-storey (50 ft. height) multi-unit residential building. Mr. Lane further explained that the development agreement portion of this application is a contract between the Municipality and the property owner that enables uses not permitted in the zone and must be first enabled by Plan policy.

Mr. Lane explained that issues of the proposal attendees may wish to consider include the proposed use, overall design, building height, relationship to the street and neighboring properties.

Proposal Presentation, Ross Grant & Tom Emodi, TEAL Architects + Planners

Mr. Ross Grant provided a slideshow presentation explaining there was a former gas station on this site, the land is contaminated and needs to be remediated to ensure that the area is clean. He added that HRM has identified Spryfield as an Urban District Growth Centre in the 2014 Regional Plan and that the current density will create less traffic than the gas station. HRM has identified no issues with the current Herring Cove Road and Sussex Street intersection however, the Applicant is willing to make positive improvements to the intersection if requested.

Mr. Tom Emodi reviewed the overview of the proposal explaining that they are proposing 86 three-bedroom family units; 6 two-bedroom units and 48 one-bedroom units with 9,950 sq. ft. of commercial space for businesses in the area; 6,700 sq.ft. of indoor amenity space and 18,000 sq.ft. of outdoor amenity space. The proposal is for 10 storeys at the intersection and 4 storeys at the rear and side of the building. There will be a total of 74 parking spaces for residents, 8 visitor spaces and 27 commercial parking spaces. The property boundary setbacks are 15 ft. for the at-grade commercial uses and 40ft. for the above grade residential portion of the building.

Mr. Emodi explained that potential commercial space may include such uses as: daycare, boutique shops, coffee shop and professional office space. They would also like to include a portion of the residential rental units as affordable housing. He explained the Community Plan is over 30 years old and that the Regional Plan has identified this area as a Growth Center, adding that there currently is not a significant amount of commercial space in the area.

Mr. Emodi reviewed a slideshow presentation of the proposed design and a design comparison of what was previously submitted and included in the staff report at the September 6, 2016 Regional Council meeting.

Questions and Answers

NOTE: The following questions were raised by attendees during the Applicant's presentation; no names were submitted.

Q - When was the plan created?

A - 1987 and hasn't been formally reviewed since, however has been through many amendments.

Q – In order to go forward, will there have to be changes made to the Community Plan?

A – Yes, and will take several months which will then will go to Council for a Public Hearing where Council will make a final decision.

Q – Were there amendments already made that happened in September?

A – Staff submitted a recommendation to Regional Council in September where Council directed staff to look further into this proposal and to bring out to the community for public feedback.

Q – Is this application a one-time amendment and will not change overall community plan?

A – This application is site specific to the property of civic address 383 Herring Cove Road.

Ms. Joy Woolfrey explained that there was a long community Visioning process for Spryfield that took place which was adoption by Regional Council in 2008. Those documents say to work with the community and vision of the community to see how they want it to grow.

Mr. Lane explained that the Spryfield Vision document can be found on the Municipality's website at www.halifax.ca. The Herring Cove Road Urban Design Streetscape Study was to

address transportation issues and beautification efforts which went to Community Council as an information item and is currently being reviewed and implemented by staff as budget resources permit.

Q – Did Staff recommended against this proposal?

A- Yes, the staff initiation report had a negative recommendation on the previous 7-storey building submission by the Applicant. Staff identified issues included the height, massing and transitioning to adjacent properties. Council asked staff to work with the Applicant to achieve the goals identified in the staff report. Staff report can be found on the website for this application.

Q - Who is the Client?

A - FH Development Group is the Applicant

Q – What will the fees be for affordable housing?

A - Affordable housing policy is being worked on by staff within the Centre Plan Project. While HRM encourages 2 and more bedroom units to accommodate families, it does not have the legislative authority to require affordable housing.

Mr. David Sampson, Sussex Street explained that he was involved in the streetscape project and visioning process for the area, explaining that this site is proposed to be used as a garden; in the visioning process, the community asked to follow the streetscape study recommendations and the objective was for it to become a greenspace and was never meant for a big development. He explained that he is not against the development but has concern about the size. He explained that this proposal would encourage a transient rental population and addressed concern with more people coming and going and feels that this area should be built for families who will stay in the area. He also addressed concern with the efforts of the community trying to get trucks and speeding vehicles off the street and added there were intersection improvements made a few years ago but, these changes actually made the situation worse. He also addressed concern with the proposed development causing more traffic concerns and suggested that intersection concerns need to be fixed prior to adding more traffic on Sussex Street.

Jeff Hollett, Sussex Street asked if the developer would like to live beside such a tall building?

Mr. Emodi explained that these apartments will be similar rents as to what is already in the area and explained that he would live next to this and any development, if it was good design. For example, if there was protection of privacy, minimal shadowing and access to light.

Mr. Hollett addressed concern with the Developer not being credible and also addressed concern with traffic and asked if the community is against the application, will HRM still allow it to happen.

Mr. Emodi explained that there will be a traffic study completed.

Mr. Lane explained that the community's feedback will be collected and included in the staff recommendation report that will be submitted to Council; Council will make final decision.

Ms. Joy Woolfrey, Purcell's Cove, explained that this neighbourhood is her "centre" for shopping and leisure/recreation and explained that this area has been identified as Growth Centre since the first Regional Plan (2006). She asked if the Herring Cove Urban Design Study will be available on the website for viewing and added that while back in September the members of Regional Council directed staff to continue with this application, however, there are is now a new Council. Mrs. Woolfrey also referenced the Community Facilities Master Plan. Mr. Lane said he would update the project webpage to contain links to these studies, as well as, the Spryfield Vision.

Ms. Nancy Hayden, lives in the area is okay with the proposal, however, has concern with the height and noted there should be more three bedroom rentals and less one and two bedroom units. She suggested having a catwalk (above grade walkway) crossing over Herring Cove Road where the current crosswalk is as this is a safety concern for the children.

Ms. Julie Robertson, Sussex Street, explained that the building design is nice, however, doesn't think it is appropriate for the area. She addressed concern with her adjacent gardens being impacted and would like to see a smaller proposal there. She added that there is already daycare in the area and addressed concern with the term "affordable housing" and how it isn't necessarily affordable to all. She explained that she would like to see the area incorporated into a community park and also has concern with the safety of the children crossing the streets.

Mr. Jim Hoskins, 42-year resident explained that he is familiar with the contamination and noted that Spryfield historically had a reputation for crime, however this has improved and are trying to provide affordable living to the remaining area. He addressed concerns with the height of the proposal, as well as, fire protection for a 10-storey building and asked if HRM Fire can even service such a building in this area; the height of this building setting precedence for future applications of this size; stormwater runoff issues for the abutting properties; safety of the intersection and the school across the street; and road safety. Mr. Hoskins recommends a smaller proposal be brought forward.

Mr. Lane explained that this application has not yet reached the stage in the process where staff circulates to internal departments, however, the proposal will be reviewed by professional staff prior to any decisions are made. Recommendations from internal departments will be submitted with the staff report. He confirmed that HRM Fire has standards which have to be satisfied in order to for a proposal to receive construction/occupancy permits.

Mr. Emodi explained that you cannot get a building permit without a storm water management plan. Also cannot get a building permit if HRM Fire does not agree that they can protect the building.

Mr. John Cole, a 59-year resident addressed concern with contamination of the site and asked why it has been allowed to sit there this long.

Mr. Lane explained that HRM does not regulate groundwater, the Provincial Depart of the Environment has jurisdiction and a monitoring program has been and continues to be in place for the site.

Mr. Emodi explained that this site has been partially remediated to its current status and is presently only permitted to have commercial uses.

Mr. Cole asked what the current vacancy numbers are in the area and addressed concern of not being able to fill these rentals.

Mr. Lane explained that there are a number of policy criteria that staff use when evaluating a proposal, however, vacancy rates are not a consideration.

Mr. Emodi stated Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation data indicates vacancies are low and there is a need in creating more family unit rentals. A lot of people are moving back to Halifax now that there are better employment opportunities.

Mr. Cole expressed concern with a 10-story building and addressed traffic concerns.

Mr. Rick Dempsey addressed concern with taking away from the number of parking spaces available at the Shopping Centre. He also addressed concern with digging down and asked how

they are going to control the contamination from spreading to surrounding housing/properties. He asked what will happen to the MacIntosh Run when digging down on this property and asked if there is a buffer requirement from a water course that will protect the run.

Mr. Lane explained there is a minimum 20 metre watercourse buffer for any new developments. Mr. Emodi stated a Construction Management Plan is required to be submitted to the City as part of the building permitting process.

Mr. Terry Bobbitt, Spryfield Legion explained that he is proud of the community and it has all kinds of potential to make the community a whole lot better, and are currently working on continually making it better. He addressed concern with the safety of the children and the current traffic situation. He explained that the Community is growing, in the right direction but, parking is a concern.

Ms. Anne-Marie Curtis, Williams Lake Road area, explained that she enjoys the MacIntosh Run and addressed concern with traffic and the lack of parking in the area. She added that the speed is not acceptable and although this is a beautiful design, it is not appropriate for the area nor the vision she would like to see.

Mr. Kenneth Hiltz, Thornhill Drive, explained that the traffic study is typically only 49 meters from the site and doesn't have any traffic accidents incorporated in them. At this time Mr. Hiltz made reference to a Dartmouth Main Street/Tacoma Drive Traffic Study that he viewed online and addressed his concerns with that particular study being compared to the traffic concerns in this area. Mr. Lane explained that the website should not reference any other traffic study and explained that he would ensure the webpage references the correct information.

Mr. Hiltz addressed concern with the traffic in this area and agreed with the idea of an overhead walkway bridging Herring Cove Road, but suggested it to be universally accessible. He also addressed concern with no crosswalks being referenced on the site plans submitted by the Architect. He explained that there are currently no fire truck ladders in the area that would reach up 10-storeys. The vision scope for this area has proposed 3-4 storey buildings; not 10 storeys and explained that this proposal does not fit within that scope. He addressed concern with greenspace on the top of building and explained that it will not benefit the residents in the area. He is not in favor of proposal.

Mr. Emodi explained that traffic studies are site specific and should not be compared to any other previous studies. The lack of viewings of crosswalks on the designs have been an oversight and the crosswalks will remain and added that he believes there should be more.

Mr. Richard Astry addressed concern with City owned vehicles using the parking area for storage of their vehicles and asked if construction vehicles will also be using this space during construction.

Mr. Emodi explained that there will be a Construction Management Plan.

Mr. Astry asked for a list of investors in this development and asked if these are the original owners of the property.

Mr. Emodi explained that it is owed by a local company and that this property was purchased three years ago.

Mr. Astry addressed concern with wind damaging the proposed building and asked if a wind study will be completed.

Mr. Emodi explained that HRM does not require a wind study to be completed however, there is a possibility of having one completed.

Mr. Tom Levesque explained that the design is great and asked how many fewer units than what is proposed would be viable.

Mr. Emodi explained that it depends on what the demands are. The less amount of units, means the less amount of amenities that can be offered. He explained that he does not have these numbers with him, however, as the unit numbers come down, the less site remediation that can happen.

Mr. Levesque explained that there needs to be a mix of uses and residential units in the area and asked if they have current traffic numbers and what is the predicted percentage increase.

Mr. Lane explained that he does not have the numbers available however, he explained that HRM Traffic Engineers would assess this during their review.

Mr. Alan Snow explained that he owns multi-unit rental in the area and this proposal will create competition for him; which he welcomes. He explained that this is a signature development for Spryfield and added that it is a very attractive design. He noted that he thinks this is a positive development for area.

Mr. Amereault lives next door to proposal. The proposed 15 ft. setback from the property line concerns him, in addition to eliminating 30 ft. plus of trees that is currently between the two properties.

Mr. Emodi indicated the required landscape plan can provide a replacement buffer.

Mr. Amereault addressed concern with safety for children, high traffic/speed and parking availability for the café and other businesses. He explained that Mr. Emodi's presentation overlapping building elevations of the two proposals (7 and 10 storeys) was confusing, and suggests a wind study be completed.

Mr. Emodi explained that he would review the detailed drawings of the original proposal compared to the new proposal with Mr. Amereault following the meeting.

Ms. Mary Penny explained that the street is 60 feet wide. She expressed concern with traffic and traffic congestion during rush hour. There was an offer on the land for it to become a parking lot and it was declined and now it is being proposed for a 10-storey building. She is not supportive of this application and would like to see it only as a parking lot. She addressed concern of the contamination and the concern for safety of children related to vehicle traffic.

Ms. Joy Woolfrey feels that this is the wrong direction for Spryfield and that you cannot build community by one big building at a time and suggests that HRM complete more studies before approving applications of this size. She explained that she is also concerned with all of the public consultation that took place with the area becoming a park and questions why HRM did not purchase the land for park use. She feels that this land could be remediated to allow for a park.

Mr. Lane explained that when funds are available staff and Council make decisions on where to allocate funds and what to purchase during annual budgeting.

Closing Comments

Mr. Lane thanked everyone for coming and expressing their comments and posted his contact information for anyone who wished to submit additional comments.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.