



**COMMUNITY DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**April 25, 2018**  
**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Fred Morley, Chair  
Gaynor Watson-Creed, Vice Chair  
William Book  
Eric Burchill  
Christopher Daly  
Jenna Khoury  
Reg Manzer  
Deputy Mayor Wayne Mason  
Councillor Sam Austin  
Councillor Shawn Cleary  
Councillor Lindell Smith  
Councillor Richard Zurawski

**REGRETS:** Rima Thomeh  
Dale Godsoe

**STAFF:** Carl Purvis, Planning Applications Program Manager  
Jacob Ritchie, Urban Design Program Manager  
Liam MacSween, 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](http://halifax.ca).*

*The meeting was called to order at 11:38 p.m., and the Committee adjourned at 1:30 p.m.*

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 11:38 a.m.

## **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None**

There were no minutes before the Committee requiring approval.

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

There were no added items before the Committee requiring approval, however the Chair suggested the Committee may wish to hear should it have time, in addition to Item 8.1.1, a presentation by Jacob Ritchie involving a virtual tour of several buildings in the municipality to better contextualize areas of conflict and feedback relevant to the Centre Plan. Committee expressed general support for this addition.

## **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**

#### **7.1.1 Correspondence from EDM Planning Services**

Correspondence from EDM Planning Services dated April 23, 2018 was before Committee. Repeating comments made during the previous meeting, Chair Fred Morley stated that since similar correspondence is currently being received by the Committee and will continue to be received, he proposed that it was his intention to collect correspondence and deal with all similar such correspondence at a later time, rather than dealing with each on an ad hoc basis.

#### **7.1.2 Correspondence from Chad Kennedy**

Correspondence from Chad Kennedy of Kennedy's AutoPro dated April 18, 2018 was before Committee. Repeating comments made during the previous meeting, Chair Fred Morley stated that since similar correspondence is currently being received by the Committee and will continue to be received, he proposed that it was his intention to collect correspondence and deal with all similar such correspondence at a later time, rather than dealing with each on an ad hoc basis.

## **8. REPORTS**

### **8.1 STAFF**

#### **8.1.1 Presentation on Emerging Areas of Conflicting Feedback**

The following was before the Community Design Advisory Committee:

- A staff presentation "Conflicting Feedback Synopsis" dated April 25, 2018
- A staff presentation "Halifax/Dartmouth Tour" dated April 25, 2018

Carl Purvis, Planning Applications Program Manager, spoke before the Committee and guided members through a presentation focused on identifying matters for which staff has received conflicting feedback from stakeholders during its public engagement efforts. Topics included the value of height as a control

on building form, transition policies, affordable Housing strategies, street walls, permissive corridors, the site plan approval process, minimum parking requirements, land uses in higher residential zones, and midrise building requirements.

Regarding transition policies, some Committee Members inquired how staff might resolve disagreements over appropriate transitions for corridor zones. Staff answered that it was possible to resolve these on a corridor-by-corridor basis, but other strategies may be more appropriate such as adding texture and conditions to the zoning areas, by reducing setback requirements to a percentage of the lot, or by using one of the setback policies the municipality already uses at this time.

Several Committee Members discussed concerns and preferred policies regarding affordable housing strategies under the Centre Plan. During these discussions, staff clarified that affordable housing is currently framed under the plan as units available over a 15 year period at 40% of the average market rent in the regional centre, which is currently pegged to \$1250.00 per month. Jacob Ritchie, Urban Design Program Manager, added details regarding background discussions in 2016 and 2017 with service providers around housing insecure groups. The main result of these discussions was recognition that the key role of the Centre Plan would not likely be a total strategy to combat housing insecurity, but rather an plan to prevent the exacerbation of the problem through housing scarcity by ensuring housing stock become available to meet the needs of the growing population. It was staff's expectation and understanding that the municipality will use other programs and policies to more directly confront housing insecurity in conjunction with the Centre Plan. Staff stated that in this respect, the policy of distributing financial assistance to housing insecure groups is a successful strategy. Staff and several Committee Members further discussed the policy of pooling capital received from density bonusing programs, and some Members highlighted that larger consolidated capital pools are more effective at addressing housing insecurity problems than smaller divided pools. Regarding public benefit bonusing for public space and art, some Members expressed that unconnected and piecemeal works also ought to be avoided.

Several Members discussed the value of height rules as a measure operating in addition to Floor Area Ratio (FAR). Some Members suggested that outside of the corridors, the height measures in addition to FARs were unnecessary, cumbersome, and worth abandoning. Other Members suggested that there was likely to be a strong community expectation for the continued use of height measures, and should development become cumbersome, the appropriate strategy would be to either increase an area's height limit or FAR to spur development. Some Members suggested that because a building's height is more visually apparent than its FAR, without clear public demonstrations of different FAR ratios, members of the public will likely be inclined to continue to consider height as the crucial factor regarding the appropriateness of new developments. Some Members added that sun and permeability were ultimately more important than height itself, and that setback and streetwall restrictions would be more relevant to achieving these objectives. Some Members expressed that four stories should be the limit for any setbacks, and that buildings below this height should be permitted to build close to the property line without setback restrictions.

Several Members expressed support for inclusive land-use in established residential with the caveat that Members were frustrated with the municipality's lack of power to regulate closing hours, particularly for entertainment and food and liquor venues. Members expressed a desire to continue to discuss their concerns with the Province in this regard.

Regarding site-line approval, several Committee Members expressed the view that given the likelihood of future controversy, it would be beneficial to conduct extensive public engagement on this topic to limit the instances in which site-line approval disagreements become matters for consideration at public hearings.

Following discussion of the conflicting feedback to the Centre Plan, Jacob Ritchie, Urban Design Program Manager, guided Committee through a virtual tour involving a presentation of ten buildings and building designs in the municipality. Jacob Ritchie highlighted features in these buildings to visually describe how the policies in the Centre Plan will operate as currently drafted.

### **8.1.2 Discussion on Committee Comments – Package A**

This item was not addressed by the Committee at this time, and will be dealt with at a further meeting of the Committee.

### **8.1.3 Identification of Building Form Regulation on 3 sites with no height identified in the Draft Package**

The following was before the Community Design Advisory Committee:

- A staff memorandum regarding “Draft Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (RCSMPS) and Land Use By-Law (RCLUB) – Package A Designations” dated February 20, 2018

Jacob Ritchie, Urban Design Program Manager, spoke before the Committee regarding three sites identified by asterisks in Map 2, Draft Regional Centre SMPS Max GFAR, why these sites were selected and are identified in the map. The developers for these sites had had quite a bit of consultation with neighbourhood groups specifically about height prior to the release of the Centre Plan Draft Package A. Planning staff wanted to preserve the variability of height reflected in these sites which emerged as the results of these consultations results. Staff plans to submit a future memo to the Committee through the Chair which would include updated height maps which better identify the height variability on these sites.

### **8.1.4 Discussion of Consultation Process for Package B**

Jacob Ritchie, Urban Design Program Manager, spoke before the Committee about the consultation process for Package B. Staff’s intention at this time was to assess the Committee’s sense of the public’s interest in matters which will be addressed in Package B of the Centre Plan, as well as to identify matters for which the Committee may feel are also relevant to current considerations regarding Package A before it is being finalized.

Committee discussed the values versus consequences of waiting to discuss Package B following the finalizing of Package A. Many Members recognized and affirmed the value of speed, and expressed that delaying Package A would delay crucial development and challenge the confidence of stakeholders eager to work within the new by-law. Staff added that while there were recognized risks in splitting the Centre Plan into two packages, it was staff’s ultimate decision to do so partly in order to accommodate faster implementation. A Committee Member asked Councillors what their perspectives were regarding the perceived differences between Packages A and B. Some Councillors expressed that the Whereas Package A matters involved a major shift, Package B envisions more gentle growth where Regional Council’s role will be to steward growth rather than encourage major projects. Other Councillors added that while most matters for which they have been contacted by members of the public have involved concerns about Package B matters, they have also received feedback regarding Package A. In many of these matters, there was little value to delaying Package A since doing would leave concerned stakeholders working within the older planning framework, which was less than ideal. Some Members expressed that Package B matters are likely to be the subject of more disagreement and controversy since they related to use and development in established residential areas, such as urban agriculture. Following general discussion, Committee Members expressed general support for the view that it was valuable to continue to move decisively to finalize Package A separately, and to consider Package B in further detail following this.

## **9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – June 6, 2018**

Committee discussed a proposal to postpone the next ordinary meeting of the Committee, originally set for May 23, 2018, to June 6, 2018. This was proposed to give staff sufficient time to finish its engagement process, synchronize feedback received, and provide the synchronize feedback to Committee Members with sufficient time for Members to review these materials prior to the Committee’s meeting to discuss it. Members of Committee expressed their general support for this proposal.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Simon Ross-Siegel  
Legislative Support