Planning Advisory Committee Meeting

October 01, 2025
Town Council Chambers

Present

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

Guests:

UPLAND - Consultants: P Dec, Planner and B. Archibald, Policy Planner

Town of Antigonish Staff - K. Meisner, P. Eng, Director of Infrastructure & Engineering.
L. Basinger, Project Manager; and S. Long, Acting Director of Community Development.

Eastern District Planning Staff – M. Tait, Planner/Development Officer; H. Bruckner, Assistant Planner/Development Officer, B. MacDonald, Development Officer/GIS Technician, and H. Joshi, Planner/Development Officer.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

1. Additions to the Agenda

Councillor L. MacLellan added Parking Study and Meeting Date to the agenda.

2. **Approval of the Agenda**

A motion to approve the agenda with additions for the October 1, 2025, meeting was made by. M. Grant and seconded by L. MacLellan.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

A motion to accept the minutes of June 12, 2025, as written, was made by M. Grant and seconded by O. Adewoye.

4. **Introductions.**

Chair J. Sullivan invited all present to introduce themselves.

5. **"Antigonish Housing Accelerator Fund Town PAC Direction Workshop presentation."**

P. Dec explained that the Housing Accelerator Fund is a federal funding program that was created to remove barriers to local initiatives to build more homes to boost the local housing supply while supporting affordable, diverse, and climate-resilient communities. The program is intended to be used as a supplemental resource to meet the goals laid out within the National Housing Strategy.

The Town of Antigonish was awarded 1.3 million in March 2024 for five initiatives:

I. High Density Housing review with changes to the municipal planning strategy and land use bylaw.
II. E-permitting to speed up the process for developers.
III. Water sources exploration and development to prepare for housing acceleration.
IV. Grant program of $50,000 for a 2-year period to boost affordable housing new builds.
V. Identification of appropriate areas for changes in zoning and as of right construction.

P. Dec stated that the Town is committed to building seventy-three dwelling units within the next three years; and 136 dwelling units within the next ten years. If the commitments are not met, the town would be required to pay back the funds for not meeting the requirements.

K. Meisner commented that the Town of Antigonish has applied for additional funding through other programs that is intended to build the infrastructure necessary to allow for the increased developments such as securing additional water sources and upgrading of the water and sewer systems. He explained that the timelines are crucial to ensure that the town maximizes funding opportunities to further its plans to grow a strong community.

P. Dec noted that to keep on track the Planning Advisory Committee will need to provide UPLAND with any adjustments to recommendations prior to the public engagement phase with housing providers, organizers representing underserved populations, major institutions and interested community members through a project website, survey, and advertising. Tonight's meeting, he advised will serve as a refresher to the Town and County workshop that took place on June 25, 2025.

6. UPLAND Recommendations

P. Dec stated that UPLAND is proposing three main approaches to comply with the Housing Acceleration Fund:

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

P. Dec proposed that four-unit dwellings be directly eligible for permits in the RN-1 zone, while allowing up to a six-plex to be considered by site plan approval; dwellings of up to ten units in the RN-2 Zone be directly eligible for permits; and over ten-unit dwellings would proceed via site plan approval. He also noted that higher density could be established through changes to subdivision. He commented that there are properties in Antigonish that could be subdivided to accommodate a second lot.

UPLAND provided suggested changes to the minimum lot sizes and referenced the CHMC catalogue of houses that have been designed to fit Atlantic Canada. However, he noted that the designs would not fit with the Old Town architectural requirements.

Discussion followed:

Chair J. Sullivan commented that the CMHC designs would require modifications to fit the streetscapes of Antigonish. He stated that it is important to maintain the character of the community.

Planning Advisory Committee members agreed that the CMHC designs although they may work in other larger communities would not fit the landscape of Antigonish. However, it was noted that with modification of the facade the designs may work.

P. Dec pointed out the specific areas of the town such as James Street and other arterial and collector streets could be prioritized as locations for current and future growth. UPLAND proposed extending the RN-2 sone to all properties abutting arterial and collector streets, a new height limit of eight stories along James Street, and design requirements changed to encourage development such as podium height, articulations, and floor elevations. As an incentive to developers. The zoning map areas were highlighted in green and included Arbor, Braemore Avenue, Brookland, and a portion of Hawthorne, Hillcrest, and a portion of West Street.

UPLAND recommended a 50% reduction in residential parking requirements along the fixed route of Antigonish Transit.

Discussion followed:

Councillor L. MacLellan advised that parking is an issue in Antigonish as it is and decreasing parking requirements may not be in the best interest of the community. He stressed that businesses require parking for their staff, and patrons. He commented that Antigonish Transit is not used as much as it could be and that primarily seniors and disabled people are using it. The students do not use it as much due to time constraints.

Planning Advisory Committee members agreed that Antigonish Transit is currently underutilized.

P. Dec noted that with increased population the need may increase for Antigonish transit.

UPLAND proposed that Accessory Dwelling Units be directly eligible for “as of right” development, ADUs be permitted in the Mixed-Use Centre and design standards be reduced in all areas except in Old Town and that lot area requirements be removed.

J. Bain advised that currently when a homeowner has a basement apartment, they are unable to create an ADU on their RN-1 zoned property. He noted that homeowners who contacted him and had the initial conversation about building an ADU have not followed through to build the proposed ADU.

UPLAND proposed that the Town explore inclusionary zoning as a tool when implementing changes to the Municipal Planning Strategy policy.

P. Dec advised that the public engagement session would be online and need to occur by the first week of November.

J. Bain stated that Eastern District Planning would be able to hold an open house public engagement session at the Antigonish Library, a date was set for November 3rd. The Planning Advisory Committee will review the results of the public engagement session on November 25th and make a recommendation to Council.

7. Solar Panel Installation of Netting

Mayor S. Cameron advised that he has heard several complaints from citizens regarding pigeons nesting in their solar panels and wanted to bring the matter to the attention of Eastern District Planning to see if they could have staff look at adding netting as a requirement when installing the panels.

8. New Business

8.1 Plan for Vacant Lots

Deferred to next PAC meeting.

8.2 **Parking Study**

Deferred to next PAC meeting

9. Meeting Days

Next meeting will be Tuesday, Oct 28 at 6 p.m. in Council Chambers. The open house will be November 3, will be the public engagement session with EDPC at the Antigonish Library, time to TBD, and the following Planning Advisory meeting will be held on Tuesday November 25.

Councillor L. MacLellan made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

The Planning advisory Committee meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Next meeting is October 28th at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.