

WEST HANTS PLAN REVIEW
Public Review Meeting
Centre Falmouth Community Hall
June 19, 2007, 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair Shirley Pineo
Warden Richard Dauphinee
Deputy Warden Gary Cochrane
Councillor Reed Allen
Councillor Randy Matheson
Councillor Tom Brown
Councillor Anne MacDonald
Councillor Gloria Shanks
Councillor Rick Gaudet
Ms. Traci Curry

STAFF: Lynn Davis, Director of Planning
Jane Sodero, Senior Planner
Tracy Robinson, Planning Technician
Velma Macumber, Administrative Assistant

ABSENT: Mr. John Shanks

Members of the Public: 44

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Pineo introduced the Planning Advisory Committee members and staff.

Presentation of proposed Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law

Ms. Davis welcomed the members of the public. Ms. Davis explained the purpose of the meeting was to present the first drafts of the proposed Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law and to receive comments from the public. Once the community meetings have been completed, PAC will be reviewing the comments received to decide how to proceed. Ms. Davis stated that assuming the draft planning documents move forward to the formal adoption process, a public hearing will be held so the public will have another opportunity to give comments. She suggested written comments should be submitted by the end of July 2007.

Ms. Davis stated she would only highlight the main changes in the documents, and emphasized that the public should take time to read the documents and review the maps.

Ms. Davis gave an hour long Power Point presentation explaining the designations established

by the MPS, the zones within each designation and the process for rezoning and development agreements to allow various uses.

The meeting recessed at 8:15 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:30 p.m.

Questions and Comments from public

Chair Pineo opened the floor for questions and comments from the public.

Annie Wilson asked if Mount Denson being designated as a Hamlet had any influence on why it was taken off the list for municipal water. She stated that the community had been promised for many years that they were going to get municipal water. Ms. Davis advised that under these planning documents, following great discussion by PAC, it is proposed that services will not be provided outside of the Growth Centres because the cost of extending water and sewer in the rural areas is extremely high. Ms. Davis advised that the Municipality has done a number of studies over the years that looked at the cost for providing services in Brooklyn and Mount Denson. Ms. Davis noted that when the estimates came back and were presented to the residents, the cost was unaffordable.

Ms. Wilson asked if existing farms would still be permitted in the Hamlets. Ms. Davis advised that in the Hamlets, existing active farms would be zoned AR-3. There is also a provision for household livestock, where a small number of livestock are permitted accessory to a residential dwelling provided there is a large enough lot. Ms. Davis stated that as for legal existing farm operations, they are grandfathered. Ms. Wilson asked if cows could be brought back to the farm once they have been removed. Ms. Davis suggested that Ms. Wilson contact the Planning Department if she had a specific property she would like to discuss.

Stan Kochanoff commended Planning Staff for the work done on the Plan Review with the planning documents and maps. Mr. Kochanoff asked why apartment buildings were not considered in Falmouth. He advised that there were some business people who have expressed interest in locating apartment buildings near the highway. Mr. Kochanoff also asked why the intersection of Falmouth Dyke and Town Roads was not identified as a commercial core area. He felt the intersection was a hub of activity in the community with the store, the school and the community hall. Mr. Kochanoff also asked why provisions to control noise were not included in the planning documents. Ms. Davis stated with respect to apartment buildings, that the Municipality has had extensive consultations in Falmouth with regard to multi residential development. The Planning Advisory Committee heard that residents were not in favour of apartment buildings. This is why multi-residential dwellings and apartment buildings in particular, are limited. Ms. Davis stated in terms of the intersection of Falmouth Dyke and Town Roads being a commercial core area, again what they heard from Falmouth residents over the years was that they were not in favour of commercial development in residential areas. Mr. Kochanoff stated that perhaps commercial development such as plaza may be suitable for the area. He stated from a planning perspective, he thought that walking to these places would be more acceptable than driving. Ms. Davis stated that this may be something that the Committee may want to revisit. Ms. Davis stated that in terms of noise, the Municipality has no way to address the matter in the MPS or the LUB, except that for other development agreements or

rezonings, there may be a specific policy that would require Council to consider noise issues with respect to a proposed commercial or industrial development.

Claude Davidson noted that apartment buildings can be noisy, and asked what was meant by a development agreement. Ms. Davis pointed out that apartment buildings will not be permitted in Falmouth. She explained that a development agreement is a contract between the Municipality and a property owner which specifies how a development is to occur and what type of development is allowed. When considering a development agreement, there are specific policies that have to be considered such as if the use is compatible with surrounding land uses, the development pattern, and vehicle and pedestrian traffic. PAC reviews a staff report which outlines the policies to determine if the application meets those requirements. The development agreement is site-specific and can address details such as the hours of operation, and buffering needed such as landscaping or fencing. If PAC feels the proposal is appropriate and meets the policies, a recommendation is made to Council for approval. A public hearing is required and notices are sent to property owners within 300 feet of the subject property. If Council approves the proposal, a Notice of Approval is published in the local newspaper with a 14-day appeal period. If no appeals are filed with the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board, the development agreement is signed and then registered at the Registry of Deeds, and then comes into effect. The development agreement stays with the property until Council decides to discharge it.

Annie Wilson asked if the proposed MPS and LUB were approved. Ms. Davis advised that the proposed documents are draft only. The Committee wants to get comments from the public, and make necessary changes, before making a recommendation to Council. There is another opportunity for public input at the public hearing.

Barry Moore asked if land in Falmouth could be zoned to R-2 and R-3 for higher density development. Ms. Davis advised that the R-3 zone is not available for Falmouth. In Falmouth, land can be rezoned to R-2 as long as the property is serviced and fronts on an arterial or collector road. Higher density residential development would only be considered by development agreement.

Barry Moore asked about the Falmouth water treatment plant upgrades and whether the studies looked at the existing growth rate or a potential growth rate. Ms. Davis advised that she believed the figure is based on a higher rate of growth. Chair Pineo added she thought the rate was based on 2 or 5 percent growth. Mr. Moore asked about the current status for water and sewer upgrades. Chair Pineo advised that an application was submitted for infrastructure funding, but so far the amount was inadequate for what was needed. Mr. Moore wondered whether it was appropriate to enable higher density development in Falmouth when the sewage treatment plant is at capacity.

Discussion was held about infilling development in the Growth Centres, and the supply and demand of water and sewer services.

Annie Wilson asked about the capacity of French Mill Brook. Ms. Davis replied that she understood the studies examined capacity and the issue was storage, not whether the brook could supply enough water.

Stan Kochanoff asked about the provision for granny flats. Ms. Davis advised that there is a policy that provides for an accessory apartment in the R-1 zone, as long as it is contained within the single unit dwelling and maintains the appearance of a single unit dwelling. Additions are permitted in the rear of the building.

Chair Pineo asked for further comments and questions. Hearing none, she thanked the public for coming to the meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.