Planning Advisory Committee Meeting

April 8, 2024
Town Council Chambers

Present

Councillor M. Farrell, Chair
Deputy Mayor W. Cormier
Councillor D. MacInnis

Catherine Hughes
R. Sers
T. Barkhouse
J. Bain, Director of EDPC Planner/Development Officer
D. Halfpenny, Secretary

Absent
Mayor L. Boucher

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

1. Approval of Agenda

"It was moved and seconded, that the Agenda for the Planning Advisory Committee meeting of April 8, 2024, be approved". Motion carried.

2. Approval of the Minutes

"It was moved and seconded, that the Minutes for the Planning Advisory Committee meeting of 2024, January 11, 2024, be approved with the correction to attendance R. Sers". Motion carried.

3. Discussion- Policy CE11(e)

The Town will mail out an information package to all property owners within 30 m of the proposed development that includes:

i. A description of the subject property,
ii. A brief description of the proposed development.
iii. The name of the applicant.
iv. Instructions on how to obtain more information regarding the application and how to become involved in the planning process.

J. Bain, Director of EDPC stated that all Planning Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public. However, he advised that the Planning Advisory Committee meetings give the public a chance to hear the discussions but are not a forum for the public to voice their opinions or concerns.

He reviewed the Development Agreement process and asked whether another opportunity for input may be to have a public consultation added prior to the Planning Advisory Committee meeting to

provide EDPC staff with more feedback prior to the staff report. He noted this would impact the timeline to process a development agreement and add to the expense.

M. Farrell, Chair noted that an Open House does increase the feedback from the community, if there are concerns with the Development Agreement. However, what do we want to do and is it reasonable and does it consider the developer's concerns and are the guidelines met.

W. Cormier, Deputy Mayor noted that the public perception is that when they attend a PAC meeting that they can participate, however, it is the public hearing that provides the opportunity to bring forward their concerns.

D. Macinnis advised that he believes the current process works well that the signage erected, the information on the website, the public hearing are all opportunities for public input.

R. Sers commented that an open house is one thing, but it would require a well-developed information package beforehand.

C. Hughes noted that the public needs clarification on the process and that there are opportunities for public engagement.

T. Barkhouse agreed that the current process works and inquired as to how would the addition of an open house affect the timeline of a Development Agreement.

J. Bain stated an open house would extend the timeline for a development agreement and create added expenses such as an extra meeting, and more staff time.

Discussion- Development Agreement 56 Highland Drive

J. Bain explained that an application received from AA Harbour Enterprises on Oct 11, 2023, for a multiple unit three-story apartment building. Upon review the application did not meet the requirements of the Land Use Bylaw. AA Harbour Enterprises' representative, M. MacMullin, received notification that the proposed development did not meet the requirements of the Land Use Bylaw. The company then revised the proposal to a two-story building with ten units and a new application submitted on November 12, 2023.

J. Bain noted that six units is permissible as of right, but the proposed ten units required a Development Agreement. He noted that currently the existing house on the property is a seven-bedroom lodging home that registered with the Town of Antigonish. He provided a slide presentation of the architectural design of the multi-unit apartment building, a site plan, and advised that there are one- and two-bedroom units available. He explained that the Director of Public works had requested a stormwater management plan prior to consideration of the Development Agreement which J. Bain noted slowed down the process. AA Harbour Development submitted the stormwater management plan, and the Development Agreement staff report as presented is ready for the Planning Advisory Committee to discuss.

Discussion followed.

W. Cormier, Deputy Mayor asked about the amenity area space requirements.

J. Bain provided details of how the proposed amenity space requirements exceeded the requirements for the development. He noted that the number of balconies and two green space areas, as well as the number of green spaces available within 400 ft in the neighbourhood provided ample square footage. He provided a visual presentation of how the general criteria for Policy ADM16 General Criteria is meet through scale for the neighbourhood, compatibility, municipal servicing, and stormwater management.

D. MacInnis commented that the number of one-bedroom apartments will provide needed rental opportunities for the community.

J. Bain advised that each unit is a fully functioning apartment, and that the developer is using a prefabricated format. The intent is to offer an affordable building option with a plan that is easy to replicate. He stated that initial concerns over the vision triangle for traffic when reviewed were not an issue as there is sidewalk and enough space, and the clearly defined entrance and exit create a better traffic flow.

J. Bain noted that the plan calls for a 3 ft hedge to create visual separation between the new multi-unit apartment building and the neighbouring property.

T. Barkhouse advised he had concerns about the vulnerability of the hedge.

C. Hughes, R. Sers, and Chair M. Farrell, D. Macinnis agreed that a hedge would be an issue with snow removal damage.

M. Farrell, Chair noted that a fence would be a better option than a hedge. She inquired as to how the green bins would be situated to meet the Solid Waste Management Bylaw.

J. Bain identified that the area for the Green Bins to be located featured a fenced in section.

Further discussion identified that there would also be an issue with vehicles shining their lights into the neighbouring property and that a 6 ft fence would be a better option to create the separation and prevent headlights from disturbing the neighbours in the adjacent property.

Motion

It was moved and seconded, that the Planning Advisory Committee recommend to Town Council that they enter into a Development Agreement with AA Harbour Enterprises Ltd. at 56 Highland Drive, PID 01221290, for a ten-unit apartment building with six one-bedroom apartments located on the main floor and four two - bedroom units located on the second floor, and that a six foot fence be erected to create a light barrier from the parking area adjacent to the neighbouring property , and that Town Council give First Reading and Schedule a Public Hearing."
Motion Carried.

4. Tentative Discussion – Development Agreement 23 Main Street.

J. Bain advised that the Development Agreement for 23 Main Street previously presented to the Planning Advisory Committee has changed. He stated that the new proposal is to create a multi-unit building to be comprised of apartments with the

provision to have retail space on the bottom floor. J. Bain provided a visual of the architectural design. He explained the flood plain issues remain the same.

T. Barkhouse noted that there is a drive-through that may be of concern in architectural design.

R. Sers commented that having retail on the bottom floor will continue the downtown vibe for Main Street. He maintained that consistency through the Main Street is important with mixed use buildings providing the commercial offering and that it keeps the downtown vibrant.

Deputy Mayor Cormier commented that the building has a commercial design that fits with the area. He noted that Green Diamond and KV Electrical Developments have revitalized the East End of Main Street, and that additional retail would be optimal on the ground floor.

C. Hughes advised that the Planning Advisory Committee needs to further consider the conditions of the Development Agreement for 23 East Main Street to maximize the potential of the property and ensure any privacy concerns are addressed by the developer concerning the neighbouring property.

J. Bain agreed that the Planning Advisory Committee should take time to consider any concerns and bring them to the next Planning Advisory Committee meeting on May 13.

D. Macinnis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion Carried

The Planning advisory Committee meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.