

**PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
APRIL 8, 2015 - 7:00 P.M.**

**MINUTES**

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**Present:** Councillor Susan MacLeod, Chair  
Councillor Brian Fralic  
Councillor Peter Waterman  
Don Kimball  
Heather Kelly  
John Winters  
Richard Smith  
Robert Ross  
Mike MacLeod, Planner

**Regrets:** Jessica Van Dyne Evans

**1. CALL TO ORDER -**

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

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA –**

Additions:

- 6.1 Old Bridge Street
- 6.2 Liverpool Waterfront (C4) Zone Amendments – Council Discussion

It was **MOVED** by **John Winters** and **SECONDED** by **Brian Fralic** that the Agenda be approved as amended.

**Motion Carried Unanimously.**

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - March 11, 2015**

It was **MOVED** by **Robert Ross** and **SECONDED** by **Richard Smith** that the Minutes of March 11, 2015 be approved as circulated.

**Motion Carried Unanimously.**

**4. DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT – 91 UNION STREET -**

Mike MacLeod reviewed an application and discussion paper respecting an expansion to the existing funeral home located at 91 Union Street in Liverpool. The property owners wish to put a 16 foot by 33 foot addition onto the rear of the existing structure to be used for a preparation room and storage room. The funeral home is located in a Restricted Residential (R1) Zone under the Region's Land Use Bylaw (LUB). The R1 Zone does not include funeral homes in its list of permitted uses; however, Council has set out provision in the

Region's Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) to consider expansion or reconstruction of such uses by way of a development agreement.

Robert Ross advised that as long as the proposed expansion does not significantly affect the parking for the business and impede the traffic flow through the property, he does not have an issue with the proposal.

Mike MacLeod advised that the proposed expansion would extend 16 feet out from the existing building and would have little impact on existing parking. He also noted that adequate traffic circulation within the property would be maintained.

John Winters noted that this proposal is not allowing the applicant to do anything that there are not already allowed to do and he has no issue with this application.

Heather Kelly advised that she had been talking to the applicant respecting the proposal and the extension would allow for better service to their customers.

Mike MacLeod noted that existing fencing between the subject property and abutting properties along Main Street provided a good buffer and would minimize impact on abutting properties.

Robert Ross advised that he was in support of this application, but suggested the recommendation to Council should include the size of the expansion being proposed.

It was **MOVED** by **Robert Ross** and **SECONDED** by **John Winters**

THAT the Council of the Region of Queens Municipality give notice of its intention to enter into a development agreement with Chandlers' Funeral Service Ltd. to allow for a 16 foot by 33 foot extension of the commercial use (funeral home) on property located at 91 Union Street in Liverpool and identified as PID# 70024708;

AND THAT a public hearing be scheduled for May 12, 2015 at 8:55 am, in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 249 White Point Road in Liverpool, NS.

**Motion Carried Unanimously.**

## **5. MUNICIPAL PLANNING REVIEW -**

Mike MacLeod opened discussion on the review of the Region's Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw. Further to earlier discussions with PAC and the suggestion that the will of Council to embark on an early review of the planning documents, Mike had added this to the agenda for discussion during budget deliberations with Council.

Susan MacLeod enquired as to the regulations surrounding formal review of planning documents. Mike MacLeod advised that the Municipal Government Act sets out that Council must set out a process for reviewing the documents, but does not specify a timeframe within which the review must take place. The Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, adopted in 2009, set out policy whereby Council shall review the documents atleast every eight years. Susan requested a refresher on reasoning for initiating an early review of documents.

Robert Ross noted that a lot of things have changed in Queens County since the adoption of the documents in 2009. One of the more significant being the closure of one of the Region's major employers. Policy needs to be implemented which addresses the Region's current economic needs. Robert also felt that the existing policy within the MPS does not adequately address the current demogrgaphics of our area. We need policy to suport seniors in our communities, which currently make up a significant portion of our population. As well, policy needs to be developed to support our youth, to make things more attractive to make them want to stay here or return here after college / university.

Council needs to redefine where it wants to be in the future by establishing a vision and a set of clear goals, objectives and timeframes to meet community needs and challenges.

Susan MacLeod advised that discussions of the post-Bowater Transition Team indicated that it takes time to refocus following the closure of a major employer. There is a transition period where things are in flux and sometimes it can take a number of years before a community can realize a new vision of where it wants to be.

Robert Ross noted that he did not agree with concept. He felt that now is the time to refocus to meet the needs of the community. We already know what many of the issues are. We need to develop youth and senior friendly communities, develop / expand our economy, address climate change issues, etc. Piecemeal, incremental growth is not the way to plan for the future.

Brian Fralic acknowledged that change has occurred and continues to occur in our Municipality. We have to look to the future and establish a clear vision. Brian felt that the Economic Development Department and the Planning Department have a key role to play in establishing a vision, but felt that they were not working together in achieving this goal.

John Winters felt that when the current documents were prepared, a lot of compromise was involved in developing their content, as planning was new for the majority of the County. Going from nothing to something. After several years under a regional plan, we know more and are in a better position now to make changes and perhaps tighten up policy in a number of areas. He felt that a more definitive plan is necessary and will make things easier in the long run.

Richard Smith enquired as to Council's feelings toward an early review of the planning documents. Susan MacLeod noted that Council is fully aware of its requirements, and the necessity to, review planning documents and has agreed to build up a reserve over the next couple of years to finance a review. However, Susan indicated that it was the general feeling of Council that the community is still in a transitioning phase and that a formal review would likely not be initiated early.

Mike MacLeod advised that there is a lot of research and background information that is necessary for the preparation / review of planning documents, a lot of which can be done without significant financial implications. Some of this can be initiated any time.

Susan MacLeod enquired as to where to start.

Robert Ross suggested that drafting a terms of reference to be used in a planning review would be a good place to start. It essentially sets out the work plan to be utilized in preparation of the new MPS and LUB. The terms of reference form the project framework to be used by municipal staff, external consultants or a combination of both to achieve the desired results. Robert felt that the use of external planning consultants to complete the review would be beneficial as they may be better able to bring a fresh perspective to the process.

Mike MacLeod acknowledged that the framework for planning here in Nova Scotia has, for the most part, the same way for decades, our documents included. He noted; however, there has been a move in recent years toward a new way of thinking on how we plan our communities. Robert Ross noted that the "smart growth" movement has been around for many years and has been utilized by many communities throughout North America and essentially focuses around compact / livable communities.

Heather Kelly enquired as to what will be different following a review and adoption of new planning documents? Will Council still amend the documents if something comes along that doesn't fit. Robert noted that if the documents are well drafted, it is less likely that amendments will be required.

Richard Smith noted that the MPS and LUB are meant to be living documents which change with the times. Changes will eventually be required.

Brian Fralic felt that some progress has been made in that Council has agreed to start budgeting money to conduct a review; however, he did not feel there was real "buy in" from Council. Establishing a vision is a critical step, something we can take to potential developers.

Heather Kelly felt that clear direction needs to be given by Council to move forward with this project.

Robert Ross suggested that perhaps one way to get Council thinking about planning would be to bring in a facilitator assist in establishing a focus on getting the Municipality to where we want to go for the future. Brian Fralic concurred, that bringing in someone with a fresh perspective would be of benefit.

Susan MacLeod suggested that perhaps the Mersey Forum Speaker Series may be a good venue to engage council and the public in discussion around the future of planning in our area. Mike MacLeod indicated that he would have a discussion with Jill Cruikshank on this and report back to Committee.

Mike MacLeod advised that he would endeavour to obtain some examples of terms of reference for planning review from other municipal units, as a basis for discussion at the next meeting.

## **6. OTHER -**

### **6.1 OLD BRIDGE STREET**

Brian Fralic enquired as to what the process was if a potential developer wished to formally close a portion of Old Bridge Street and redevelop into an alternate use. Where do they go to? Mike MacLeod advised that ultimately, any decision to formally close a street, or a portion thereof, resides with Council. The MGA sets out the process Council follows for such closures. If the developer had particular questions regarding zoning, permitted uses or the like, they could come in to the Planning Department and talk to him.

### **6.2 LIVERPOOL WATERFRONT (C4) ZONE AMENDMENTS – COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

Robert Ross advised that he was concerned with some of the comments made at the March 24, 2015 Council meeting regarding amendments to the Liverpool Waterfront (C4) Zone and Multiple Unit Residential (R3) Zone for rowhouse developments. Robert had listened to an audio recording of the Council discussion and was surprised, disappointed and annoyed at some of the comments made, by one of the councillors in particular. Robert acknowledged that the role of PAC was to advise Council on matters related to planning and that Council was not obligated to agree with all recommendations coming forth from the Committee. However, he felt that some of the Councillor's comments were very unprofessional and not fair to the volunteer members of the PAC and that an apology ought to be given to the Committee for the comments.

John Winters advised that as a member of PAC, he was insulted by some of the comments. Susan MacLeod noted that she, as a member of Council and Chair of the PAC, was very appreciative of the work of members of PAC and that the input they provide is greatly valued.

## **7. NEXT MEETING -**

The next meeting is scheduled for May 6, 2015.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

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Councillor Susan MacLeod, Chair

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Date