Planning Advisory Committee Meeting

November 25, 2025
Town Council Chambers

Present

Councillor J. Sullivan, Chair
Councillor L. MacLellan
Mayor S. Cameron
M. Grant
J. Bain, Director of EDPC Planner/Development Officer
D. Halfpenny, Secretary

Absent
A. Boudreau
O. Adewoye

Guests:

UPLAND - Consultants: P Dec, Planner via zoom

Town of Antigonish Staff - K. Meisner, P. Eng, Director of Infrastructure & Engineering and
L. Basinger, Project Manager.
Eastern District Planning Staff –H. Bruckner, Assistant Planner/Development Officer, B. MacDonald, Development Officer/GIS Technician, and A.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

1. Additions to the Agenda

No additions to the agenda

2. Approval of the Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda the November 25, 2025, meeting was made by.
L. MacLellan and seconded by M. Grant.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

A motion to accept the minutes of October 1, 2025, as written, was made by M. Grant and seconded by Mayor S. Cameron.

Discussion Items:

4.1 The Chair invited P. Dec of Upland to begin his presentation**.**

P. Dec provided an outline of the project timeline and a review of the recommendations that were made at the October 1, 2025, meeting of the Planning Advisory Committee. He explained that tonight's meeting is focused on the review of the public engagement responses to the proposed HAF amendments and determining the final direction of the HAF amendments for the Planning Advisory Committee to recommend to Council.

P. Dec noted that the three main approaches to reach the HAF goals:

I. Accommodating "missing middle" house design.
II. Amending selected higher density zones and,
III. Streamlining provisions for accessory dwelling units.

P. Dec explained that the results for the public engagement were as follows. There were 452-page visits, 72 Survey submissions, forty letters sent to stakeholders, and an Eastern District Planning Commission Open House at the John Paul Center which was attended by twelve participants.

He reported that the main concerns that were expressed by participants highlighted the challenges of affordable housing, the availability of housing and the diversity of housing choices. The participants' responses identified that the status quo does not meet the needs of young people, low-income households, seniors, people living with disabilities or single person households. The concerns that were raised focused on pressures on infrastructure, parking, and the character of the neighborhood. It was noted that increased density needed to be accompanied by thoughtful planning with attention to traffic impacts, stormwater management, green space protection, and access to public transit.

He advised that the most supported development forms were building apartment units above shops and services, building new smaller apartments or condominiums such as condominiums and fourplexes, assessor buildings such as garden suites. They had concerns about high-density apartments in general, however, for four units 72% of the respondents were in support. He noted that there was a concern with the height requirement for mixed use buildings on James Street which resulted in a change in recommendation from 26 Meters (8 storeys) to twenty meters (6 storeys).

P. Dec stated that overall, the residents of Antigonish want to see Antigonish grow in a way that is initiative-taking, well-planned, climate conscious and inclusive and beneficial to all its citizens. He commented that there was no negative response from any of the contributors to the survey.

Discussion followed on the engagement results.

Mayor S. Cameron thanked P. Dec for the presentation but noted that he had concerns about the sample size of the participants. He identified that his biggest concern was the removal of site plan requirements in the RN-1 zones as this would allow for fourplexes to be built as of right in residential neighborhoods.

L. MacLellan commented that there are new fourplexes recently developed that are very attractive, and that to facilitate the building of a fourplex the lots would have to be a size that would meet the requirements for hardscape and parking and therefore he did not regard this as a major issue.

M. Grant explained that he personally had concerns about the development of fourplexes in his neighborhood but that he has been pleasantly surprised with how good they look and stressed that proper parking is key. He concluded that bylaw enforcement is needed to enforce parking and address unsightly premises.

Chair J. Sullivan identified that what was important to him was that the structures fit the look of the neighborhood.

Committee members agreed that allowing accessory dwelling units to occur as of right would be a good move. All agreed that it is important to have quality design. There were no issues with increasing density in high density zones.

L. Basinger reviewed the commitments of the Town of Antigonish to participate in the Antigonish Housing Accelerator Fund and how additional funding through other programs is intended to build the necessary infrastructure to allow for the increased developments such as securing additional water sources and upgrading of the water and sewer systems. She stressed the importance of meeting the goals of the program by the January deadline.

K. Meisner reiterated that this funding is crucial to ensure that the town maximizes funding opportunities to further its plans to grow a strong community. He explained that the Town is on track to meet the housing unit development goal for this January's report and that over a three-year period a total of seventy-three new units is required to meet the town's commitment for the funding.

L MacLellan stated that he is supporting efforts to improve the infrastructure of the town and that the Planning Advisory Committee, putting forth a recommendation for Town Council, is the next step in the decision-making process.

Mayor S. Cameron stressed that he is not against development but that he wants to ensure that it is good development that is in keeping with the needs of the community.

M. Grant commented that J. Bain will ensure that any building meets the requirements of the Land Use Bylaw and fits the requirements for the lot. He noted that growth must be paired with the infrastructure and good planning.

A motion was made by L. MacLellan and seconded by M. Grant, that the Planning Advisory Committee recommend to Town of Antigonish Council that they give First Reading and Schedule a Public Hearing for the amendment to the proposed changes to the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Land Use By-Law as outlined in the "Town of Antigonish Housing Accelerator Fund Proposed Amendments document."

See Document attached with the minutes.

4.2 Strategic Plan for Vacant Lot

The Chair, Councillor J. Sullivan, stated that due to the limited number of vacant lots in the town it would be attractive to lot owners to be made aware of what they could potentially build on their vacant lot. He stressed the need for excellent quality development.

B. MacDonald, Development Officer/GIS Technician, commented that it would be an easy exercise to make an inventory of the vacant lots in the Town of Antigonish.

J. Bain noted that he needs a directive from the Town to assign staff do an assessment of what could potentially be built on each lot in general terms of what size of lots are available and what type of development would fit within the zone in which it is located.. He explained he is not an architect and therefore design of building options would not be included.

A motion was made by L. MacLellan and seconded by Mayor S. Cameron that the Planning Advisory Committee recommend to Town of Antigonish Council that a strategic plan be developed to fill vacant lots involving a multi-pronged approach that combines data analysis, , and engagement with landowners offering potential options for what can be built on their property to encourage infill development. Motion Carried.

L. MacLellan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion Carried.

The Planning advisory Committee meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

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