



DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
February 9, 2022

PRESENT: Ted Farquhar, Chair
Jesse Hitchcock, Vice Chair
Sujana Devabhaktuni
Thomas Gribbin
Sarah MacDonald
Nancy Soliman
Cristina Verissimo

REGRETS: Alex Kawchuk
Nicholas Robins

STAFF: Erin MacIntyre, Director, Current Planning
Krista Vining, A/Deputy Clerk
Jill McGillicuddy, Legislative Assistant
Andrea Lovasi-Wood, Legislative Assistant

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 4:35 p.m., and adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

The Chair recognized the service of Jonathan Lampier and Elizabeth Barry to the Design Advisory Committee and acknowledged their resignations.

1.1 Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Jill McGillicuddy, Legislative Assistant called for nominations for the position of Chair of Design Advisory Committee.

MOVED by Sarah MacDonald, seconded by Tom Gribbin

THAT Ted Farquhar be nominated for the position of Chair of Design Advisory Committee.

Ted Farquhar accepted the nomination.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

McGillicuddy called three times for any further nominations.

MOVED by Jesse Hitchcock, seconded by Cristina Verissimo

That nominations cease.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

As there were no further nominations, Ted Farquhar was declared Chair of Design Advisory Committee.

The Chair then called for nominations for the position of Vice Chair of Design Advisory Committee.

MOVED by Tom Gribbin, seconded by Sarah MacDonald

THAT Jesse Hitchcock be nominated for the position of Vice Chair of Design Advisory Committee.

Jesse Hitchcock accepted the nomination.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The Chair called three times for any further nominations.

MOVED by Nancy Soliman, seconded by Cristina Verissimo

That nominations cease.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 10, 2021 and December 8, 2021

Thomas Gribbin and Nancy Soliman requested additions be made to the draft November 10, 2021 minutes as follows:

Insert the following information under Section 7.1 paragraph 4

Committee members outlined questions and concerns regarding the Committee's role in the site plan approval process. Some of the key issues raised were:

1. The Committee still does not have a tracker requested in the March 10th, 2021 meeting that tracks each recommendation of the committee and whether it was accepted or not by the applicant. Without this tracker it is impossible to determine whether the DAC has any benefit to the city of Halifax.
2. We are a team of highly qualified professionals and bring innovation and best practices to this volunteer role. Our wish was to help the city and our expectations of the role were higher. This is not a good use of citizen volunteer time.
3. The committee has no meaningful input into the site application process and recommendations are (almost) all ignored.
4. It feels like members are expected to rubber stamp everything. Meetings are a waste of time.
5. Terms of reference are too narrow - for example, the TOR have very little to do with the environment and sustainability.
6. Our terms of reference limit us to advising on 51 trivial design requirements. These DR's do not require a group of professionals to review. What benefit is there to the city? How is it worth the effort of gathering city staff, clerks and professionals together monthly to review?
7. Political theatre - HRM gets the benefit of saying it has a team of arm's length experts reviewing applications and recommending approval. However, the DAC's mandate is so narrow that it has no meaningful influence on any developments. The volunteers feel that the city may be leveraging their involvement to provide the impression of citizen involvement when none exists.
8. The committee members are not upset because they lack personal influence. It is a frustration that this is how the city chooses to do design review. There should be more meaningful input from citizens in some form.
9. HRM does not have an architecture dept and relies on DAC to provide advice but DAC recommendations are all ignored. What is the point?

Replace paragraph 6 in section 7.1:

Committee members had questions regarding the amendments to the Regional Centre Land Use Bylaw as it relates to the Committee's mandate and the usefulness of the DAC within the process of site plan approval.

MOVED by Thomas Gribbin, seconded by Cristina Verissimo

THAT the minutes of November 10, 2021 be approved as amended and the minutes of December 8, 2021 be approved as circulated.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Additions:

- Item 10.1 Design Advisory Committee Letter to Regional Council

MOVED by Jesse Hitchcock, seconded by Sarah MacDonald

THAT the agenda be approved as amended.

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

Correspondence was received and circulated from Ted Farquhar, Chair of Design Advisory Committee.

The Chair spoke to their correspondence regarding a request for a Design Advisory Committee (DAC) motion tracker. Chair read the correspondence to the Committee as follows:

Whereas the members of the DAC have found little evidence of the benefit of their work since its inaugural meeting on September 16, 2020. And whereas the committee believes that the DAC, city staff, HRM Council and citizens of Halifax should have information that allows them to measure the impact of the committee's work. And whereas the committee has developed a DAC Application Tracking Document which documents all motions and recommendations of the committee since inception and whether they have been accepted or not. The committee requests that the committee and Planning Staff work together to come to a solution that will allow the revised DAC Application Tracking Document be maintained and updated and included as an agenda item for discussion at every meeting of the DAC for the lifetime of the committee or until the DAC votes to end updates.

The Chair asked members to indicate whether they supported the draft motion contained in the correspondence, to which members noted unanimous support.

7.2 Petitions – None

7.3 Presentation – None

8. INFORMATION ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD – NONE

9. REPORTS

9.1 STAFF

9.1.1 Site Plan Approval Application Tracker – February 2022

Stephanie Norman, Principal Planner | Development Officer, Current Planning provided updates to the site plan approval application tracker and responded to questions of clarification from the Design Advisory Committee.

10. ADDED ITEMS

10.1 Design Advisory Committee Letter to Regional Council

MOVED by Sarah MacDonald, seconded by Sujana Devabhaktuni

Whereas the Design Advisory Committee members have routinely had concerns with the limited mandate of the Committee and whether the Committee has any ability to provide any meaningful benefit to the citizens of Halifax. And whereas the Committee's concerns have grown with the passing of Package B by HRM Regional Council on October 26, 2021 which further reduces the

mandate of the Design Advisory Committee. The Committee requests that the Chair of the Committee, Ted Farquhar, write a letter on its behalf to HRM Regional Council summarizing the concerns of the Committee members.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – March 9, 2022

The Chair expressed gratitude to planning staff, Erin MacIntyre, past and current DAC members for their service to Design Advisory Committee

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

Andrea Lovasi-Wood
Legislative Assistant