

# Planning Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

August 3, 2017

Town Council Chambers

## **Present**

Mayor L. Boucher, Chair  
B. Gottschall  
C. Henderson  
J. Kerr  
J. Sullivan  
S. Day, Director of Planning  
B. Nheiley, Planner  
D. Halfpenny, Secretary

## **Absent**

Deputy Mayor, W. Cormier  
Councillor D. MacInnis  
C. Hanlon  
K. Silver  
P. Andersen, StFX Representative

## **Call to Order**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:16 p.m.

## **Approval of Agenda**

Deferred until next meeting

## **Approval of Minutes**

Deferred until next meeting

## **Conflict of Interest**

C. Henderson and J. Kerr declared a conflict of interest concerning Lodging units.

## **New Business**

B. Nheiley reported that she had attended a Brierly Trail public engagement session in coordination with T. Cameron, Director of Recreation. She advised that the public engagement session had occurred during the Art Fair.

B. Nheiley provided background on last year's public engagement event which had over 100 participants contributing ideas on five topics. She noted that access to green spaces and increased active transportation opportunities was high on the list of those that participated.

B. Nheiley reported that at the recent Brierly Trail public engagement session thirty one participants had signed the sheet and noted that others had participated and not signed the sheet. She commented that there were thirty nine comments, and roughly eighteen more were received through facebook. The overall view identified that citizens were excited about the Town of Antigonish green infrastructure and plans to further expand the hiking trails.

Concerns that were identified were decreasing parking at the library. She advised more work needs to be done to clearly identify and communicate the availability and location of public parking.

B. Nheiley explained that the first phase would be to expand the walking trail to carry it along the Brierly Brook by Piper's Pub she provided a quick review of the Piper's Pub proposed plan to move the deck and create an outdoor community space.

B. Nheiley noted that T. Curley from New Glasgow participated in the Public engagement session. She explained that T. Curley was heavily involved in the New Glasgow trail linking system and had provided valuable insight into the importance of investing in quality light standards, and data on usage of the trails created in New Glasgow.

Discussion followed and Planning Advisory Committee members agreed that objectives must be put in place with clearly defined dates.

Mayor L. Boucher confirmed that she will be present when the negotiations take place with the library board to ensure the benefits to the community are clearly identified. She noted that various funding opportunities will be explored to ensure that the necessary monies are in place to implement each phase of the trail development.

## Lodging Units

S. Day provided a review and update the current status of Lodging Units issue. He noted that Antigonish is one of a few unique communities in Nova Scotia that has a population that doubles for eight months of the year. S. Day advised that staff advocates for a clear definition of a lodging home through setting a threshold for rented sleeping rooms.

S. Day identified the town's areas of concern:

1. A misalignment of the Planning Strategy -S. Day stressed that the town is required to ensure that there is housing for families, seniors, and others.
2. A link between binge drinking and a high number of bedroom units - He referred to a document provided by the province on binge drinking which showed the correlation of young people living in rental properties with a large number of bedrooms showing a marked increase in binge drinking.

3. Fire concerns - He noted that families tend take care of one another where a group of people living in a house together, particularly as they gain more members, don't have the same level of concern for each other and therefore increased safety measures are put in place.

S. Day outlined how the Town will grandfather existing homes in the R1 zone that have more than four bedrooms (as proposed), by creating a registry of these properties. He stressed that the owners of these properties may be required to make additional renovations to address any safety concerns identified. Further lodging homes could only be developed in R3 zones under existing policy.

S. Day noted outcomes from a clear definition of lodging houses should decrease the number of conversions in R1 zone (which is contrary to policy) but went on to indicate that new opportunities to have been developed and will continue to be so as review of the Residential policies continues.

S. Day identified that concerns were raised at a Public consultation meeting with the Rental Association members indicated that limiting the number of bedrooms to four would not make it financially viable to develop a property. S. Day noted that he would like to speak to someone with a financial background to get a clearer understanding if this were in fact the case.

Discussion followed with Planning Advisory Committee members agreeing that a proactive approach is necessary to ensure the needs of all citizens are addressed. Committee members were in agreement that being unique and having a student population is valuable part of the town.

S. Day concluded with an update of the Planning Department. He advised that summer student C. Rankin has been tasked with assisting the Building Inspector(s) with closing cold case files. He advised that 75 letters were sent out to homeowners requesting that they contact the Planning office to make an appointment for an inspection and have their file closed.

## **17 Adam Street**

Mayor L. Boucher welcomed guests J. Dee, owner of 17 Adam Street and Contractor A. Cameron to the Planning Advisory Committee meeting.

B. Nheiley advised the committee that she had met on site with J. Dee and his contractor A. Cameron to address the tentative progress on the berm and delineation of the wetlands. She provided a copy of a letter from the neighbourhood outlining their concerns that the barrier consisting of a berm and plantings had not been completed as per DA 2-13.

*[Letters from neighbourhood (circulated to PAC on July 28, 2017) generally concern the following:*

- *increase in building size is not felt to be minor;*
- *height and depth of berm should be adequate to provide effective visual and sound barrier; and*
- *location of proposed new structure should not diminish effective buffering.]*

J. Dee, owner explained how he had been working towards addressing the concerns of the neighbours. He outlined the steps taken to date:

- relocate the line of dumpsters from the residents' view
- and that he had built a new toolroom and lunch room to move things into a quieter area
- working to make his business more accessible to the public.
- He advised, with respect to the plantings, that he was unable to find willows for planting but has several greenhouses looking to secure the required trees and that he is hoping to have them by fall.

J. Dee asked that A. Cameron explain why the berm can't be completed at this time.

Contractor, A. Cameron explained that in order to properly excavate for the new building he would destroy the berm and that from a cost effect and common sense approach he has advised J. Dee that once the building is completed the berm can be started immediately and the plantings installed.

J. Dee noted that Eastern Sanitation has their own excavator and that the work would start immediately following the build.

S. Day asked whether construction of the berm could commence at the other end. J. Dee noted that he is having trouble obtaining good materials.

Mayor L. Boucher reiterated that the neighbourhood's initial concerns were noise, visual and smell.

J. Dee advised that by having the machinery enclosed and by removing the compactors it will greatly reduce the noise.

Discussion followed on visual concerns. Committee members present agreed that the berm and plantings would be required to satisfy the requirements of Development Agreement 2.13. However, it was noted that to create the berm and plantings to then have them potentially destroyed by the excavation for the new building would be wasteful and costly to the developer. The committee members noted that a timeline for completion of the berm would need to be strictly adhered to and that while the willow trees may not be available at the present time they could be ordered and the area where they will be staked off by a surveyor to show where they will be placed when available.

J. Dee reiterated that as soon as the building is completed he would begin the creation of the berm and that he was in total agreement with the stipulation that he would be denied occupancy of the new building until the berm and plantings are completed.

J. Dee noted that by relocating the row of dumpsters the adjacent neighbours have a better view. The new building he advised will allow for the removal of the old compactors (currently in front). Further he commented that by moving the machinery inside the new building he will be able to expand his business to better serve his customers while cutting down on the noise. He clarified that the increase in the size of the building is to store more material inside not to further increase the amount of equipment.

S. Day commented that the new policy was created to address the changes of solid waste management with the added benefit to the community of mitigating visual impact, noise and smell to adjacent properties.

Mayor L. Boucher summarized. She noted noise issues have been addressed. Concerns of smell have been addressed. She clarified that the issue to be determined is whether the increase in the size of the building from the original proposed size of approximately 4500 sq ft to the maximum size permissible (7500 sq. ft.) without a development permit is a major or minor variance. She instructed that an e-poll be sent to all Planning Advisory Committee members on Friday, August 4 and that members be asked to respond by Tuesday, August 8.

J. Dee thanked the committee for their time and consideration of his proposal. He stressed that his contractor would be willing to start the work as soon as approval was granted and that the proposed work would be completed in October, the berm would be created as soon as the building was completed, and the plantings would be put in place before he received his occupancy. He reiterated that the larger building would allow him to store more materials inside. He noted that it is a pleasure to be able to have his business in town, to be able to have a safe work area for his staff, to be able to expand his business and to provide the waste services to the citizens. He acknowledged that in order to meet the Fall planting schedule he would need to get the building started as soon as possible.

### **Meeting adjourned.**

*E-poll motion.*

### **Motion**

*" That the PAC recommend to Council that the proposed 7500 sq ft building for 17 Adam Street be viewed as a minor variance providing the owner complete the berm and plantings for the buffer to comply with DA 2.13 before being granted occupancy.*

*Results: All Planning Advisory Committee Respondents agreed to recommend to council. **Motion approved.***