

**HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Public Information Meeting
Case 21389 and 21795**

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

**Thursday, November 1, 2018
7:00 p.m.
St. Peter's Anglican Church Hall**

STAFF IN

ATTENDANCE: Scott Low, Planner, HRM Planning and Development
Alden Thurston, Planning Technician, HRM Planning and Development
Cara McFarlane, Planning Controller, HRM Planning and Development

ALSO IN

ATTENDANCE: Councillor Russell Walker, District 10
Councillor Richard Zurawski, District 12
Cesar Saleh, WM Fares Architects
Sonia, Jamil and Lyla Hage, Owners of Wedgewood's Little School

PUBLIC IN

ATTENDANCE: Approximately 20

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

1. Call to order, purpose of meeting – Scott Low

Mr. Low is the Planner and Facilitator for the application and introduced the area Councillors, the applicant and staff members.

Case 21389 - Application by WM Fares Architects, on behalf of Wedgewood's Little School Ltd., requesting a development agreement to permit a child care centre in 2 buildings at 55 Kearney Lake Road and 4 Grosvenor Road, Halifax with a proposed 76 children under care.

Case 21795 - Application by WM Fares Architects, on behalf of Wedgewood's Little School Ltd., requesting a development agreement to permit a child care centre at 56 Kearney Lake Road, Halifax with a proposed 46 children under care.

The purpose of the Public Information Meeting (PIM) is to:

- Identify the proposal site and highlight the proposal;
- Give the applicant an opportunity to present the proposal; and
- 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 the PIM or have been made up to this point.

2. Presentation of Proposal – Scott Low

Mr. Low provided a proposal fact sheet to the audience and gave a brief presentation of the proposal for the properties at 55 Kearney Lake and 4 Grosvenor Roads, Halifax (Case 21389 – District 10, Councillor Walker) and 56 Kearney Lake Road (Case 21795 – District 12, Councillor Zurawski) outlining the status of the application, the Applicant's request, site context of the subject lands, the relevant planning policies [2.4.2 (Residential Environments-Citywide), 3.20 / 3.20.1 (Implementation Policies)] within the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy and existing zone [R-1 (Single Family Dwelling) Zone] within the Halifax Mainland Land Use By-law (LUB). The daycare was created before the current by-law came into effect and the Halifax Charter protects the business on the property from future changes of the LUB; therefore, the use is permitted to continue. If approved, the development agreement would essentially supersede the zone allowing the number of children to increase but control the intensity.

Presentation of Proposal – Cesar Saleh, Professional Engineer, WM Fares Architects

Mr. Saleh presented the development agreement proposal for the subject properties to allow for child care centres at 55 Kearney Lake and 4 Grosvenor Roads (Case 21389) and 56 Kearney Lake Road (Case 21795) and outlined the site context and site plan (change to allow for vehicles to turn within the parking area but no external change, only internal, to the existing structures). The proposal is only for a change in the number of children which is also governed Provincially.

Presentation of Proposal – Sonia Hage, Owner (as well as Jamil Hage and Lyla Hage), Wedgewood's Little School

Ms. Hage presented their background and experience as licensed daycare owners/operators. The daycare at these locations have always been at capacity; therefore, the owners would like to expand the current programs to accommodate toddlers and before/after school students.

3. Questions and Comments

Irene Phinney, Wedgewood Avenue is fine with the number of children currently at the daycare but is concerned about increased numbers of children at 56 Kearney Lake Road and people parking (including employees) on both sides of the street (is very narrow) to pick up / drop off children as it is so close to the corner. Parents turn around in neighbours' driveways and there are no sidewalks on Wedgewood Avenue. Navigating snow removal / plows and emergency vehicles is very difficult. Wedgewood Avenue and Kearney Lake Road are very busy and dangerous and not safe to take children across that crosswalk. Entering onto Kearney Lake Road by vehicle is also a real challenge.

Jeff Lawley, Grosvenor Road respects the business owners but echoes the concerns about safety and the parent drivers who drop off / pick up their children at the daycare. Glad that the driveway is going to be redone and have the vehicles not backing up into the street. Appreciates wanting to expand the business but safety of the children and the residents of the neighbourhood come first. Kearney Lake Road is very dangerous in the winter and will become more and more congested as the top of Larry Uteck Boulevard becomes more developed. **Mr. Low** reiterated that the policy states that safety is the first consideration. Currently, there are 60 children using these three sites and there is no structured use of the street parking. In that respect, the development agreement gives the opportunity to bring some structure even with an increase in intensity of use. **Mr. Lawley** wondered if it would be possible to down-size the proposal and if so, would it come back to a public forum? **Mr. Low** –The development agreement is a negotiation between the Municipality and the property owner(s) and it would depend on the viability of the proposal. The numbers will depend on pedestrian and traffic safety. Another public information session would

be held if there was a material and / or significant change to the proposal.

Glenn Taylor, Wedgewood Avenue (lives across the street) was pleased to see in the presentation that pedestrian and traffic safety is the major concern but doesn't feel it is the employees' parking that is the concern but the pick ups and drop offs by parents. Mr. Taylor strongly recommends, due to the amount of traffic, that there only be parking on one side of Wedgewood Avenue at least up past their property because it is so narrow and to consider either moving the community mailboxes that are located there or designate parking spots for that purpose. The parking and traffic between Wedgewood Avenue, Wilson Boulevard and Kearney Lake Road have to be considered. A fire hydrant located on the street also limits parking. **Mr. Low** – Traffic issues are being looked at more than anything else.

Margaret Whalen, Donaldson Avenue is concerned about the noise level and age group from the increased number of children as well as the hours of operation. There is another daycare going in further up the Kearney Lake Road which will intensify the amount of daycare available. **Mr. Low** – The Province is in the process of changing the Daycare Act to address demographic issues and considers these centres as partners in early childhood education.

Al Jamieson, Wedgewood Avenue does not want to discourage the development as they have had excellent relationship with the past owner(s) and no issues with the current owner(s). The traffic on Kearney Lake Road is unbearably busy and very dangerous. The curvature at Wedgewood Avenue needs some attention as it creates a real problem due to difficulty seeing vehicles on both sides of the road (a signal light or turn arrow would be helpful). Many people use an alternate route to avoid the danger. The proposal is in keeping with the intent of the previous owner of the daycare but the increase in pick ups / drop offs will create problems for parking alongside of Wedgewood Avenue. Mr. Jamieson is also concerned with the duration of construction. What would the timeframe be? **Mr. Low** – At least about three or four months until going before Halifax and West Community Council and maybe six months before the development agreement would be signed / registered.

Sherry Walsh, Grosvenor Road echoes many of the previous concerns. Currently, high density creates problems with courtesies when people drop off / pick up children as some are parking illegally but it will be worse with the increase in capacity. The traffic study that was done used research from 2012 and 2016 which stated that there would be no increase in development in the area that would impact the density of the number of vehicles. The statistics on number of vehicles was taken in July when schools are out and parents are home and does not truly represent the actual traffic flow in the area. The already high-density streets are narrow and is worse during the winter. Safety of the children and getting in and out of that very small street are issues of concern. Ms. Walsh does not see it being feasible in this high traffic area.

Zack Swick, Grosvenor Road has experience entering in and out of the driveway and echoes previous concerns. There is currently too much traffic along Grosvenor Road and safety is an issue with people stopping and getting out of their cars. Painted lines within the driveway will not improve that. As a parent, registering a child at a daycare of that size would be a concern. The intensity of these uses in the neighbourhood need to be considered when looking at the amounts of children being dropped off / picked up. Mr. Swick did not appreciate some of the false statements (no employee on-street parking) that were part of the original application; therefore, statements for the current application are questionable. Is there any outcome to this process that would negotiate physical changes in the driveways or buildings? **Mr. Low** – The building code may ask for some minor revisions most importantly being egress points (from the existing buildings) and the Province requires a certain amount of natural light which may lead to more windows. A larger driveway could be an outcome.

Cameron Morrison, Donaldson Avenue has no objection to the daycare; however, echoes the

previous concerns. Coming down Kearney Lake Road from the lake is a raceway and has a blind hill. A set of lights at the corner of Wedgewood Avenue and Kearney Lake Road would help tremendously. This request has been suggested repeatedly at many different public meetings held in the area.

Vincente Bonilla, Donaldson Avenue does not have an issue with the daycare but is concerned for the safety of their children when people turn in their driveway. This will be worse with the increased capacity. There has to be a set of lights and sidewalks. Could a School Zone sign be erected on Kearney Lake Road for the safety of the daycare children? **Mr. Low** – Signs are administered through a separate agency and not determined by Council. It will be brought to attention along with the safety issues.

John Achenbach, Grosvenor Road thanked the owners for notifying residents in the area of their intentions. Mr. Achenbach's concerns are mostly with traffic. The ability to park on the side of the street in a safe manner during the winter is very difficult and the snow plow leaves half of the street inaccessible. **Mr. Low** – Curbside snow inventory is considered when looking at curbside parking. HRM is potentially looking at tentatively creating loading zones in front of daycares here as a pilot project.

Loretta Bennett, Grosvenor Road – Grosvenor Road was once a dead-end street and Kearney Lake Road a country road. Presently, crossing the road is very unsafe. The amount of traffic that goes down Kearney Lake Road cannot be overstated. The traffic study is not recent and doesn't reflect the true traffic flow. **Mr. Low** – HRM Staff also audits the study and if necessary, it will be revised.

4. Closing Comments – Scott Low

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

5. Adjournment

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