

**PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 1, 2017 - 7:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Heather Kelly, Chair
Councillor Susan MacLeod
Don Kimball
Julie Petrella
Mary White
Mike MacLeod, Planner

Regrets: Councillor Raymond Fiske
Anne Conrad
Paul Connolly
Robert Ross

1. CALL TO ORDER -

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA -

It was **MOVED** by **Susan MacLeod** and **SECONDED** by **Mary White** that the Agenda be approved as circulated.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - April 3, 2017

It was **MOVED** by **Julie Petrella** and **SECONDED** by **Don Kimball** that the Minutes of April 3, 2017 be approved as circulated.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM LAST MINUTES

Mike MacLeod advised that he is currently working on finding a new representative for District 3 to replace Melanie Newell.

5. DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT AMENDMENT – 290 MAIN STREET, LIVERPOOL

Mike MacLeod reviewed an application and discussion paper respecting a request for an amendment to an existing development agreement between the Region of Queens Municipality and Jihad and Salam Nasrallah for their property located at 290 Main Street in Liverpool. The applicants are seeking an amendment which would permit up to three (3) additional residential dwelling unit on the main floor of the existing building as part of the development agreement. The original agreement from 2008 and subsequent amendment in 2010 allows for three (3) dwelling units on the main floor. See attached. These units have been created. The applicants have an area of commercial space in their building (formerly the *Main Street Quik Way*) which is now vacant and the owners have been unable to rent. They would like to convert this area to additional residential dwelling units

Julie Petrella noted that the Main Street area has historically been identified as the commercial core area; however, more and more commercial development is locating across the bridge on Bristol Avenue. The commercial area has changed.

Mary White acknowledged this shift, but felt that the downtown was still very important and needs to be maintained.

Heather Kelly enquired as to the need to amend the existing agreement. Mike MacLeod advised that the original development agreement and subsequent amendment in 2010 specifically set out the number of residential units permitted on the ground floor. A change in the number of units is considered a substantial amendment and requires the same formal process as entering into the agreement itself.

Don Kimball enquired as to the potential next step(s) if the Committee chooses not to recommend the amendments. What is the plan for downtown? How much commercial space is reasonable for a community of our size? Mike MacLeod advised that the revitalization of the downtown is high on the list of strategic priorities for Council and will be a significant topic of discussion during the review of the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw. Heather Kelly noted that in the absence of a formal plan around residential housing, and data to support further reduction in available commercial space in the downtown area, she cannot support a motion to amend the development agreement. Julie Petrella enquired if this was fair and what were the applicants options if Council decided to maintain status quo. Susan MacLeod advised that if Council does not approve the amendments, the applicant has the ability to appeal the decision to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board.

Mary White noted that she does not feel that property owners should be easily able to convert vacant commercial space to residential if they are unable to rent right away. There are impacts to the community. Downtown commercial space needs to be marketed properly, looking at attracting more niche type of businesses, as bigger box type development occurring on the other side of bridge.

Julie Petrella enquired if there was any type of compensation / relief for owners of unoccupied commercial space. Mike MacLeod advised that there was not. Taxes are based on the assessed value of the property, occupied or not. Julie noted that vacant space does little to improve the attractiveness of an area.

Heather Kelly advised that she has been talking with business and property owners in the downtown area in an effort to determine what can be done to improve the area. She felt that we need to accurately define the boundary of the commercial core area. Perhaps it does not have to be as large as what is currently identified.

Julie Petrella enquired if there were any standards to which a property owner must maintain their vacant property. Mike MacLeod advised that the Municipality has the ability to require certain upkeep under the Dangerous or Unsightly Premises provision of the Municipal Government Act.

Susan MacLeod enquired if there was opportunity to postpone this application, pending completion of a downtown revitalization plan. Mike MacLeod advised that this would not be fair to the applicant, as the timeframe for completing a plan, whether part of the MPS/LUB review or not, would be fairly lengthy.

It was Moved by **Susan MacLeod** and Seconded by **Julie Petrella**

THAT the Council of the Region of Queens Municipality give notice of its intention to approve an administrative policy to amend the development agreement between the Region of Queens Municipality and Jihad and Salam Nasrallah, dated January 16th, 2008, which would permit three (3) additional residential dwelling unit on the main floor of the existing building as part of the development agreement;

AND THAT a public hearing be scheduled for June 27, 2017 at 8:45 a.m. in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 249 White Point Road in Liverpool, NS.

Don Kimball felt that in the absence of a definitive future plan for the downtown, voting on this issue is difficult and wondered if we should even be considering this amendment at this time.

Mary White noted that if this amendment is approved, it will be hard for Council to deny other similar applications that may come in the future.

Motion Defeated – 2 For and 3 Against

It was MOVED by **Mary White** and SECONDED by **Don Kimball**:

THAT the Council of the Region of Queens Municipality maintain status quo respecting the number of ground floor residential units in building located at 290 Main Street in Liverpool.

Motion Carried - 3 For and 2 Against

6. MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY AND LAND USE BYLAW REVIEW

Given the time and the number of members absent, the Committee decided to continue discussion / review of the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw at the next meeting in June.

7. OTHER

N / A

8. NEXT MEETING -

The next meeting is scheduled for June 5, 2017.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Date