

Port Wallace Public Participation Committee
Meeting Notes: April 30, 2018, commencing at 7 p.m.
HEMDCC room, Alderney Gate

PRESENT:

Robert MacPherson
Claudia Currie
Adam Flick
Valerie Gray
Peter Connor
Catherine Lunn
Bertrand Losier

COUNCILLORS:

Councillor Tony Mancini, District 6

STAFF:

Andrew Bone, Planner III
Katherine Greene, Policy & Strategic Initiatives Program Manager
Genevieve Hachey, Planning Controller

REGRETS:

OTHERS:

Kevin Neatt, Clayton Developments Limited
Tom Swanson, P.Eng, Summit Rock Developments Limited
Brent Conrad, Conrad Brothers Ltd.
Kim Conrad, Conrad Brothers Ltd.

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Andrew Bone called the meeting to order at 6:34pm.

2. APPOINTMENT OF ACTING CHAIR

Robert MacPherson volunteered as chair for this meeting

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES OF FEBRUARY 5, 2018

Andrew Bone stated that there was a request to add additional detail to some of the minutes, they've decided that the best course of action is to attach all presentations to the meeting notes.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES OF APRIL 12, 2018

Catherine Lunn, Bertrand Losier and Peter Connor have abstained from this as they were not at the last meeting. Motion to approve the minutes put forward by Robert MacPherson, approved by Claudia and Adam.

5. ADDED ITEMS / APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Agenda approved as is.

6. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Andrew Bone asked if there were any nominations for Chair and Vice Chair, Bertrand Losier nominated Robert MacPherson, Robert accepted and everyone else agreed. Peter Connor nominated Catherine Lunn as Vice Chair.

Andrew Bone reminded the committee that if they are unable to attend a meeting to make sure to send your regrets, as it will not come off your record if you are excused.

7. REFRESHER (Kate Greene)

- a)** Kate introduced herself and explained her role with HRM. Kate spoke to the group about their roles and responsibilities, they encouraged the committee to read through the Terms of Reference for this committee to refresh on the mandate of the committee. (see terms of reference provided)
- b)** Kate presented a power point explaining what policy is within the HRM Planning group. (see copy of power point provided)

Peter Connor wanted to know if as members of this committee they are able to create policy wording.

Kate answered that yes, part of what they are here doing is getting guidance from the committee on what policies should be in place. Staff will write policy; the committee's feedback is integral to what will be put into the policy.

Peter Connor explained the difference between as-of-right development and a Development Agreement.

Peter acknowledged that in the terms of reference it states "all meetings of the committee shall be open to the public" and wanted to know what freedoms do the committee members have to communicate outside of this forum.

Kate explained that conversations by the committee should happen here as it becomes part of the public record, it will help to form policies and help staff to know what concerns there may be. It is beneficial if we all talk together as someone may have information that will answer questions being raised during conversation.

8. MASTER PLAN REVIEW – Policy (Andrew Bone)

Andrew Bone presented a power point that explained that Port Wallace was identified as an urban district growth centre, the Regional Plan identifies these growth centres and says there should be a mix of low, medium and high density residential, commercial, institutional and recreational uses capable of supporting a complete community. It talks about the transitions from existing residential to low, medium and high density and how this should occur, it also talks about pedestrian oriented design. There are several goals tonight that have to do with laying out high level policy framework. We are suggesting that the master plan be divided into two areas, that the Land Suitability Analysis be used as a guide for planning and we will identify residential uses as well as commercial and mixed use and identify parameters for the development of these areas. We will also discuss design goals that we will revisit in greater detail later. (please see power point provided for more detailed information).

Council has recommended on March 27, 2018, that the area be divided into two, one part being the Conrad quarry area and the other being the residential mixed use and supporting commercial areas are to be established. We will start with talking about the blue areas (residential) and talk about the Conrad lands at a later date.

Andrew asked if there were any comments or questions regarding this.

Peter Connor asked if policies for the red and blue areas will be different as they are very different uses.

Andrew explained that when they are talking about the residential area that if there are issues that arise that have to do with the commercial/industrial land we can discuss that.

Adam Flick commented that the road area across the highway will have more value as a commercial space.

Peter Connor pointed out that within the blue residential areas there are 3 separated areas that may require different policies.

Andrew Bone replied that there are vast differences between some of these lands and that will be taken into consideration during the building of policies. There will be broad policies where appropriate and detailed policies where needed.

Andrew Bone asked if everyone agreed that these lands should be looked at in two separate parts, the red commercial/industrial lands and the blue mixed use residential lands.

The committee agreed to this and it will be written into policy.

Andrew Bone explained that the Land Suitability Analysis identified a series of conditions on the site ranging from environmental to topographical to cultural and previous industrial uses. It identified a series of areas that are to be considered in the development of the area. (please see maps in presentation)

Andrew Bone asks that the Land Suitability Analysis be considered during the building of policy.

All members of the committee agreed, this will be written into policy.

Housing

Andrew Bone presented a power point with images of low, medium and high-density housing of various types to give an example of construction that may be considered for this project. These buildings included single units, semi-detached, townhouses, stacked townhouses/live work units, co-housing/cluster/pocket neighborhoods, assisted living/care homes, medium density residential and high density residential. (see power point for examples)

Adam Flick asked which streets in Bedford West had 34-foot-wide lots.

Kevin Neatt was not sure at this point but will look into it.

Andrew Bone reiterated that the concept drawing of what could be on the site is just that, a concept drawing. This is simply for reference and could look completely different in the end.

Bertrand Losier said he would like to see some one-story type buildings for people who may want to be downsizing but don't want to be in an apartment or condo. Single family, single level bungalow.

Peter Connor commented that in some instances you can put neighbors' driveways together to allow for more on street parking. They also said that stacked two level houses could be good for people looking to downsize, the street level unit could be one level without stairs.

Adam Bone advised that policy often enables that type of construction but that it is not often built because ownership of this type of building can be complicated, often it has to be a condominium, unlike a side by side duplex.

Adam Flick asked if there are high minimums in these communities. They also voiced their concern over the use of wood construction in some of the medium density projects, they find that wood construction often means lower value and you would often get renters as opposed to owners.

Andrew Bone answered that there are maximums but not minimums.

Valerie Gray wanted to know how much the Land Suitability Study comes into play for recommendations of height restrictions, building materials requirements and so on; also what the land can physically support.

Andrew Bone advised that typically there is not a lot of discussion about in-depth details like that, when it comes to what is suitable for a specific piece of land – if the land is not suitable that particular building will not be built on it, however engineering will help with some things

Peter Connor advised that the building code currently allows for a 6-story wood construction building and that in 2020 it will go higher, probably twice that if not more. They believe that their task should be to look at allowing multi-unit buildings and not making them road intensive, when you have more density you need less roads. They would also like to talk about lane housing and secondary suites.

Andrew Bone replied that secondary suites, lane housing, garden suites is something that aids in affordability for the renter and homeowner, it can also allow for parents to age in place and not have to move out of the community. In the Bedford West sub area 7 and 8 we built in some option to allow for secondary suites.

Peter Connor asked if there will be a density cap driven by the servicing capacity of waste water and run off water.

Andrew Bone replied that yes there would be a cap based on sewer and water capacities but we do not know what those numbers would be at this point.

Claudia Currie asked how these properties will be sold. Will there be a show home, will they be sold before they are built? How much can the layout of the project change after we decide what we want?

Andrew Bone said they sell in a variety of ways, they will have a show home and sales people.

Valerie Gray said they may have 10 or 15 plans to choose from for various types of buildings, residents can also build custom properties as long as they fit within certain parameters.

Andrew Bone advised that at the end of this process there should be a land use map that shows roughly where low, medium, high density and commercial will be placed. If necessary we may have percentages of what types of construction is allowed however we do like to be broader to allow a reasonable amount of flexibility, it will be brought to the public for input and after we collect the public input there may be changes we wish to make to the overall plan.

Robert MacPherson would like to let the committee know that they should be looking at this project like a blank slate at this time. They advised that Andrew is looking for feedback on what they walked them through, as far as different building types and designs; they are to make a decision about whether or not all these types can be considered. Not how many, or where they are going, simply to decide if all of these types are appropriate somewhere on the site.

Andrew Bone agreed that yes, in order to move on they would like comment on if any of these types of construction are not appropriate for the site. At this point we are talking very high level, it will go in to more detail further along the process.

Peter Connor said at this point they feel all these types of construction are appropriate. They would like more refinement on details later on.

Claudia Currie is concerned about surface water runoff into the lake and wants to know what is more water friendly, large apartment buildings or individual houses.

Andrew Bone advised that this will be discussed in greater detail later in the process and that generally speaking a smaller footprint will make for smaller water runoff issues so a multi unit building is better. With every construction project there is required to be water management of storm flows.

Adam Flick voiced concern over having less expensive housing options including more narrow lots and wood frame apartment buildings. Adam indicated he is not against affordable housing, and that it should be on a proportionate basis.

Valerie Gray has no objections to any of the building types presented tonight but would like to make sure they do not end up with an over abundance of one type of building. It is important that all types of people are able to find something in the area that they would like, a mix is important.

Bertrand Losier also believes that they have to keep building types and materials into the discussion in order to not have cheaper looking buildings. They are also concerned about runoff water.

It is agreed that all building types are acceptable for this site.

Commercial

The power point continued to show different commercial types, neighborhood commercial - two story commercial buildings, plazas. Larger commercial could be a strip mall, grocery store area with a series of other smaller commercial buildings (see power point for examples). It is very common to have mixed use where you will find residential above some of the commercial buildings.

Bertrand Losier asked if the water in this type of commercial area that has a large parking surface is going directly into storm drains.

Andrew Bone replied that all these sites have water runoff management in place and that if any water goes into the regular system that it goes through a management system beforehand. There is policy that requires storm water treatment before it is discharged into any water course.

Peter Connor added that the type of commercial area shown (area in Bedford west at Larry Uteck) is very different from "the Village at Dartmouth Crossing" and that we should be thinking of Dartmouth Crossing village as opposed to large parking lots.

Claudia Currie added that Village at Dartmouth Crossing encourages walking where as the Bedford at Larry Uteck commercial area does not.

Andrew Bone said that if you do mixed use with commercial on the bottom, perhaps office on the second floor and residential on the third floor and framed the streets more like a traditional downtown.

Claudia Currie and Valerie Gray said that you can look at Dartmouth Crossing and the Hydrostone area as great examples of what they should be looking at. People want to be in these areas.

Andrew Bone advised that we would want to enable that sort of construction but that it is challenging to get developers to want to build it. We would want to encourage a broad range of types of commercial and a range of forms.

Valerie Gray wanted to know if they can write policy that states where a gas bar can be placed.

Andrew Bone replied that gas bars are highly regulated by the province, they can have a say in what areas they would like to see a gas bar placed if one is to go in.

Andrew Bone asked that at a very high level would all these types of commercial properties be acceptable in this area.

Catherine Lunn said that a broad variety is needed to achieve a quality development.

Robert MacPherson advised that he is favorable of seeing neighborhood commercial and mixed use commercial and has a concern with the general commercial not having highway access and that it might be more appropriate in another location. If it must be included in this master plan they would want it to have a strong pedestrian component to it.

Valerie Gray and Claudia Currie agree with Roberts statement.

Andrew Bone went through some development parameters that may make sense.

Existent land uses should transition to new land uses with similar land uses.

Buffers should be maintained with existing neighborhoods where possible.

Higher intensity uses should not abut existing development.

Lower density residential may be able to go anywhere except where explicitly not permitted.

Commercial development should be on the collector road and higher intensity uses should be located on a transit route.

It may make sense to include these and other statements into policy.

Peter Connor wanted to know why buffers should be maintained with existing neighborhoods.

Andrew Bone explained why buffers are important between different types of developments (i.e. Low density residential to medium density residential) and between existing and new development.

Robert MacPherson asked the group to provide feedback on the statements made by Andrew Bone.

Valerie Gray wanted to know if the statement that there should be separation between commercial and lower density residential contradict the wanting of mixed-use residential/commercial? They believe that a mix seen at locations like the hydrostone area is something they would want and they don't want policy to discourage that.

Andrew Bone explained that mixed-use would be with a medium density residential area. There would be a transition from low to medium residential and commercial.

Peter Conner thinks there should be transition and buffers within the plan, so you don't have single houses next to semis and medium density housing.

Andrew Bone advised that further transition policy could be written in, more details could be put in at a later date and this could be a future discussion.

Peter Connor feels that when it comes time to name roads that they should have historic significance.

Andrew Bone advised that the HRM Civic Addressing department looks at that and that there is a by-law that encourages historic naming of streets. At this point we are looking high level policy decisions, at the end of this entire process we will have made decisions about good design. It will cover many things including: land use locations, pedestrian and bicycle oriented design, mix of housing types, well designed streetscapes, mass and placement of buildings, integration of established neighborhoods, architectural design, lot parameters, exterior materials, street furniture, lighting, landscaping, how certain elements are laid out on buildings, municipal services and engineering features. We will not talk about these things right now but there will be time and a chance to comment on all of these potential policies.

Claudia Currie asked if HRM had a light pollution policy.

Andrew Bone answered that no, there is no such policy, however for commercial sites there are usually lighting plans.

Andrew Bone said that this was the end of tonight's presentation, that the group has made statements about policies and that he is able to start writing "motherhood statements". Next meeting, we will discuss the Conrad quarry a bit, parks, active transportation and road networks. There will be an added item on the agenda outlying what we have already discussed and decided.

Claudia Currie asked when environmental and water will be discussed. They are not available May 31st.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

Questions/comments:

Kevin Neatt advised the group that 34-foot-wide lots are found on Capstone Cres, Three Admirals Drive, Lowther lane, Evandale Lane, Abbingdon Avenue. A few of these are not all 34-foot-wide lots, they have been mixed in with 38 and 40-foot-wide lots. On Serotina in Bedford west there is a 34-foot-wide property for sale for \$479 900.00. Lowther Lane properties that are 5 years old are going for \$425 00.00.

Tom Swanson wanted to advise the committee that there are parameters for storm water discharge at the Port Wallace sites, any development in the Port Wallace Secondary Plan area states that there be no increase in volume or decrease in quality of water that is discharged. Council has already accepted the suggestions of this report.

Councillor Mancini thanked everyone for taking part in this committee and understands how much of a big commitment it is. They are looking to walk away from this process with the knowledge that they have designed an award winning development, this cannot be done without the committee's participation.

Peter Connor asks if the developer can at some point in this process say, "what you are looking for is not feasible or we cannot do that kind of thing or we'd rather do something else". When will feedback from the developer be given?

Andrew Bone advised that the developer can provide public comment at the public information meetings, they can speak to staff and they are able to provide feedback at the end of these meetings.

Kim Conrad advised the committee that there is a drone video on his personal Facebook account that shows the Conrad lands.

10. FIELD TRIP

May 5th is too soon for most people, Andrew Bone advised that the plan is to start in Bedford West to understand various topics that have been discussed tonight and then to head over to the Port Wallace site. We will do a drive around of all the access points and perhaps walk to the Barry's Run area. Lunch would then be provided by HRM.

The group has decided that a date in June would be better and they will send their availability.

11. NEXT MEETINGS

Andrew Bone suggested four upcoming meeting, May 17, 31, June 14 and 28th.

Claudia will not be available May 31st. Valerie Gray will be out of the country from May 14th to June 1st and away for June 28th, they ask if she is able to attend the meeting through skype.

Andrew Bone said he would look into this and get back to her.

Robert MacPherson is not available May 31st.

Andrew Bone advised that the meeting appointments will be sent out and if members are not available for a specific night to advise us through the invite.

Peter Connor suggests that due to Claudia Currie's interest in the topics that deal with environmental issues that will be discussed during meeting 3 that it be scheduled for when she's available.

Andrew Bone said the committee could schedule that discussion for June 14th. It is unknown if we will have the information from Nova Scotia Environment by then.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Robert MacPherson adjourned the meeting at 9:00 pm.