



**Virtual Public Information Meeting
Case 23820**

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

**Monday, February 7th, 2021
6 p.m.
Virtual**

STAFF IN

ATTENDANCE: Ross Grant, Planner, Planner II, HRM Regional Planning
Ben Sivak, Program Policy Manager
Kasia Tota, Principal Planner
Bryan Maponga, Planning Controller, HRM Planning

ALSO IN

ATTENDANCE: Stephanie Mah – Applicant, Clayton Developments Limited
Connor Wallace – Applicant, Zzap Architecture & Planning
Kevin Neatt – Applicant, Clayton Developments Limited
Scott MacCaullum - Applicant, Clayton Developments Limited
Sam Austin (District 5) - Councillor

PUBLIC IN

ATTENDANCE: Approximately: 87

1. Call to order and Introductions – Ben Sivak, Planner.

Case 23820: Southdale Future Growth Node - Application by Halifax Regional Council to amend the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (RCSMPS), the Regional Centre Land Use By-law (RCLUB), and a concurrent development agreement process to develop a master neighborhood plan for the Southdale Future Growth Node (FGN).

Mr. Sivak went through the agenda of the night and the participation-related (Q&A) portion of the meeting. Mr. Sivak, introduced himself and the rest of the HRM staff present at the meeting, including the area Councillor for District 5, Sam Austin. Before handing it Ross Grant for HRMs presentation, Mr. Sivak introduced the key stakeholders from Clayton Developments and Zzap Architecture + Planning who were representing the landowners at this meeting.

2. Presentations

2a) Presentation by HRM Staff – Mr. Ross Grant

Mr. Grant's presentation included information on the following:

- (a) the purpose of the meeting
 - Introduce the planning process and share information
 - Listen and collect questions and comments relating to the Case
 - Share other opportunities to provide feedback - no decisions were made at this meeting;
- (b) the role of HRM staff through the planning process;
- (c) Project Introduction and policy-related information.
- (d) a brief description of the application including application history, application proposal, site context, proposal, planning policies & what the planning process is; and the two

proposals that have been submitted. Noting;

- Specific development proposals cannot be considered on the site until policies are approved by Regional Council
- The landowners submit studies for review and are engaged during the policy phase

(e) Ended noting that more engagement will take place and status of the application.

2b) Presentation by Kevin Neat, Scott McCullum and Connor Wallace – Applicant

Mr. Neatt talked about Clayton Developments Limited and their involvement on behalf of the applicant and their history as a developer. He presented the master plan and the proposal including background, design, and vision for the site; including but not limited to, what the surrounding area is like, access to the site, concept plan, active transportation networks, and leisure opportunities throughout the area. Mr. Wallace spoke about how the concept was looked at from a planning policy lens. Specifically speaking on policies and plan objectives that relate to the application. Mr. Wallace presented the technical studies that have been done and gave a brief overview of the results. Mr. McCullum spoke on the stormwater management plan and the key features and objectives they will use as governing principles for the plan.

3. Questions and Comments

Mr. Sivak welcomed attendees to ask questions to staff and the presenters and provide their feedback, including what they liked and disliked about the proposal. Attendees that were connected via Teams webcast were called upon to provide their comments and questions.

(1) Questions from people connected via MS Teams

Ben Sivak invited the speakers from the public, one at a time, to unmute themselves and provide their comments:

(i) **Margret - Hastings Drive**

Issues concerning the environmental effects of the presented projects. Her concerns included;

- Wetlands and how the projects will impact the sizes of the wetlands and, the specific intend size of the wetland. There was no specificity given in the report. Further, the effects of runoff on the wetlands and other species within the wetland.
- The Buffer is not clearly shown in the drawings for the development. Nor information on the slopes and how it will adhere to the 20m.

(ii) **Bill Zebedee – Clement Street/ Protect Eisner Cove Wetland Society**

He is representing a group called the Protect the Eisner Cove Wetland. As a member, he is concerned that the eco-sensitivity of the wetland will not be maintained if the project moves forward. The services of the wetland are not being retained regardless of remediation efforts and asks the developer and HRM's planning and development staff to explain and address his concerns. His questions included;

- Where are the supports for the bridge that will cross the wetland and are they within the 20m buffer zone and have permits for this been approved by the province? Further, what is the plan for salt and other runoff contaminants from entering the body of water and damaging the wetland?
- What sell and or rent prices are anticipated for the housing developments? Are the prices attainable?
- He asked the planning department to explain the inclusion site map plan 2 and the buffer zone restrictions.

Kevin Neatt: Spoke on the attainable vs affordability and topic and how they will be working with stakeholders and different levels of government to define and create an affordable housing

product that is representative of the demographic. Mr. Neatt stressed that the average rent and cost will be determined at an early date as this is still in the early stages of the process. At this point, they are analyzing topographic information to ensure the slope and the plan stay within stipulated guidelines of sloping around the wetland. If it requires an additional buffer they will adjust accordingly.

Scott MacCallum: Thanked Bill for his questions and the role they play in ensuring due diligence. Proceeded to mention how any adjustment to the wetland will go through a consultation process that involves different levels of government and government-affiliated organizations. Wetland delineation was completed in June 2021 and determined the wetland to be 23 acres in size and the proposed alteration is rooted in mitigative procedures that only account for 2 of the 23 acres of the wetland. The design of the wetland is determined by a combination of factors and due diligent processes across all government levels. These, in turn, follow a mitigative sequence that ultimately looks to enhance wetland health and reduce degradation from salt and other nutrients.

Ross Grant – Mr Grant spoke on the wetland buffer that was mentioned, specifically asking residents to point out any errors they might see from the delineation of the slope.

(iii) **Tara Lepoint – Woodside/Marvin Street:**

Tara is a resident of the area and is speaking as a member/participant of the Protect Eisner Cove Wetland Society to voice their opposition to the development as a whole. Spoke about the eco-services provided by the wetland, specifically, the carbon sequestration potential of this wetland and its benefit as a habitat for deer and other native flora and fauna. Stressed that the preservation of eco-sensitive systems is integral in creating a thriving community and the need for Green Space is similarly essential for mental health purposes. Her questions were;

- What is the monitoring and mitigation plan for potentially elevated PH levels as a result of this development? Is this going to be tracked and mitigated throughout the lifespan of the project?
- What is going to be done to mitigate the displacement of the animals?

Scott MacCallum: The key piece for PH monitoring is the Wetland Alteration Application Process which was submitted November 2021 and has since led to a series of questions and exchanges with the province, specifically, the terms of reference for monitoring procedures. This is to be taken into consideration as they continue to move forward with the design work for this wetland alteration. Looking at pH is not something that is typical from a wetland alteration but again the monitoring requirements are specific to each different wetland and complexities are related to other sensory sensitivities within each of the respective watershed

Kevin Neatte: The displacement of animals is unfortunate and it's the trade-off for development, however, the retainment of green space is aimed at ensuring some species remain on site and don't migrate.

(iv) **Susan Van Iderstine:**

I just have a short question and it is this why is the city are the province and the developers replacing a carbon-sequestering area for a carbon-producing development? There's plenty of room out at the corner of Main Street and Forest Hill drives for their development if not the Woodside area. Despite the development representing the need for housing in the city, its location will add stress to the wetland and its eco-services. The land suitability analysis that was done was largely a desktop analysis and it does not make mention of the methodology and nor its timeline.

Ross Grant reiterated that there the process has several guiding plans policies that would protect the wetland and the natural areas in this space. The plans include a watercourse buffer that will help further protect the wetland and guide development. In relation to location, the Regional Centre plan and the Integrated Mobility Plan are documents that identified this area for potential future growth and being places where development can occur through a comprehensive process.

Connor Wallace, spoke about the land suitability assessment and assured that it's being shared with different agencies and experts to see if there's any gaps or missing information. The assessment was provided by an external consultant and it included a desktop analysis portion and also a field study investigation as part of that analysis; as well as the developments impact on the environmental feature with regards to the species at risk.

Scott MacCallum, the consultant would've completed the wetland delineation on our behalf specifically in the growing season, I believe June 2021. It included a species at risk desktop review which looked at both fauna and flora species. It would have identified 29 fauna species that are rated S1 and S2 within a 5 km perimeter radius of the particular sites. During this process there were no specific species that were identified so no species at risk were observed from a fauna perspective. When they looked at flora species, they were twelve flora species identified within a 5 kilometer radius of the subject site and during their field delineation in June 2021 no specific species at risk were observed on the site and that's specific to this particular wetland.

(v) **Lil MacPherson:**

I'm an Atlantic mentor for the climate project head and my main reason why I'm calling in today. Last year HRM unanimously voted that we are in a climate change emergency and promised to cut emissions through the HalifACT 2050 plan and, advocated for more nature based solutions. It's really important we that before any development gets done we talk and think about climate change first and how the development affects that process. This area is a very delicate amazing area and it provides an amazing service for us in Dartmouth. In relation to this, has there been a study for the amount of carbon that will be released into the atmosphere if development begins? Also, has this carbon been costed and added to the price of development?

Ben Sivak: These are great questions and things to consider moving forward.

(vi) **Mark Davis:**

Spoke about his personal connection to the area and its potential for storm surges that can be harmful to human life and kids. Further, the new development will lead to an influx of new residents and he believes the services in this area will not be able to withstand the demand that the new development will bring. The current school in the area is maxed out and he hasn't heard of any plans to build a new school and or expand the current. Does the current design for the new buildings allow for more greenery on rooftops and bigger yards in comparison to the other developments that have been commissioned in the past? Will the apartments have underground parking?

Ross Grant: In relation to the school board and the anticipated increased demand, the Halifax Regional Centre for Education is one of our reviewers involved in the project so they are aware of this proposed development and will be with us along the way.

(vii) **Harvey Heaton:**

Mr Heaton is not happy with the development and had a few questions. He was disgruntled by the fact that some of the information provided in the presentations were not available prior to the meeting and he hopes that it doesn't persist this way during the rest of the process.

- What are the setbacks for the various types of those dwellings and what is the width of the roads? Mr Heaton did not see any of this information in the proposal and documents online.
- What are the setbacks for each dwelling and the road sizes?
- What is the parking for the various types of gross dwellings, single vehicle garages? Do the parking driveways have the room for two cars? If not what happens in winter?
- Are there sidewalks on their proposed roadways; Is it on one side of the street or two?
- The proposed pedestrian trails lead to the eastern corner private property; I don't believe they can do that; can they please address this.
- Echoed Mr. Davis concerns about the proposed impact on local schooling district. Presently Dartmouth South academies design capacity of 690 students and is at 640.
- Since the access to the wetland is a causeway and not a bridge how would that design affect the wetland in question?
- Going by the developers' figures there are 31.2 hectares of forested land and that's including their portion for the proposal. There's a proposal to have 23 hectares of that to become asphalt. Lately, we've seen some pretty violent rainstorms; what is the plan for the present storm sewers? Are they planning on getting into those that are already in place?

Ben Sivak: noted that Ross has their contact email address and will follow up on some of the questions. Reinforced the point that this process is in its preliminary stages and new information will be communicated as it gets refined by various agencies and stakeholders.

Kevin Neatte: Echoed Mr. Sivak's sentiments on communication and offered to get in touch with Mr. Heaton and set up a meeting to go through the information supporting the proposal.

(viii) Peter Lutton:

Mr Lutton is against this development for environmental reasons, his main issues being;

- The discharge from surface and groundwater into the wetland and its subsequent impact; not only from the siltation point of view but any contaminants that may be in the surface and groundwater and whether there will be sufficient recharge into that wetland. The surface water management plan does a good job at looking at permeable pavers, biofilters, and bioswales, however, what is the overburden type is?
- Where is the surface water proposed to be directed to? Is it just to the wetland or is it going to be directed to Neptune Crescent?
- He would like information on any data that has been submitted for the aforementioned study, specifically, information regarding design criteria and their significance to 100-year storms vs 200-year storms. plans for bedrock excavation etc. The migration of wildlife is concerning; where they're going to escape once there is a disturbance to their habitat? Highway 111 is close to this area, this is a major area of concern for both humans and wildlife; is there any way to consider escorting wildlife outside of the area so they can get to another safe location?

Scott MacCallum: From a site perspective due diligence is a focal point of the project and the test pits themselves were focusing on what is the organic layer and what's the silty sand, among other things. The interface between the bottom of the silty sand and the clay is what the proposal aims to manage and make sure that from a construction perspective, you're not seeing any of that increasing groundwater flows in that impervious strata. The proposal references the naturalized wetland and its alterations following the water commission requirements as per their models and standards. They have been working closely with the water commission to analyze data, specifically that of Clement street and its role in their planned combined sewer diversion efforts in the next few years.

(ix) Jacob Fillmore – Collingdale Street, Halifax:

Mr Fillmore thanked the developers for the meeting and the land acknowledgement. However, he is against the development and is concerned about its environmental impacts. Further, Mr. Fillmore was interested in knowing what the consultation process is and whether indigenous communities were consulted and engaged? Further, the potential displacement of animals and the loss of greenery and a natural carbon sequester in the urban core, is an area of concern.

(x) Liam Fraser:

Mr Fraser is concerned about the pricing range of these houses when completed and that other current developments are not expensive and may not be affordable for the local population. Further, Mr Fraser spoke about the proposed design for the wetland and asked for further information on the proposed culvert instead of a bridge. Specifically, the decision process to infill and use a causeway instead of a bridge. He reiterated the increased propensity of storms and asked for more clarity on how the anticipated runoff from increased impermeable surfaces is being accounted for in the proposal.

Ben Sivak – Mr Sivak reiterated that all presented documents and or plans are still under review and scrutiny, this meeting is preliminary and all updated information will be communicated and further consultation will be done.

Scott MacCaullum: From a design perspective road one which we're referencing, is the proposed road that will bisect the wetland. From a watercourse perspective there's no water and any connectivity within this actual wetland itself and the surface water. The rockfill is designed to ensure that you got brown flows that are contiguous on both sides of wetlands so that that you know the wetland will survive an extreme measure and winter event; surface connectivity with the introduction of a culvert and the culvert will be oversized to accommodate both.

(xi) Joe Mingroove:

Mr. Mingroove is concerned about the health of the wetland and the direction it will take the community. The proposal for the development is great but the location is not given it is impeding on greenery and green space. Noted that destroying the wetland for the benefit of housing is not justifiable given all the comments his other peers have made throughout the meeting. The value of wetlands is not something as controversial and asks that an independent study by an organization that is approved by the Protect EISner a Wetland Society so that we can be confident that any type of development would protect the wetland. Further, the initial sale of land was not advertised adequately and Mr Mingrove is disgruntled by the level of community engagement that has happened thus far and the lack of it.

Ross Grant: Mr Grant reiterated that the application is also being reviewed by the province, specifically the wetland alteration proposal. Their review will determine the validity of the proposal and suggest adjustments per their protocols and standards.

(xii) David Foster:

Mr Foster is a resident of Hawthorne drive and like other members, is concerned about the strain and stress this development will put on the wetland and its water retention services and the sewer plans; he feels not enough planning and consideration has been given. Noted, despite this being preliminary, the level of detail that is currently provided is not extensive. The planned park is .89 hectares which is small in comparison the that of Russell lake, Russell lakes are two times as big as what is proposed here but their park is four times as large. Given that this is going to serve the surrounding community as well not just the new development, wouldn't the proposed park need to be larger than .89 hectares? His further concern was on walkability, the only connection in that direction right now would be Mount Hope, and Mount Hope is very inhospitable to pedestrians. He wants to know if there's any other way to cross the highway that doesn't involve pedestrians walking along what feels very much like a highway given we're trying to build sustainable communities and walkability is an important part of that.

(xiii) Ben Paddon:

Mr Paddon expressed support for the prior mentioned wetlands group and their petition. He raised concerns about the traffic and its impact on Portland street and other surrounding streets outside the 500-meter radius the study used.

(xiv) David Griffith:

Mr Griffith asked the developers and everyone involved put greater emphasis on multi-unit buildings because they have a smaller carbon footprint is much and would require less energy to maintain and accommodate a lot more people and greenery.

(xv) David Jones:

Mr. Jones thanked everyone for attending and expressed his gratitude and joy to see this much interest from the public. He noticed that the project has significant opposition and hopes the necessary stakeholders take these concerns seriously and include residence in the decision-making.

(xvi) Bill Campbell (questions posted in the chat):

- Integrated Mobility Plan - HRM's Integrated Mobility Plan has as its foundation four Pillars to create Connected, Healthy, Affordable and Sustainable travel options throughout HRM. These Pillars call for giving people choices to reach out-of-home destinations using active transportation or transit modes, enabling those choices for persons of all ages and those with physical, visual, auditory and mental disabilities, and providing means of access to those who cannot afford a car or choose not to.
 - How will the planning process ensure the proposed development is aligned with the foundational pillars of the IMP?
- Municipal Design Guidelines - A brilliant enhancement to the HRM Municipal Design Guidelines (Red Book) is the Complete Streets analysis process. It supports the planning and design process to carry out the direction of the IMP. It includes defining the context (Place or Link) of each street, establishing its objectives, collecting data including a Multi Modal Level of Service

analysis, and conducting an iterative design process. It may be that the Southdale concept plan shown on Shape Your City was developed prior to adoption of and without the benefit of this process. Two questions:

- Will the Complete Streets process be used in the design of the Southdale lands; and
- What will be the public engagement opportunities during the process, in particular during the design iterations?
- Public Engagement - The Regional Planning process underway now has identified the shortcomings of HRM Public Engagement practices. "...traditional engagement tools often only reach those who are already engaged or have the loudest voices and have left many others out of the conversation. Alone, these tools produce narrow representation in terms of demographics, perspectives and experiences." There have been improvements recently including the Dartmouth North AT Project engagement practices, conducted in part during the Covid period, and the development of a public engagement guidebook, built with modern engagement principles.
 - How will this project's processes use inclusive and equitable public engagement processes to truly make sure all voices are heard?
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 - How will this project's processes use inclusive and equitable public engagement processes to truly make sure all voices are heard?

(xvii) Norma Welch:

What opportunity is there for the public to follow this process?

(xviii) Anonymous Guest:

The proponents spoke of a mix of land uses, in particular affordable or attainable housing. I did not hear the mention of Shared Housing forms in the mix. On the face of it, Shared Housing could be the most affordable form of all those described. Will Shared Housing be considered in the housing mix

4. Closing Comments

Mr. Ross closed off the meeting with a slide on further communication and engagement. Mr. Sivak thanked everyone for their participation in the meeting.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:10 p.m.