

**Planning Advisory Committee Minutes
February 4, 2010
Council Chambers**

Present

Councillor W. Cormier, Chair
Deputy Mayor L. Chisholm
Councillor D. MacInnis
A. Murray
M. MacDonald
D. MacFarlane
B. MacLean
T. Sherrington

Mayor C. Chisholm
S. Day, Planner
D. Kampen, MPA, Chief Administrative Officer
D. Wilson, Deputy Clerk

Various Delegates re Licensing Rental Properties
I. Kadray, Delegate

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor D. MacInnis
Seconded by M. MacDonald
"That the Agenda be approved as circulated." Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Councillor D. MacInnis
Seconded by D. MacFarlane
"That the Minutes of the meeting held on December 3, 2009, be approved as amended, and the Notes of the meeting held on January 7, 2010, be approved as circulated." Motion carried.

Business from Minutes

- Staffing

S. Day, Planner, advised that applicants have been short-listed for the position of Fire Inspector/By-law Enforcement Officer and Fire Inspector/Safety Officer.

- Licensing of Rental Units

The Chair welcomed the delegates and provided background information on the changing demographics within the Town and the impact that the University has in this regard. St. F.X. University Off-Campus Housing representatives involved in the listing of dwelling units for rent noted their group typically looks at basic necessities such as smoke detectors and electrical panels prior to a unit being listed on their website, and noted approximately fifty units are typically listed. It was further noted that when problems arise between student tenants and landlords, they would assist in providing contact information for the Residential Tenancies Board.

Chair, Councillor W. Cormier provided information on steps the City of Oshawa, Ontario, has taken with respect to rental units and noted that the Town has invited D. Potts to come to Antigonish for discussions. He noted D. Potts is a lawyer who was involved with Oshawa's legal issues with respect to rental units.

Mr. A. Buteau, delegate, provided details on his recent experience as a tenant within the Town and with the Residential Tenancy Board. He expressed his support of the Town licensing rental units. M. MacDonald commended Mr. Buteau for his comments and noted he is involved with an organization that often sees tenants in sub-standard living, and offered his support for some level of community standard for all with a mechanism for recourse.

Mr. I. Kadray, who rents multiple residential units in the area, noted that he is governed by the Residential Tenancies Act and that it has been his experience that if he has a poor tenant it is difficult to have them vacate the premises. He noted it takes one hundred and twenty (120) days to go through the Residential Tenancies system.

In response to a question from S. Day, Planner, representatives of St. F.X. University Off-Campus Housing noted that it is the landlords responsibility to seek references and that some request reference while others do not. They further noted that when problems arise, students will often 'wait it out' and move at the end of the lease rather than seeking to have issues addressed.

B. MacLean noted that with the system now in place in Oshawa, issues are dealt with as soon as a complaint is lodged.

D. MacFarlane suggested that MLA M. Smith and the Provincial Minister responsible for Housing be invited to attend the meeting to be held with D. Potts. The Chair advised that representatives from Halifax Regional Municipality and the Town of Wolfville have expressed an interest in coming to Antigonish to speak with D. Potts.

B. MacLean commented on the shrinking rental market within the Town and more students moving to the fringe area.

A. Buteau provided comments on 30-40 year-old houses with bedrooms being let for approximately \$300.00 per month with little to no amount of the rent being put back into repairs. Brief discussion took place on salaries versus rental costs.

The Chair thanked the delegates for their attendance and they left the meeting at 6:20 PM.

S. Day suggested the next meeting be a separate meeting to discuss the steps the City of Oshawa has taken.

- 62 Hawthorne Street

S. Day advised the Committee that consultants are now working on stormwater issues to be dealt with and that he and the Chair had walked the area and noted a lot of wetness in the bottom corner of the lot, and concern by residents in the immediate area of run-off.

Mr. I. Kadray provided comment on his experience as owner of rental units and noted that the market is changing with fewer students seeking rental units and more people seeking smaller units. He noted many people are returning from western provinces as work opportunities slow

down and more seniors (from the County) are moving to Town. He noted that although not an urban centre, the Town is a service centre.

I. Kadray noted that his proposed development will be built to meet affordable housing standards, although he is unsure at this time whether funds for affordable housing will be available. He explained to the Committee how affordable housing works, what he is required to do to meet those standards, and what benefits he receives in providing affordable housing, which is mainly the difference between the rental cost and the income of the tenant being paid by the Province. He noted the rental cost is typically in the area of \$1,000.00/month with one-half of the units being subsidized.

S. Day noted that Town Engineer, K. Proctor, is working with I. Kadray's consultant to deal with the issue of stormwater. Tentatively, it appears the parking area would take the water to a rock swale where it would go into the soil via a French drain and the stormwater then piped to Brookland Street.

Brief discussion took place on some of the features of the building and the units.

S. Day noted that although there is good site stopping distance at the driveway exit, some adjustment to grade would likely be required to queue at the street.

In response to a query from Mayor C. Chisholm, S. Day noted he is waiting for professional drawings and some landscaping detail to be amended. He further noted a Public Hearing may be feasible this April.

With respect to a comment by D. MacFarlane on the distance from the driveway to an intersection on Hawthorne Street, S. Day noted that the area had been visited by the Traffic Authority and deemed suitable.

The Chair thanked Mr. I. Kadray for his attendance and he left the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Other Business

- LiDar

S. Day provided information on the capabilities of LiDar and noted he hopes to get some contribution toward obtaining it, hopefully for under \$10,000.00.

- GIS Project

S. Day advised he hopes to obtain additional GIS mapping prior to the end of this fiscal year and does not anticipate much for next year.

- West Street By-law Infraction & DA/Rezoning Application

S. Day advised he had nothing new to report. Discussion took place on the issue of the University utilizing lands not zoned appropriately for parking and what actions could or should be taken. S. Day noted he would have a report on this matter for the next meeting.

- Adam Street Issues (Flooding, By-law Infraction, etc.)

S. Day reported on a meeting held with property owners from the Adam/Bay Street area and Council and noted some progress appears to have been made.

M. MacDonald provided comment on ongoing activities with disregard to the Town's By-laws with additional discussion taking place on where and what activities can take place in areas zoned Light Industrial.

- Town Parking Opportunity at Court Street (D. MacFarlane)

D. MacFarlane advised that the area thought to be owned by Irving, is in fact owned by another company thought to be under the umbrella of Irving Oil. He further noted he has been unable to make any contact with the Company in question.

- Policy Regarding Vacant Lots and Unsightly Premises

The Chair questioned CAO D. Kampen as to whether the Vacant Lots and Unsightly Premises Policy might be given First Reading at the upcoming meeting of Council. CAO D. Kampen noted that there may be more editing required. It was suggested the Policy should come back to the Planning Advisory Committee for a final review; the Committee was in general agreement.

- Site Alteration Control

CAO D. Kampen advised that the Site Alteration Control By-Law will come back to the Planning Advisory Committee for a final review.

Action List

- Flow-through Buildings in Floodway

S. Day advised that as part of a project being proposed by the Antigonish Highland Society for the Wall Property adjacent Columbus Field, the group hopes to erect a flow-through structure similar to the washrooms at Columbus Field whereby the waters flow under the floor of the building and advised he would speak with Provincial representatives further on this matter. He further noted that although no policy is in place in this regard, ARRAS Branch 59 Royal Canadian Legion Members intend to erect a cenotaph at Columbus Field.

- MPS/LUB

Nothing new to report.

Adjournment

Moved by Mayor C. Chisholm

Seconded by A. Murray

"That the meeting be adjourned." Motion carried.