

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Public Information Meeting
Case 22519

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

Monday, November 18, 2019
7:00 p.m.

Old School Community Gathering Place - Multipurpose Room - 7962 Nova Scotia Trunk 7
Musquodoboit Harbour, NS

STAFF IN

ATTENDANCE: Meaghan Maund, Planner II, HRM Planning
Shayne Vipond, Planner III, HRM Planning
Jared Cavers, Planning Technician, HRM Planning
Tara Couvrette, Planning Controller, HRM Planning

ALSO IN

ATTENDANCE: Councillor, David Hendsbee, District 02
Bianca & Pierre-Luc Sevigny – Applicant / Owners

PUBLIC IN

ATTENDANCE: Approximately 80

1. Call to order, purpose of meeting – Meaghan Maund

Ms. Maund introduced themselves as the Planner and Facilitator for the application. They also introduced; Councillor David Hendsbee, Tara Couvrette – Planning Controller, Jared Cavers - Planning Technician, Shayne Vipond – Planner, and Bianca & Pierre-Luc Sevigny – Applicants.

Case 22519 - Application by Bianca and Pierre-Luc Sevigny to enter into a development agreement for an intensive agricultural use to allow for an abattoir and additional animals at 1129 West Petpeswick Road, West Petpeswick.

Ms. Maund explained the purpose of the Public Information Meeting (PIM) is: a) to identify that HRM has received a proposal for the site; b) to provide information on the project; c) to explain the Planning Policies and the stages of the Planning Process; and d) an opportunity for Staff to receive public feedback regarding the proposal. No decisions are made at this PIM.

1a) Presentation of Proposal – Meaghan Maund

Ms. Maund provided a brief introduction to the application and then made a presentation to the public outlining the purpose of the meeting, status of the application and the applicant's request. Ms. Maund outlined the context of the subject lands and the relevant planning policies.

1b) Presentation by Bianca & Pierre-Luc Sevigny – Applicant

Mr. Sevigny explained the reason for the application. Mr. Sevigny explained who they are, why they would like to do this, what they are doing, where – showing site context, and when they would like to have this done and their expansion expectations. Bianca Sevigny addressed some common concerns/questions that had been brought to their attention.

2. Questions and Comments

Jude Major, Ostrea Lake Rd. – has a background in agriculture and education in farming and has been farming for 50 years. They are very happy the applicants are looking at building an abattoir because it is needed in the area. They have the following concerns because of their experience and background: the applicants do not have an education in agriculture and it is an art and very detailed science; and the piece of land is way too small for the number of animals. They are concerned about the number of animals and happy they are looking to grow gradually to those numbers, because they will probably run into some

serious health issues long before they get to the max numbers. You do not have enough land to properly rotate the animals. You haven't said anything about animal welfare, animal health, and if any animals regrained. You have presented your situation as intensive agriculture, but looking at the numbers it looks like confinement agriculture, which is not going to go well. How do you manage pasture rotations with the animals? There is no space, you can't mix certain types of animals together. You are talking about selling at the market, but nobody at the market is making any money. Concerned with marketing ideas. Most of the concerns are around animal welfare and the intensive nature of what they are trying to do on a fraction of land that would be needed for that many animals. **Mr. Sevigny** explained the ducks and chicken would be free range, the pigs will be rotated, the electric fence will be rotated every year, so it will not be in the same spot. **Ms. Sevigny** stated the pigs will be in the forest. **Ms. Major** – that's great, with the chicken being free range – how big of an area, how often are you rotating their pasture, are you mixing ducks with chickens, and what about the health issues? You don't have enough ground to raise any feed, so you will be buying everything, this will make your ultimate meat price high. Ms. Major offered to consult with them because of the experience and education they have in this area.

Cheryl Negus, West Petpeswick Rd.- what is stopping your free-range chickens and ducks from going out on the road and causing an accident? **Ms. Sevigny** stated there will be fences. **Ms. Negus** – can the number of animals in this proposal ever be changed or raised? **Ms. Maund** – stated once the development agreement is approved the numbers are set, it is a fixed number. For them to increase the numbers, they would have to come back for an amendment and that is a whole other process they would have to go through. **Ms. Negus** – in the event that the smell is not being taken care of from this, what action can be taken? **Ms. Maund** – it is still part of the review process on how the manure is going to be managed. **Ms. Negus** – agrees the land can't hold any more that what is being asked for, so they hope that if this goes through, there is not any way the amount of animals can be raised in the future. With the butcher shop, what is to stop them from bringing in other farms' and people's animals to be butchered? **Ms. Maund** – Someone with NS Dept. of Environment has to be on site for processing. They also license the facility. The facility is designed to meet their requirements. **Mr. Negus** – there is an inspector there when you butcher your animals, so you can't bring other peoples birds in. **Ms. Negus** – in two years they can get more if they want. **Ms. Maund** – explained they would have to go through the development agreement process again.

Alana Hogg, Westside Inlet Dr. – is in full support of this development. Believes the applicants are intelligent, caring, and ethical people. They visit the farm often and their kids are shown where meat comes from. They feel it is important for kids to understand that. They are also speaking for Bruce DeBaie who feels the same. They are their closest neighbours and they are in full support.

Hugh Kerr, West Petpeswick Rd. – has a proper site survey been done? Has there been any Geotech work there? Do you know what kind of soils you are dealing with? Your effluent and manure as it seeps into the ground, will it go straight to the bay? **Mr. Sevigny** stated they can't give an exact answer but the document they put up, the environmental farm plan, has those answers. **Mr. Kerr** – has concern about bedrock because the effluent will create a lot of phosphorus, nitrates, and carbon. Once that hits the bay it will create a seaweed problem because of the nutrients in the water. There has been a huge difference in our bay over the last couple of years in the number of crabs, the numbers are way down. That is not a good sign and they don't want to see an abundance of seaweed and effluent because government doesn't always get it right. You say you are going to get rid of your manure, you have a compost area of 10x10, and in the document you released, it stated your farming plan should have up to 7 months of capacity and they don't believe that 10x10 will be big enough. **Ms. Sevigny** stated yes, you are right we haven't come up with the composting plan yet because they need to work with different organizations to do that and they need more information first. **Mr. Kerr** – there is no septic plan, it just says a silt bed. Maybe for the abattoir, but there isn't any septic plan that says we are going to have this buffer zone. **Ms. Sevigny** they can provide that now because they got the septic plan after they submitted their application. They have the engineered septic plan and it can be provided to HRM to put on the website. They can also post it on their Facebook page. **Mr. Kerr** – have they ever considered going mixed use for a certain amount of time and seeing how things go, before going to build this and having large infrastructure right away? Is there enough infrastructure to maintain all those animals when you are alone? **Ms. Sevigny** stated they will be building up to those numbers and may never even reach them. It is going to take time for them to learn how to be farmers.

Colin Cameron, West Petpeswick Rd. – concerns about the number of animals. The rotation of your animals is going to be very important otherwise that soil is going to be stripped down to nothing. Concerns about potential erosion. How do you pick up chicken poop, how are you going to manage that? **Ms. Sevigny**

stated 70% of the poop is when they are in the chicken coop on their perch and they clean that. **Mr. Cameron** – if you let your pigs free range in the forest there is going to be nothing left, it is going to be stripped down to nothing. It is a small acreage, and if you maintain buffers to water zones, the area that is left for pasturing those animals is quite small, maybe an acre or two at most.

Paula Milsom, East Petpeswick Rd. – would like to commend them for their enthusiasm and wants to welcome them to the community. Their main concern is runoff. They're on the board at the Petpeswick Yacht Club, and for the past couple of years has noticed it is taking longer and longer for the tide to flush out the inlet. It used to take 1-2 days to happen and now it is taking 3-4 days. The kids spend as much time in the boat as they do out of the boat when they are learning, and the beaches have been closed due to water quality. This never happened 10-20 years ago, but it is happening now. Nature is not taking care of what it used to, they are concerned about the quality of water that the kids are playing in. **Ms. Sevigny** stated it is a priority for them as well. The environmental farm plan was not a requirement, but it is something that they wanted to do, and they will be following up with the Department of Agriculture once they get setup to make sure things are being done the right way.

Jude Major, Ostrea Lake Rd. – have you applied to the Chicken Farms of NS for your free-range permit? **Mr. Sevigny** – no, we know about it we just haven't done it yet. **Ms. Sevigny** – we definitely plan on getting it.

Pat Trainer, East Petpeswick Rd., – how often will you be sending the waste from your abattoir away? Every month or every other month? How does it get transported to where it is going? Also has concerns with more traffic on the roads. **Mr. Sevigny** – Every processing day they will be sending waste away. They will be collecting it in buckets and taking it off site. **Mr. Trainer** stated horses are eating and pooping machines, curious how they will manage their poop if they are going to be out in a big field free-range. **Ms. Sevigny** stated they are starting with 1-2 next year and maybe the year after if they can manage that, 3. **Mr. Trainer** stated 2 horse can do a hell of a lot to a field in a hurry.

Ernest Samson – East Petpeswick Rd. – if this is not done right we are going to have to live with the consequences.

Victoria Dunbrack, Musquodoboit Harbour – you are going to free-range over your setback boundaries, how can you do that? **Ms. Sevigny** – the setback is for the housing. **Ms. Dunbrack** – the setback isn't for the animals? They believe there should be setbacks for the animals too. Has concerns about the animals in proximity to the water, wells, and the creek. Need to start smaller and only have what you are allowed to have now. **Ms. Sevigny** explained the number of animals they are asking for. Also explained they put this all in one application because it is expensive, and the process takes a while to go through. **Ms. Maund** – explained why they were doing the development agreement process. **Mr. Sevigny** – stated they will be starting small and growing over time and may never reach the maximum numbers. **Ms. Dunbrack** stated then only have the abattoir and cut back on the number of animals. Thinks that is a great thing.

Bruce DeBaie, Westside Inlet Dr. – In full support of this project. Being a close neighbour, they trust these two and knows they will do the right thing and will learn from whomever will help them. For them it is a matter of character and trust as much as it is capability and intent. To have local product is great.

Pat Traynor – how are you going to contain your animals? **Ms. Sevigny** – the horses and pigs are all fenced with electric fencing and the chickens will have chicken wire. **Mr. Traynor** – if you lose your electricity it could be for a long time. Where are you getting your water? **Ms. Sevigny** – we have a drilled well and a generator if we lose power. We have the barn and the chicken coop to put the animals in if there is a storm.

Sharon Athens – If there is a heavy rainstorm where is the chicken poop going, into the water. **Mr. Sevigny** – it is quite far from the animals to the water, and that is why the setbacks are created.

Brian Kelly, Fall River – If you have 100 chicken and 100 ducks and they are pooping all over the yard and you are not picking, it up it is going to stink. When it rains it is going to wash downhill or wherever. You don't have enough land, and I think what you are allowed now is even more than you can handle there. Abattoirs attract rats. If there is any by-product the rats will get in and once they are there if there isn't enough to eat they are going to move all over the place looking for food. Too small of a property, too big of an idea. **Ms. Sevigny** – explained the processing process and with the amount there shouldn't be too much going into the septic field. All the internal parts will be taken off-site, so none will be staying on-site. They

could compost, it is an option, but they aren't because they don't want to attract more predators. **Mr. Kelly** still feels there will be an issue with rats. Feed alone will attract rats.

Richard Bell, Eastern Shore Cooperator, questions posted on his livestream video of the meeting – 1) What kind of testing is required for the groundwater to make sure nothing is getting into it? Is that part of the development agreement that you have a regular testing schedule and will it be public? 2) In the process of considering this, does HRM look at the potential impact to property values? **Ms. Maund** – we do not look at property values. At this point we have not looked at testing the ground water.

Pamela Whelan, West Petpeswick Rd. – concerns about the inlet deteriorating further. How do you connect with city composting for the kind of waste you will have? **Ms. Sevigny** – They haven't investigated that yet. It was when they were doing their environmental farm plan that said that they found out it is an option, but they haven't gone any farther with that. **Ms. Whelan** – is it under active consideration that HRM is taking it into account for how you are dealing with the waste? **Ms. Maund** – something to keep in mind as they move forward and will be looked into. **Ms. Whelan** – the speed at which you are looking to do this is very worrisome. You need to really slow down and figure out some steps in you process.

Jude Major, Ostrea Lake Rd. – meat birds love to die and that is a concern. What kind of horses, chickens etc., are you looking at getting. Volumes of manure are different depending on what you get. Health consideration for different types of horse are different. Commercial feed would have herbicide residue, pesticide residue, and a certain amount of genetic modification residue, so how are you looking at managing parasites within that amount of livestock on that small of an area? **Ms. Sevigny** – We haven't gone down that path yet, but we would need to figure it out, as well as look into getting a vet. **Ms. Major** offered to help with that.

Carol Young, West Petpeswick Rd. – agrees with everyone here, that tiny piece of land can't sustain anymore growth on it then what you have now. Do not support having a slaughter house on their road.

Resident – If you take the questions that have been raised here tonight back with you, research, and get the answers, the community will feel a lot better about it. **Ms. Sevigny** – that is their plan. They are in no rush. They will be working on all the concerns before looking at getting more animals.

Resident – Thinks they should stay within the guidelines of what they have now and see how they make out before asking for more, as well as the abattoir, because they feel the abattoir is really bad. With regards to the rock, the water will run right through the rocks in this area. Whatever rain comes down will wash it down through the rocks and it will make its way to the bay.

Dan Wellwood, West Petpeswick Rd. – the community has a history of negativity when it comes to anything new and they would hate to see it happen again here. The piece of land that they have is ideal in that the shape of the land is essentially a bowl that contains any immediate runoff. There are ways to test what happens with runoff that have been done on the inlet. They support what they are doing but would like to see the development plan be staged so that you get 25%, 50% to 100%. One would have to do with the water runoff. The other is for somebody to examine the farming practices that you have in 3 years' time. There are ways this process could be staged with checks and balances. Thinks if this is the cases there would be much less resistance.

Jude Major, Ostrea Lake Rd. – doesn't believe free range will be something that anyone needs to worry about.

James Shaw, West Petpeswick Rd. – the mixed-use zone – where is it divided? I will tell you, Young Dr. When they first moved there, there was a meeting to make West Petpeswick residential and they told them to leave it mixed-use.

Kelsey Gallant, Ostrea Lake Rd. – it is really beneficial to have 4H in your area. It's really good for kids to be around farms. Food that is raised and able to be bought locally is great for the community.

Blair Dyer, West Petpeswick Rd. – would you be upset if it only reached the level of a hobby farm? **Applicants** – No.

Resident – West Petpeswick Rd. – Wetland system works very well, rats I wouldn't worry about. Doesn't

think with that their plan will see more pests than they already have. Would like to somehow accommodate a staged approach. Believes from the comments of the neighbours that they would do that. It is really a bad idea to send these people home and say do it again in 2 year's time. Likes the idea and wants to see this go ahead somehow, but at the same time there are lots of valid concerns. Would like to see an abattoir in the area. Believes that the treatment is such that it will contain the concerns that people are raising here.

Victoria Dunbrack – thinks if there is some way that it could be stepped approach instead of having it all at once, it would be to their advantage. Concerned about amount of space vs number of animals they are trying to raise. Has no problem with the abattoir. Just thinking of the animals and what you are taking on.

Krista White, East Petpeswick – thinks what they are doing is great. Everybody is saying they would like to see a stepped system, however, regardless of whether that is part of the agreement that is what you are planning on doing anyway, correct? You guys are talking responsibility and planning on being responsible.
Applicants – Yes.

Councillor Hendsbee thanked everyone for coming out and explained they could come out to the Public Hearing to show support and address concerns.

3. Closing Comments

Ms. Maund thanked everyone for coming and expressing their comments.

4. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:55 p.m.