

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Public Information Meeting
Case 22704

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

Wednesday, March 11, 2020
7 p.m.

Basinview Drive Community School (Cafeteria) - 273 Basinview Dr, Bedford

STAFF IN

ATTENDANCE: Jennifer Chapman, Planner, Planner III, HRM Planning
Tara Couvrette, Planning Controller, HRM Planning
Holly Kent, Planning Technician, HRM Planning

ALSO IN

ATTENDANCE: Eugene Pieczonka – Applicant, Lydon Lynch

NOT IN

ATTENDANCE: Councillor, Tim Outhit, District 16

PUBLIC IN

ATTENDANCE: Approximately: 23

1. Call to order - purpose of meeting – Jennifer Chapman

Ms. Chapman introduced herself as the Planner and Facilitator for the application. They also introduced; Tara Couvrette – Planning Controller, Holly Kent – Planning technician, and Eugene Pieczonka – Applicant, Lydon Lynch.

Case 22704: Application by Lydon Lynch Architects requesting substantive amendments to an existing development agreement to allow a multi-use building on lands at Fourth Street (PID 41457979), Bedford.

Ms. Chapman explained; the purpose of the Public Information Meeting (PIM) is: a) to identify that HRM has received a proposal for the site; b) to provide information on the project; c) to explain the Planning Policies and the stages of the Planning Process; d) an opportunity for Staff to receive public feedback regarding the proposal. No decisions are made at this PIM.

1a) Presentation of Proposal – Jennifer Chapman

Ms. Chapman provided a brief introduction to the application and then made a presentation to the public outlining the purpose of the meeting, status of the application and the applicants request. Ms. Chapman outlined the context of the subject lands and the relevant planning policies.

1b) Presentation by Eugene Pieczonka – Applicant

Mr. Pieczonka explained the reason for this application and showed the updated site plan with changes made from suggestions at the last meeting.

2. Questions and Comments

Gerry Sampson, High St. - How many buildings are planned for along these sites? **Ms. Chapman** – One building. **Mr. Sampson** – What is the grey area? **Ms. Chapman** – explained that was a separate project **Mr. Sampson** – so it's another building? **Ms. Chapman** – what we are reviewing, and the content of the development agreement is one building. The parcel in front will be developed at a later date.

Jean Bird, Fort Sackville Rd. - Does that mean what we are looking at is setback the later of this piece will be built in front? I don't understand what the grey area is and how it fits into the whole thing. **Ms. Chapman** – The grey area is not part of the development agreement (DA). That is just another piece of

land that the property owner owns and may have some future plans, but it is not part of this application. **Ms. Bird** – we would like to know would like to know how this piece of land fits into this. **Ms. Chapman** – showed the property on the slide and explained where the property was and what was being developed under this agreement. The grey property is a separate parcel of land and right now there is no application as part of the development agreement. They think the future plan is to develop it in accordance with the Land Use Bylaw. **Ms. Bird** – The grey area is a piece of land in front of the one that is being proposed? **Ms. Chapman** – Yes. **Ms. Bird** – possibly how many units would fit in there? **Mr. Pieczonka** – for the land along Bedford Highway, it would be a 2 storey building with ground floor commercial and probably 3 apartments on the second floor.

Sean O'Connor, High St. – In the provided Traffic Impact Statement (TIS) the numbers don't match what is being proposed. There is mention made of phase 1 and phase 2, by there count there would be 31 apartments in the initial application which the engineer authoring the report notes that this proposal would be a decrease to 30 but neither of those numbers is 18 or 27 so they are confused as to what this TIS is referring to. This has reliance because much is being made of the fact that this property only fronts onto Fourth St. and the TIS seems to assume that at least some portion of the traffic going to it will be going through the Bedford Highway which it won't be. And to clarify how many units are going to be going into this building? **Mr. Pieczonka** – Explained in the grey area they had summited for a separate project which was going to be 10 units plus commercial which was about 6900 square feet. In total we had 33 residential units combined between the two properties plus around 7000 square feet of commercial space which would have had its own amount of traffic. What we are proposing now is 30 residential units and around 4000 square feet of commercial, so we are decreasing, so in totality if we if we look at both properties, the amount of residential and commercial. **Mr. O'Connor** – what fronts of the Bedford Highway so it is irrelevant how many units it has all the access for the 27 units will be on Fourth St. Meaning they are going to go down Fourth St. down High St. down wherever. **Mr. Pieczonka** – the traffic engineer was aware of all the data that I was describing, and their summary was that in comparison there would be no change to the TIS. **Mr. O'Connor** - but this is written with the assumption that they can all exit through the Bedford Highway and they can't, they would have to go out through Fourth St. So, 27 units which is a net increase to the people that have to drive onto Fourth St. and the assumption that they are saying here is that there is a net decrease it is only if you weave that kind of magic where these are connected, which you are showing in your drawing that they are not, does this work. If you live in that building you must drive down Fourth St. They made a big point in here of saying that there is almost no commercial traffic that is going to be added because it's all pass by traffic. So realistically Fourth St. just gained however many units are being added in traffic and that is not accounted for in the TIS. The TIS seems to assume that it is split equally between these two streets. I don't think most people are concerned with the number of windows that are on the building we are concerned about the effect it is going to have on the neighbourhood and the effect its going to have on traffic. I feel at the very least this report should be amended or at least made clear. It is very confusing to read this. **Ms. Chapman** – offered to follow up with their development engineer and connect Mr. O'Connor with them so that they can go over all their concerns. **Mr. O'Connor** asked if there is ever an evaluation of adequacy for these submissions? **Ms. Chapman** explained that is what the development engineer does.

Jim Bruce, High St. – has noticed a fair increase in traffic on High St. over the past few years. High street will be the conduit for people in this development. There is no sidewalk on High St. and there is a lot of pedestrian traffic there. Sullivan's Hill up by the church has no stop sign at that top of it and it shouldn't have one, because a lot of people use that in the winter to come up because there is no stop sign, but there are stop signs on either side of High St. there and a lot of people don't respect those stop signs so with the increase in traffic there, there is probably going to be more pressure to remove those stop signs and put it coming up Sullivan's Hill which is a concern. The increase in the amount of traffic without a sidewalk is a real concern. That street is not as wide as some of the other streets to be able to accommodate that much of an increase in traffic. People will be using High St. not the Bedford Highway. Expects to see a big increase in traffic and an increase in pedestrians and this is their concern and how with this be accommodated for?

Elvira Akhmetchina, High St. – has concerns with the TIS. In the TIS and in the current proposal there is a reference to the number of units between the two projects. They understand that the project that fronts the Bedford High is very flexible and it could even be sold so their point is that this is quite misleading and irrelevant to count the total number between the two projects while the second half of the project is very flexible. **Ms. Chapman** explained they want to look at the worst-case scenario when looking at the TIS and that is why it was considered.

Nancy Bianco, High St.- all the streets surrounding have children. Basinview is a walking school and you

haven't discussed any of the requirements for the heavy traffic flow. We already struggle enough with traffic on High St. We have children walking home and you are increasing traffic by quite a bit and you can't tell me that this building that doesn't have an application, yet you have already made plan on how that building was going to be climb. I think it is irresponsible to have this and not have something planned for how the traffic is going to work. We need sidewalks, speed bumps, something to control the traffic. If even on one child gets hurt from this heavy traffic flow that is to much.

Gerry Sampson, High St. – High St. is an access Rd. for a lot of traffic that goes above us. High St. is in a deuterated condition and needs improvements. It has a lot of foot traffic and vehicle traffic and now we are adding on more. A lot of residents of High St. have been advocating with Councillor Outhit to do something but the response we get is that it is in the engineers' hands, they decide. High St. is going to be a preferred route once this development is put in because of Bedford Highway being so heavily traveled. Are these two properties the only properties the developer owns? **Mr. Pieczonka** – yes.

Joyce Chew, High St. – the documents online do not show the most current plans of the proposed development. **Ms. Chapman** explained they were just received last night so we haven't had a chance to get the website updated yet, but it will be updated. **Ms. Chew** the original info on the website shows that the development on Bedford Highway would have contained 17 townhouses, 31 apartments and roughly 7000 square feet of commercial space and that was what they based this tis on. The TIS, in that case, is not very useful. Especially sense it is talking about 48 potential units and not entirely sure where 17 townhouses come into this. So, the only thing we are looking at tonight is weather we are going to have 17 spaces and the original number of parking or 27 spaces? **Mr. Pieczonka** – we had 18 now its 27 units. **Ms. Chew** – they are justifying this because the as-of-right development, in theory they could build whatever they wanted, but, because they are increasing one to 27 they are only going to put 3 units on the as-of - right development. **Mr. Pieczonka** – right. **Ms. Chew** at the other meeting there was discussion around someway of guaranteeing what could be built as-of-right. **Mr. Pieczonka** – stated anything they do along the property on Bedford Highway could only be done as-of-right and that can't be done under a DA. The as-of-right requirements are very clear in terms of what the max allow building is, it would be limited to something very close to what we are prosing which is about 4000 square feet of commercial on the bottom and an equivalent amount of floor space on the second floor and it can only be 2 storeys. The second floor will on allow for 3-4 small units. What we are showing is what the max that can be down there. **Ms. Chew** so then you are back to the original 31 units if you consider the two properties together. **Mr. Pieczonka** yes 30-31 in total. **Ms. Chew** then getting back to traffic, there is only one access point for the main development which will have the 17 or 27 units which is exiting on Fourth St. where as the smaller development, in theory, has the traffic exiting on the Bedford Highway. Is there any way for the lower parking of the larger development to us the exit onto Bedford Highway rather than existing onto Fourth St. **Mr. Pieczonka** because of the difference in height/grade of the two properties there is no way to connect them. **Ms. Chew** living on High St. they know you can potentially go down Fourth St. to get onto the Bedford Highway but in reality, that isn't going to happen. Everyone will turn up off Fourth St., onto High St. and then proceed down onto Holland Ave taking those lights to get onto the Bedford Highway. There is going to be a steep increase in traffic.

Marilyn Millett, High St. – concerned about traffic. Will there be blasting or jackhammering when doing the underground parking? **Mr. Pieczonka** not entirely sure yet until the excavation contractor is hired to look at the site. **Ms. Millett** the houses in that area are getting old and will not withstand blasting. **Mr. Pieczonka** explained that there is a blasting process that would have to be followed if that was the way they decided to go. **Ms. Millett** – how far would they go? **Ms. Chapman** stated she wasn't sure of the radius and explained there is a bylaw that covers blasting. There is before work that happens where they look at people's foundations etc.

John Tolson, Shore Dr. – what these people said is going to happen way more then they think. What they are saying is true, people are going to go up High St. not out the Bedford Highway. The traffic on High St. is going to be out of this world. What date was the DA registered. **Ms. Chapman** I'm not sure of the date. **Mr. Pieczonka** stated about a year ago. **Mr. Tolson** it is registered? **Mr. Pieczonka & Ms. Chapman** yes. **Mr. Tolson** so you get a DA registered and then you decide that what was designed is too expensive therefore we now must add more units to make it feasible. They love this because this is opening Bedford up to everybody, this is terrible. They worked in town council for 6 years trying to get Bedford to stay like it used to be, Old Bedford. We want old Bedford to stay like it was, Bedford West can have all this type of construction. We don't need this, we don't need extra places stuffed in here. You have registered a DA which doesn't mean a thing because you can change it and who's to say they won't change it again. **Mr.**

Pieczonka said it is physically impossible to bring a driveway up from the Bedford Highway, that is not true. You can bring traffic in from the Bedford Highway, it doesn't have to come in off Fourth St, I don't agree with it, you work to get one thing approved and that's where it should end.

Jean Bird, Fort Sackville Rd. – Would like to know when the Bedford Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB) were developed because they have lived in Bedford for 65 years and is totally unaware of this. What this is going to do to Bedford in 10 years, you will not recognize this community. It will be destroyed. People spent many hours developing a zoning plan for the community of Bedford to preserve the integrity of the community and it was to develop areas that we would have commercial and multiunit buildings and preserve our community. Now this spot rezoning is destroying it. This has got to stop, and the traffic has to stop. HRM allows apartment building to be built all along the Bedford Highway, every vacant piece of land was another condo until the traffic was so congested that for us to even get out of our communities is next to impossible. It would have been nice to be made aware of this new plan so that most of us would be aware as to what you had proposed for this community.

Brad Walker, High St. – wanted to know why they did not receive notice of the last meeting when they received notice in the mail of the very first meeting. In the TIS, there is nothing there about High St. only the Bedford Highway. During the winter High St. is one lane only and we have children walking back and forth for school and you are going to at the very least double the traffic up there. Before you even consider the final steps on this development you must look at High St. and how are you going to alleviate the problems that this is going to cause. You need to do a traffic study on High St.

Paula MacInnis, High St. – Halifax has talked about community, when we are looking at this building, what about the sustainability of this building? What about how you are looking forward like your solar programs, your building constructs, instead of doing it in steel, and prefab concrete, what about wood and making it look even like kind of the community. How are we making this apartment and this complex part of Bedford and part of the community, are we isolating it? Are we making it a transient population? Are we making community oriented and are we doing it for the benefit of Bedford and the community? High St. is not a long street and we believe this is going to impact us and it will impact the people around on neighbouring streets. Is it the right spot and size for the community? Make the TIS clearer because both projects are in there and it is not clear.

Richard Tolson, Shore Dr. – I am guilty of coming cutting through side streets to avoid Fourth St. because Fourth is crazy. Cutting through is very convoluted but it is better than sitting on the Bedford Highway. I know I'm not the only one who does this. Everyone is correcting is saying people are going to cut through the neighbourhood to avoid Fourth and the Bedford Highway. What are the requirements for handicap parking for a 27-unit building? **Mr. Pieczonka** – 2. **Mr. Tolson** 4000 square feet is the max for the as-of-right property. **Mr. Pieczonka** it is in that range, I can't say it is exactly 4000 square feet. **Mr. Tolson** so it could be 5000 square feet? **Mr. Pieczonka** it won't be that much. It is going to be very close to 4000 square feet.

Paula MacInnis, High St. – what is the due process on this for the public? **Ms. Chapman** – explained the process. **Paula MacInnis** – in regard to the public meeting, how do you determine who is contacted/notified? **Ms. Chapman** – ad in paper, mailout as well as info on the website. **Paula MacInnis**, I don't think you can expect the general population to be checking on the website. **Ms. Chapman** explained HRM is trying to explore how to notify people of these meetings. **Paula MacInnis** – What is your notification are/proximity to the development that the mailout is done? **Holly Kent** – Bedford is usually around 500 feet, but it really depends on the size of the application. **Paula MacInnis** – so why would we have been notified the first time but not the second time or the third time? We haven't moved. **Holly Kent** – explained there was a technical issue with their system they may have affected the mailout. **Paula MacInnis** – but you are still proceeding with the process and some people haven't been notified. **Holly Kent** – explained again the issue that was happening in the new system. **Paula MacInnis** feels the public, because of the notification issue, did have enough time to properly investigate this project. **Ms. Chapman** – explained this isn't the public's only opportunity to provide feedback on this and engage planning staff. She provided other options for people to provide feedback, website, their contact info – call or email etc.

Joyce Chew, High St. – stated they had come to the meeting for the original agreement after they got off work and nobody was there. HRM staff and anyone that may have shown up were gone by that time (8:30 pm). So, there was no opportunity for them to voice their concerns. HRM really needs to find a better way to engage the community in which these agreements are being proposed because otherwise you get a lot

of very upset people. They have been at meetings where they provided their opinions and feedback, and everything gets torn up and whatever is proposed by the developer is what gets approved. So why voice your opinion if you're just blowing in the wind.

Dmitry Trukhachev, High St. – Several people didn't get notices. It was concerning that the meeting that the initial development got approved was held in Tantallon, far away from the site and hard to access for local residents. Because this is a legal process of approval, why the process violated by the fact that the community wasn't properly notified and the meeting was held far away from the site. I think somebody has to look at this and see if this was actually appropriate. The council has to be aware that the public consultation there was serious questions about how the public was notified and how the meetings were held. The councillor stated at the last meeting that they will work with the clerk's office to make **Ms. Chapman** sure it is held in a closer location.

Jean Bird, Fort Sackville Rd. - has the biggest problem with the planning department that the MPS and LUB was developed without any input or knowledge of the people of Bedford. A good flyer indicating what their plan was so that they were aware of it would have been nice. As a tax payer they are insulted by the attitude that seems to thrive in the city proper about places outside. After amalgamation it seems like we don't matter anymore, HRM will do what they like out there. Before you go ahead with more of these multi-unit developments you have to really consider what you are doing to this community.

John Tolson, Shore Dr. – Showed how to bring an entrance/exit off the Bedford Highway and cut off access through Fourth St. but it would require losing some of the greenbelt. This can be done, build your 18 units or row houses there, do something nice that looks like Old Bedford.

Elvira Akhmetchina – sees in the new site plan map that the greenbelt area has got larger but there is no specifications as to what will be there, trees etc. The issue they raised last time with separating the two sites with the mature trees that are there now and from the empty space on the map it is not obvious what is happening there. Also, the public opinion was not represented when the initial development was approved because of the location and timing and your comment was in the future we will try to address that but that was not the point. The point was that the public was not represented when the original project was approved and to look back retroactively to see if there is enough evidence to reconsider that whole process. There are 23 people here now and everyone has a pretty strong opinion as to this project overall. Not just the second phase but also the first phase.

Darrell Johnson, Bedford United Church – If you drive through the neighbourhood, it's not much of a neighbourhood, condemned buildings and vacant lots etc. Thinks everyone is right with regards to traffic and thinks there should be a sidewalk and a safe place for people to walk. The building, whether you like it or not, can really be a plus to the community because it really needs revitalization it doesn't need old in that space. There are parts of Bedford that are old and special and historic but certainly along that strip where the church and all these other spaces are, this could aesthetically enhance the community. If you look after the traffic part on High street, which is a legitimate concern, put a sidewalk in but the building can only add to this community and thinks it is a real plus.

Paula MacInnis, High St. – Doesn't think people are against development, they think people would like a good development and one that fits in with the community. Doesn't think vacant lots are good for the area and something needs to be done but that doesn't mean that putting anything there is acceptable. We want people that are going to contribute to the community so make them condo's or townhouses, so people would have to purchase them and have ownership in the community. Apartments don't do that. Not keen on an apartment building going in there because it has more potential than that.

Jim Bruce, High St. – I don't dislike the design of it and at an age where they may have to move to an apartment and they like the community they are in, so this might not be bad. The biggest concern is the traffic on High St. Think it isn't good the Councillor Outhit isn't there tonight because they are the person that can probably do the most to make the street better by widening it and putting sidewalks on it. Something needs to be done with High St., either before, or in conjunction with this development.

Public – this development should not go through prior to these areas of traffic being resolved. If that happens then we are really into it.

Richard Baxter, Fourth St. – the building on the Bedford Highway that is as-of-right, is there any room for a sidewalk there for the part of it that is on Fourth St. or is it right to the property line? **Mr. Pieczonka** – there is probably about 25 feet between the property line and the street curve which is all HRM land. If the city wants to build a sidewalk there, there is lots of room. **Richard Baxter, Fourth St.** thinks the 500-foot radius for notification should be increased. The old Atlantic Garden site was recently for sale, they have taken off the market, but it was up for sale. I can guarantee that. That is going to be another apartment building. That will just add to the traffic again on the Bedford Highway and High St. as well.

John Tolson, Shore Dr. – The jest of the meeting was to change the number of units from 18-27 units. I'm against that. That is 9 more units, another 18 cars and how many trips a day. What you got approved for, in a very sneaky manner, do that and live with what you've got.

3. Closing Comments

Ms. Chapman thanked everyone for coming and expressing their comments.

4. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:32 p.m.