

Planning Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2017

Town Council Chambers

Present

Mayor L. Boucher, Chair
Deputy Mayor, W. Cormier
Councillor D. MacInnis

P. Andersen, StFX Representative

B. Gottschall

S. Hargreaves

J. Kerr

J. Sullivan

S. Day, Director of Planning

B. Nheiley, Planner

D. Halfpenny, Secretary

Absent

C. Hanlon

C. Henderson

K. Silver

Guests

Councillors M. Farrell, and D. Roberts.

Call to Order

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

Mayor L. Boucher, Chair advised that C. Henderson had declared a conflict of interest as her partner owns property in the periphery area.

The Chair, noted that as a make- up for the February meeting which was cancelled due to the blizzard there would be only one item on the agenda and the March 13 regularly scheduled PAC meeting will allow for a full agenda.

Approval of Agenda

“It was moved and seconded, that the Agenda for the Planning Advisory Committee meeting of March 6, 2017 be approved.” **Motion carried.**

Approval of Minutes

“It was moved and seconded, that the minutes of the January 23, 2017 Planning Advisory Committee meetings be approved.” **Motion carried.**

Business Arising from the Minutes

Residential Periphery Zoning Overlay

B. Nheiley referred to the detailed comprehensive package of material that had been circulated to the Planning Advisory Committee for review. She noted that during her presentation she would be outlining the key points for discussion and that she had hoped everyone had a chance to review the documents and ask questions.

B. Nheiley stressed that a Public Engagement Process will take place to get a better level of community involvement. She referred back to last years Community engagement sessions. She provided a brief explanation of Form Based Code and provided visual examples of what outcomes might resemble and what types of questions need to be asked to determine best approach. She noted that by amending the C1-P overlay to include form based code in the residential and commercial zones. it may assist the store fronts that struggle to maintain tenancy.

B. Nheiley identified that Antigonish is a very entrepreneurial town and therefore there is a need to support small business, and to create appropriate housing while ensuring that there are controls on residential housing. She stressed that maintaining architectural standards is important, she showed examples of a residential property in a commercial zone, and business in a residential zone. She identified elements such as signage and design elements that provided cohesiveness in each zone.

B. Nheiley noted that by providing flexible options to the developers it would allow for spaces to be filled and provide the ability to convert back to a retail space when conditions change. She provided visuals of the areas being considered for inclusion in the commercial periphery zones. She spoke of the need to allow for a hybrid of the two where some architectural and some usage controls would provide large commercial spaces within a commercial zone to gain stable tenants to become entirely residential if warranted while maintaining scale of the building and meshing with the commercial core.

She elaborated on Old Town residential requirements and showed how small shops and services could allow for small businesses to fit in and not look out of place. She spoke of residences where people want to live being evenly distributed and allowing for walkability to services and activities. She identified that the town is landlocked that current infrastructure needs to serve a diverse range of business types and by allowing small entrepreneurial opportunities it will not look out of place in residential zone.

Deputy Mayor, W. Cormier asked B. Nheiley to provide a list of areas in the downtown that would not be included in the periphery zone.

Discussion followed and B. Nheiley was asked to determine a timeline for Public Engagement.

The Chair stated that the Public Engagement sessions would take place before the April Planning Advisory Committee meeting on April 10 and any motions would be taken to Council at the April 24 Town Council meeting.

B. Nheiley identified the Main Street area, James Street area, the St Mary's and Bay Street and Adam Street areas as locations where the Commercial Periphery Zoning Overlay would occur.

Discussion followed on whether the periphery zoning should be extended to St. Ninian and Church Street areas.

J. Sullivan expressed concerns and challenges from those in the excluded area.

B. Nheiley noted that planning is ever evolving. She explained that to expand the area and not keep it contained at present and may weaken the downtown core. She continued with the theme of flexibility for the business owners and ease of conversion and should demand for commercial space increase then the area could be expanded. She reiterated that caution must be taken in order to prevent dilution of the established businesses in the commercial zone.

S. Day reminded Planning Advisory Committee that planning is always about the nature of use, impact on the greater good and overall health of the community. He advised that more focus has to be made expanding commercial opportunities which in turn will increase the population. He noted that diversity can't be mandated.

B. Nheiley commented that noise, parking light pollution and signage requirements will need to be specified in order to maintain cohesive look. She advised that the public engagement sessions will determine if there are any issues that haven't been considered and get a better idea of public interest.

Mayor L. Boucher thanked B. Nheiley for her well written report. She noted it is a very good idea and that progress is being made. She advised that the public consultation process will evaluate the concepts. She maintained that by staying flexible and testing the concept it will be a good small step forward that can be built upon in the future.

Deputy Mayor W. Cormier commented that if another special meeting needed it should be held to facilitate decisions being made in time for the April 24th town council meeting.

Motion to Adjourn

“It was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned.” **Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.