



**COMMUNITY DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 28, 2018
MINUTES**

PRESENT: Fred Morley, Chair
Gaynor Watson-Creed, Vice Chair
Deputy Mayor Wayne Mason
Councillor Shawn Cleary
William Book
Christopher Daly
Dale Godsoe
Jenna Khoury
Reg Manzer
Rima Thomeh

STAFF: Carl Purvis, Acting Manager Urban Design Planning & Development
Murphy, Legislative Assistant
Simon Ross-Siegel, Legislative Support

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

The agenda, reports, supporting documents, and information items circulated are online at halifax.ca.

The meeting was called to order at 11:35 p.m., and adjourned at 1:37 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 11:35 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 14, 2017 and January 24, 2018

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Wayne Mason, seconded by Councilor Shawn Cleary.

THAT the minutes of December 14, 2017 and January 24, 2018 be approved as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

The agenda was accepted as distributed

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE

5. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – NONE

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

7.1 Correspondence

The Chair noted correspondence before the Committee from Park to Park Community Association dated February 21, 2018. The Chair added it to the record and indicated no direct action was requested arising from the correspondence.

8. REPORTS

8.1 STAFF

8.1.1 Centre Plan Package A

The following was before the Community Design Advisory Committee:

- A staff memorandum dated February 20, 2018
- Draft of the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy: Package A
- User Guide: Draft Regional Centre Land Use By-law for Public Consultation (Package A)
- Appendix 1: Design Manual
- A staff presentation “Introduction to the Draft Regional Centre Planning Documents”, dated February 28, 2018
- A staff presentation “CDAC Feedback: Integration of Previously Provided Comments”, dated February 28, 2018

Carl Purvis, Acting Manager Urban Design Planning & Development, presented and answered questions before Committee regarding key elements of the Regional Centre Plan Package A. The Draft Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (Package A) implements new standards and guidelines for the development applications. The plan is divided into four chapters, each representing a clear conceptual goal. These are human scale design, complete communities, pedestrian priority, and strategic

growth. The plan also seeks to simplify the approval process in several ways. These include an end to single-purpose zoning and reducing site-specific plan amendments. Furthermore, Carl Purvis illustrated measures intended to increase housing affordability such as enabling unit type mixes, and eliminating vehicle parking requirements for multi-unit developments in centres and corridors. The plan also removes unnecessary complexity in the application process by removing angle control and bedroom related density counts.

Purvis detailed several elements of the plan in Package A including the following:

- New zoning designations particular to Package A (Centre, Corridor, Higher Order Residential, and Future Growth Node), and others particular to Package B;
- Permitted uses by zone, which enables developers to look up anticipated uses for a business and determine in what zones the potential business can operate;
- New transition rules for developments intended on zone borders;
- A new formula to consider density through the use of floor area ratios, and provides new policies regarding density bonusing;
- A modified site plan approval process for new developments;
- The new plan contemplates changes to the Design Review Committee and contemplates the creation of a Regional Centre Community Council;
- Illustrations and in particular an illustrated appendix to highlight and better inform developers of building requirements;
- New landscaping requirements and incentives, and extending existing requirements for green roofs outside of the downtown; and,
- Contemplates the integration of the Centre Plan objectives in alignment with other municipal strategies such as the Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP).

Committee Members asked several questions regarding the role of the Design Review Committee (DRC) both as it currently operates within the development approval process, and its role as contemplated in the Centre Plan. Carl Purvis explained and clarified to Committee that under the current system, Halifax's DRC is the only Design Review Committee in Canada that has decision making authority regarding planning applications. The Centre Plan changes the role of the DRC to providing its opinion to development officers, and in this regard the role of the DRC would become consistent with other Canadian municipalities.

Following the implementation of the Centre Plan, the DRC would provide optional advice regarding plans at the earlier stages of the process in order to facilitate plan changes in pre-approval, and following any formal application submission, the DRC would provide further review and recommendations at this time.

Carl Purvis and the Committee clarified in several questions and exchanges that the DRC is expected to provide the most value in the pre-approval process where it may identify issues which might hinder the planning approval during review and suggest voluntary changes. This role enables the DRC to exercise creativity and work with developers in suggesting means toward compliance. While the DRC's involvement at two stages in a given process does contemplate additional meetings, it is hoped that the process will enable the DRC to reorient planning discussion and increase the efficiency of application reviews generally.

Several Committee Members asked if staff could provide a benchmark on the average time required to process a development application. Carl Purvis answered that the timeline as required for the formal application based on the HRM Charter is sixty days. However, including pre-approval stages, the average development usually takes between four and five months for the total application process. Carl Purvis also expressed that there may be many new applications coming before Committee which have been awaiting the implementation of the Centre Plan, particularly in Dartmouth.

Several Committee Members asked questions about the how the appeals process may be changed following implementation of the Centre Plan, and in particular whether the number of appeals was likely to

increase or decrease. Carl Purvis stated that under the new system, staff expects that appeals are far more likely to be limited to binary issues. Currently, policy which allows for mixed use residential building requires Council to consider whether a development is “contextually compatible”. This question is very qualitative and easy for interested parties and decision makers to define differently. Staff hopes that the new system will benefit from the clarity of the new plan, application decisions will be more consistent, and this will lead to a decrease in appeals.

Many Committee Members expressed a desire to conduct a vigorous review beginning in March over the course of several Committee meetings to ensure the details and granularity of the current draft would continue to support and would not preclude important plans for future growth. Regarding certain issues pertinent to matters more fully addressed in Package B such as the relationship between the centre zones and major employment nodes and the connection to corridor zones, the Committee Members and Carl Purvis agreed that it would be best to consider these more fully following the release of the Package B draft. Furthermore, Committee Members expressed the desire to wait for the next regular or special meeting of the Committee to hear the CDAC Feedback presentation. Chair also suggested and Committee Members agreed to defer discussion regarding Carl Purvis’ memorandum to a follow-up meeting. Carl Purvis expressed that staff had no intention to change the present draft of the Centre Plan until May 4, 2018, so discussion regarding his memorandum was not urgent.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – March 28, 2018

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:37 p.m.

Simon Ross-Siegel
Legislative Support