

Planning Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

October 5, 2017

Town Council Chambers

Present

Mayor L. Boucher, Chair
Deputy Mayor, W. Cormier
J. Lawrence, CAO

B. Gottschall, Vice Chair
C. Hanlon
C. Henderson
K. Silver
J. Sullivan
S. Day, Director of Planning
K. MacInnis, Planner
D. Halfpenny, Secretary

Absent

Councillor D. MacInnis
P. Andersen, StFX Representative
J. Kerr

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:20 p.m. and welcome K. MacInnis, Planner.

Approval of Agenda

"It was moved and seconded, that the Agenda for the Planning Advisory Committee meeting of October 5, 2017." Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes from June

"It was moved and seconded, that the Minutes of June, 2017 be approved." Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

"It was moved and seconded, that the Minutes of September 7, 2017 be approved." Motion carried.

Conflict of Interest

Mayor C. Boucher, Chair reviewed MGA requirements concerning conflict of interest.

Mayor Boucher disclosed that she and her husband had recently purchased a mixed use building at 284 Main which currently contains four apartments. She explained that she wanted to be totally transparent and advised that their plans are to develop the existing

apartments into a personal living space upon expiration of the current leases in April. She noted therefore, that she would be declaring a conflict of interest concerning the topic of lodging residences.

C. Henderson, and C. Hanlon declared a conflict of interest concerning lodging residences.

Deputy Mayor, W. Cormier advised that by not declaring conflict, and to be found in conflict may create issues with decisions rendered. He noted that the staff report to date is recommending an amendment to the Land Use Bylaw that would see residential units featuring more than 4 rented bedrooms deemed to be a Lodging Residence. Those located in the R1 zone would become legal, non-conforming units. It is anticipated that these would go on a registry and, over time, be brought into compliance with reasonable life safety provisions. He reiterated that landlords that may be sitting at the table that have not declared conflict which have rental properties with more than four or five bedrooms may taint a vote. He noted that it is a very serious matter and that as an elected official he felt obligated to the constituents to make sure those in conflict declared.

Department Updates

K. MacInnis, Planner

The Chair noted that Kerby MacInnis has joined the Planning Department for a three month term as Planner/Development Officer and asked that K. MacInnis provide a brief introduction of her work experience.

K. MacInnis explained that she had just finished up a work term with Eastern District Planning Commission. She gave a brief description of her educational background. She commented that she is happy to have returned home to Antigonish and is excited to contribute.

S. Day noted that K. MacInnis will be focusing primarily on the parking calculation amendments with respect to uses such as the new Brian Mulroney Building and the Legion/CACL St Ninian project in the next three months. Current Parking calculations do not relate well to uses of these types.

C. Henderson commented that parking in R1 zone in the Land Use ByLaw should be updated as in the '70s one car families were the norm and now most families have two or three vehicles and additionally lodging residents in and R1 zone often have greater occupancy than an R1 single family unit.

S. Day responded that parking issues in the R1 zone is recognized as one of the growing problems associated with an increase in the number of bedrooms. He commented that because larger family homes are purchased and often no permits sought to increase the

number of bedrooms there is a missed opportunity to inform property owners on parking requirements and restrictions as to what can happen on site.

S. Day noted that commercial parking requirements need to be updated, especially with regard to the Mall where having staff complete new parking calculations with every change to a suite at the Mall would not be a practical use of staff time.

Proposed Developments

74 Church St.

74 Church Street Street owner is proposing an ambitious project which would require he consolidate this property with his adjacent property, demolish an older house and rezone the combined properties. His proposal is to develop a 20-unit building and he would like it to be 4 storeys which is currently not an option. S. Day identified that hard surface requirements and tight setbacks would also be a challenge for this development.

S. Day advised that there are many challenges with this project and there is a long way to go before anything can happen. He noted however, that the units would be primarily 2 bedroom and 1 bedroom units which would be attractive. Staff will continue to work with the developer toward an agreeable result.

116 Church Street Rezoning

Mayor L. Boucher indicated that a rezoning of 116 Church Street from R1 to R2 had been approved by Council. She stressed the MGA guidelines to advertise public hearing were followed as required. She noted that signage was placed on the site, an advertisement was placed in local newspaper the Casket as well as the Highland Heart. Mayor Boucher advised that these measures are identified in the MGA as requirements however, Council is prepared to make changes to go above and beyond these minimum standards. She advised that two owners of a nearby property were appealing the decision, largely as a consequence of their belief that insufficient notice was given, but also due to their concern over the impact on the community.

Dr. R. Sers, one of the two appellants, commented that he doesn't read the Casket newspaper or pick up the Highland Heart and hadn't noticed the sign on the property at 116 Church Street. He mentioned his concerns for Commercial Periphery issues on this property.

The Chair explained that Commercial Periphery is not a part of the Church Street area and is restricted to the downtown core and is a separate amendment to the Land Use ByLaw. She noted that the rezoning would permit a flag lot to be developed behind the existing property. She stated that at present there is no plan for such a development to occur.

S. Day stated that 116 Church is a L-shaped lot and, with site plan approval, has the potential for subdivision allowing the erection of a two unit house.

Dr. Sers commented that there is a plan to create a watermain loop by creating an easement at 112 Church Street and that he had received a notice in his mailbox identifying that the work would be taking place.

Mayor L. Boucher stated yes, notices were sent out by the Engineering Department in conjunction with the contractor to advise that work will be taking place as a courtesy and to advise of traffic issues. She reiterated that in the future the Town of Antigonish would go above and beyond and are currently looking at a policy to send memos to those in affected areas which will go beyond the requirements listed in the Municipal Government Act..

Dr. Sers asked about the development of 112 Church Street.

The Chair stated that currently the property is owned by the Town of Antigonish and future plans are to sell the property with an easement. She noted that the purchaser would determine what they propose to build on the site.

S. Day commented that currently those proposing new developments or rezoning are encouraged to contact the adjacent property owners and to discuss their projects and obtain support from their neighbours for their proposed project.

Deputy Mayor W. Cormier noted that when a variance is applied for the neighbours receive a letter asking for identification of any concerns about a proposed project. He noted that he would advocate that the same should be done for notices of rezoning.

Discussion followed on changing ways of how people receive news. Website posting, changes in role of newspapers, use of such tools as the Talk of the Town and placing notices in with town electric bills, etc.

Mayor Boucher acknowledged that notices in electric bills has been discussed as an option.

52 Victoria Street

The Chair advised that the owner of 52 Victoria Street had appealed a decision by Council to refuse the rezoning of his property to R2. Mediation is being looked at whereby the property owner will submit a detailed plan outlining how he plans to address the neighbouring property owner's concerns such as dealing with surface water, privacy concerns etc. She advised it should be to the satisfaction of all not just the neighbours. Then if council agrees the development could take place through a Development Agreement which would necessitate further PAC involvement and public hearing process with a mediated agreement to be sent back to Council, public hearings would take place to ensure it addresses neighbours concerns and meets policies of the Town.

S. Day stressed the importance of having a developer having a site plan, including a visual of the proposed building and speaking with adjacent property owners to gather support for the project. He noted that it is difficult for neighbours to clearly understand what is going on without seeing what a developer is proposing to build on the property. He noted that a plan would identify how placement of windows, etc could address privacy concerns.

60 Victoria St.

S. Day noted that the owner was originally looking at creating a private street behind the original house and developing a row of town houses. He explained the owner is discouraged as the Town doesn't have a new flood model approved and the updated flood model would enable him to do a larger development. S. Day commented that he is looking within his budget to continue with the floodplain research.

7 Adam Street

S. Day reported that he had just taken over the file from B. Nheiley and that the project was under Site Plan Approval. He advised that there were a few more hurdles but the permits are expected to be issued soon. He noted he was waiting for some drawings concerning site water management.

Parking Amendments

S. Day reiterated that K. MacInnis is assigned to work on this project.

Town and Gown

S. Day reported that a Town and Gown meeting with Mount Allison and Town, STFX will be taking place October 23, 2017. He noted that Mount Allison is heading the project and have held like meetings with Wolfville and Acadia. The process he advised is to create better relations between universities and the community.

Commercial Periphery

Copy is getting prepared for the Town website.

Mobile Home Park

The Phase 1 Risk Assessment has been completed (by Emergency Solutions International) and discussions have taken place with the Mini Home Park owners.

In Phase 2, the Park owners will be required to carry out detailed assessments, on a park by park basis. These would then inform agreements between the Town and individual park owners regarding life safety improvements. S. Day noted that the Town will monitor the progress with park owners to ensure they continue the momentum.

Deputy Mayor Cormier stated that it is important to stay on top of the park owners during Phase 2 to ensure that liability issues are addressed. He stressed it is safety concerns for residents is the top priority.

Discussion followed on the need to maintain a compassionate approach for low income residents living in the parks and to make sure housing options are available for these residents.

All agreed that the best interest of the residents is the primary focus and that no one should have to live in unsafe conditions.

Ron MacGillivray Chev Olds

S. Day noted that T-Mac Auto Glass had relocated to a new location on St. Andrew's St. and that R. MacGillivray, owner of the previous location, was proposing to demolish the building and develop the property into a car lot. Further, he is not interested in having another building on the site. S. Day explained that currently there are limitations on creating a car lot at that location. While options are being explored, he noted that as it was a Gateway property it may not be the best use of the site.

Lodging Residence

Mayor L. Boucher removed herself from the table. Vice Chair B. Gottschall moved into the Chair position at the table. C. Henderson and C. Hanlon removed themselves from the table.

S. Day reviewed the definitions for Lodging Residence, Lodging Unit, and Rooming House. He spoke of permitted uses in an R1 zone and how the committee had held public meetings with the Antigonish Rental association to remove the word rooming house renaming it lodging residence to remove any negative connotation.

S. Day did a brief review of staff report on lodging houses.

Motion

"A motion was made and seconded that Council approve the recommendations contained in the staff report which would set the limit on the number of rented bedrooms contained within a residential unit in an R1 zone to a maximum of four along with other, related changes." Vote call with Deputy Mayor W. Cormier and Vice Chair B. Gottschall in favour and J. Sullivan and Kim Silver against. Motion defeated.

Mayor L. Boucher returned to chair the meeting. C. Henderson and C. Hanlon returned to the meeting.

Highland Building Signage

Councillor D. Roberts was invited to join the meeting to outline concern noted during election campaigning from residents of Ross Street that had large trucks turning on their street.

S. Day commented that this would be a traffic authority matter and that he was advised by S. Smith, Traffic Authority that a sign to indicate no large trucks on Ross Street would solve the problem. S. Day further suggested that the owner or manager of Highland Building

Supplies be contacted and asked to inform his drivers and those making deliveries to his store that 18 wheelers are not to turn onto Ross Street.

Councillor D. Roberts indicated that she had spoke to the manager at Highland Building Supplies who wanted to inquire about a directional business sign being placed in the Town.

S. Day stated that the Town By-Laws prohibit such a sign from being placed in the Town except in cases where Council agrees there is a community interest. Commercial signage would not normally meet that test. He advised that the owner of operation should contact the County of Antigonish about placing a directional sign on County Property which borders on Brierly Brook Rd.

D. Roberts indicated she would speak to the manager at Highland Home Building about contacting the Municipality of the County about directional signage.

STFX Home Coming 2017

S. Day reported that the RCMP had indicated it was an extremely troubling event in regard to open liquor violations, destruction of property, and drug possession charges. He noted two major parties had occurred: one in The Village which saw the congregation of over 1000 students and the second party spot as being between two rental properties on Viewville.

The Chair outlined what steps had been taken by the Town and University to attempt to curtail such outcomes. She advised that policing was increased. She noted that the university has taken notice and that work will continue to try to prevent such an occurrence from happening again. She stressed what can be done by the Town, StFX and RCMP but stated that no one can control people from being jerks.

S. Day reiterated that studies show that binge drinking is more common when a larger number of people under the age of 25 live together, often for the first time on their own, and often subject themselves to peer pressure. He stated that the brain is not fully developed until 25 and stated that this is one of the reasons to limited the number of bedrooms in an R1 zone.

Discussion followed. Comments were made about the great job S. Smith does to contact landlords and keep them informed, landlords responsibilities, need for further education for landlords and students, importance of dealing with facts and not emotions, and addressing policies.

Motion

"It was moved and seconded, that the meeting be adjourned." Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.