

Planning Advisory Committee Meeting

May 31, 2023

Town Council Chambers

Present

Councillor M. Farrell, Chair

Mayor L. Boucher

Councillor W. Cormier

Councillor D. MacInnis

T. Barkhouse

C. Hughes

R. Sers

K. MacInnis, Acting CAO

D. Sutherland, Senior Planner/Development Officer EDPC

D. Halfpenny, Secretary

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

“It was moved and seconded, that the Agenda for the Planning Advisory Committee meeting of May 22, 2023, be approved.” Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

“It was moved and seconded, that the Planning Advisory Minutes of May 18, 2023. be approved.” Motion carried.

EDPC Supplemental Handout.

D. Sutherland, Senior Planner/Development Officer provided supplemental information to the Planning Advisory Committee explaining that the recommendation by EDPC to provide consideration of concurrent amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law to allow low-density residential units in the Institutional (1) Zone is a general text amendment and will not apply to a specific development proposal and will apply to all properties in the institutional zone.

D. Sutherland identified key elements of permitted uses in the institutional zone:

- I. maximum of three main buildings on a lot
- II. Minimums- lot area 500m², lot frontage 15m, front yard 4m, rear yard 6m, side yard 4m, flankage yard 6 m.
- III. Maximum building height 16m and lot coverage of 65%.

D. Sutherland provided a listing of permitted as of right uses through a development permit in the institutional zones. She stated that the Municipal Planning Strategy Enabling Policy is restrictive as currently only a non-profit is eligible for consideration of a development through Development Agreement process in a mixed-use designation. D. Sutherland reviewed the general provisions for Community Use Zones such as landscaping requirements, architectural requirements, lighting requirements, and storage requirements.

EDPC Staff Report Presentation

D. Sutherland provided an overview of the Staff report. She noted that former institutional buildings such as schools and churches when they are closed leave the community with a vacant building that could be converted to allow for another purpose. She provided an example of the former Willow Street School in Truro becoming Will Lots.

D. Sutherland advised that an application had been made on March 11, 2022, by A.W Arbuckle and J. L MacInnis concerning the 83 Kirk Street institutional property (former CACL building) to allow for the addition of 7 residential units in addition to the existing institutional use (Kids First Antigonish).

The council wished to inquire into options for adaptive reuse of institutional buildings including the 83 Kirk Street property. The application was put on hold at the request of the applicant. The applicant amended the application on November 25, 2022, to request consideration of three residential units as a second institutional tenant, Highland Community Midwives had been secured.

D. Sutherland provided a zoning map to identify the various institutional properties in the town of Antigonish. She stated that often institutional uses and zones are part of or near residential neighbourhoods and have minimal impact and offer compatible uses with little land use conflict. She provided several examples of what other municipalities allow in institutional zones. She noted that there is a housing shortage and allowing low density residential unit development in the Institutional zone would be in keeping with the Statement of Provincial Interest for Housing and Infrastructure.

D. Sutherland provided five options to recommend to Council for consideration:

- I. Allow low-density residential (three or fewer units) through the Development Agreement approval process by amending the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law.
- II. Allow low-density residential (three or fewer units) as-of-right (by development permit only) by amending the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law.
- III. Allow low-density residential (dwelling, three or fewer units) through the site plan process by amending the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law.
- IV. Recommend that Council refuse the application to amend the Municipal Planning Strategy. There would be no change. Low-density residential uses that are no accessory to the main use would not be permitted in the Institutional (1) Zone.
- V. Other direction by PAC or Council.

Senior Planner/Development Officer, D. Sutherland recommended that the Planning Advisory Committee Option 2 Allow low-density residential (three or fewer units) as-of-right (by development permit only) by amending the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law. She advised that Option 2 would allow additional housing, which is compatible with residential neighbourhoods. It would allow for a maximum of 3 dwelling units on the property subject to the I zone provisions.

In conclusion she stated that it was EDPC staff recommend to Council to allow low-density residential (Dwelling three or fewer units) to proceed via a development permit only, by amending the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law, as set out in the planning report dated May 31, 2023.

Discussion followed with the following concerns.

Deputy Mayor W. Cormier inquired as to whether Option 2 would provide notification to neighbouring properties when the 3 or fewer apartment units are being proposed for development. He stressed that it would be important to make the community aware of potential new developments.

Chair M. Farrell stated that the Town Council strives to maintain transparency and that she would prefer to have the development of residential units in an institutional Zone (I) go through the Development Agreement process.

Mayor L. Boucher agreed that while a particular development would be of benefit the committee is looking at making changes that would cover all institutional zones in Antigonish and that it is important to get it right for maximum land use efficiency.

Committee members R. Sers, C. Hughes, and T. Barkhouse, Councillor D. MacInnis agreed that it is necessary to take the time to weigh the options and determine the best option for Antigonish.

D. Sutherland advised that because it was a general text change neighbourhood notification had not been out to the property owner surrounding the 83 Kirk Street property. She noted that she would be required to send notification to all neighbouring properties of all the institutional zoned properties to avoid discrimination to any particular property owner near an institutional zone. She advised that the Development Agreement is an approximately 8-month process.

The Planning Advisory Committee agreed that they would prefer all property owners that are in proximity to Institutional zones to be notified of the proposed text change.

The Chair advised that with no option chosen a motion would need to be made to have all institutional zone property owners contacted via letter to advise of proposed change and then have the matter returned to PAC for consideration.

Motion

A motion was made and seconded, "that the Planning Advisory Committee recommends to Council that all properties owner near institutional zones be notified by letter to provide consideration of concurrent amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law to allow low-density, (dwelling 3 units or less) residential units in the Institutional (1) Zone and that the matter be brought back to the Planning Advisory Committee for further review . Motion Approved.

The next Planning Advisory Committee meeting was set for June 27 at 6 p.m.

Councillor MacInnis noted that all Council members should be invited to the next Planning Advisory Committee meeting.

D. Sutherland advised that all Staff reports are located on the EDPC website.

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Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.