



**Public Meeting
Case 2023-
00368**

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

**Wednesday, November 1, 2023
7:00 p.m.**

Sackville High School (Cafeteria) (1 King Fisher Way, Lower Sackville)

STAFF IN

ATTENDANCE: Dean MacDougall, HRM Planner III, Project Lead, HRM Development Services,
Maggie Holm, Principal Planner, HRM Development Services,
Kelly Greenland, Planner II, HRM Development Services,
Ardalan Shareghi Boroujen, Planner II, HRM Development Services,
Fine-Eni Ogon, Planning Information Analyst HRM Regional Planning,
Shannon England, Planning Information Analyst HRM Regional Planning,
Michelle McNiven, Planning Coordinator, HRM Development Services

ALSO, IN

ATTENDANCE: Upland Urban Planning and Design Inc Team
Councillor Paul Russell, District 15

PUBLIC IN

ATTENDANCE: Approximately 33

1. Call to order / Acknowledgements / Purpose of Meeting – Dean MacDougall at 7:00pm

Case 2023-00368 – Application by Upland Studios requesting substantive amendments to an existing development agreement for lands at 70 First Lake Drive, Lower Sackville, to allow for two six-storey residential buildings on a shared podium and new drive-through commercial building.

Dean MacDougall introduced himself as the Planner for this application. Acknowledgement that the meeting took place in the traditional and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people, and that we are all treaty people and that we are in the decade for people of African Descent.

D. MacDougall outlined the agenda for the meeting.
Introduced Councillor Russell, Councillor for District 15.

Councillor Russell – Thanked everyone who came out to the meeting, thanked the girls' basketball team for setting up the tables for this meeting. Councillor explains why we are here tonight, to hear what you have to say, your feedback, we want to hear your concerns. This application has not made it to any committee, there have not been any decisions made on this application at all.

2. Presentation by HRM Staff – Dean MacDougall

D. MacDougall then gave a presentation describing the application and the role of HRM staff was explained through the Planning process. Once the staff presentation was completed Ben Chaisson was introduced with First Mutual Properties Ltd.

3. Presentation by First Mutual Properties Ltd - Ben Chaisson

Ben Chaisson - introduced himself and that the company has been around since 2010 in the community, then gave a brief presentation of the application.

4. Questions and Comments

D. MacDougall invited the community to ask questions to staff and provide their feedback about the proposal.

Greg Publicover, Lower Sackville – Is wondering if the path that goes between Polara Drive to the back of the development is that going to stay in place, or will it be closed? Asked if Sobey's will stay open during the building of this application and the traffic will be exiting through the parking lot on to First Lake Drive?

D. MacDougall – Yes, the path that is there will remain and Sobey's will also remain open. The traffic will be exiting onto First Lake Drive.

Paul Bowden, Sackville – has concerns, yes, we have a need for housing, but we don't have the other piece of the puzzle, where is the increase in police presents, fire, schools, school activity. Where are these things in this presentation. We need to see the whole picture not just part of it. We need to make sure everything is addressed, and we are protected before we say we want or don't want this development.

D. MacDougall – part of that evaluation criteria I spoke about some of the things you mentioned are in that process, so they will have to be evaluated before getting to council. For example, the school board is a part of the review agencies that we send the application to for a comment.

Theresa Scratch, Sackville – submitted a seven-page comment about the development application. T. Scratch is opposed to the development as proposed and finds it offensive that they are being asked for input when it is known that a second development application for 2 additional buildings has been submitted to HRM.

There is a conflict between these applications. The Regional Plan application intends changes to parking and amenity spaces, the staples building remains unchanged but the application states otherwise. Concerned about the compatibility, the September 2022 application suggests Polara Drive lies about 16.4 feet above the floor elevation of the 6-storey building and this application tonight suggests Polar Drive lies about 23 feet above the floor elevation of the 6-storey. What is the correct elevation?

Concerns about traffic. The loading bay location at Sobey's requires the transport trucks to turn in the parking lot, not sure if there is enough room for this. A turn is necessary for the trucks to back into the loading bay. We are going to end up with a drive in at both accesses. The application does not show access and exits routes or a queueing lane and the capacity. I do not believe there is enough parking for the needs of this development. I am convinced that we are not going to end with just 6-storey building to the very back. Read today that maybe the Staples building is closed so maybe this is the better spot for the building.

Wastewater issue, since the study in support of the application was submitted Halifax water has been investigating the source if human e coli found in First Lake. In 2020 Case 21859 Halifax Water submitted that the sanitary and storm sewer infrastructure was an ongoing concern. Halifax Water indicated a reluctance to support any development beyond an equivalent to what would be permitted by-right.

If we are relying on the regional plan for this development, it may not come through for further development on this spot. The regional plan is looking to intensifying development closer to the city core where there are services like rapid transit, maybe more wastewater capacity.

The Mill Cove wastewater treatment centers needs at least a 90-million-dollar upgrade that we require for servicing part of Sackville and Bedford. If we don't get that upgrade, we won't have treatment capacity. October 2021 Halifax Water responded to the study that the end point of the analysis will be

around the First Lake Drive pumping station, and they were looking into curtain capacity for the first lake drive pumping station. I wonder what the outcome of that was.

Back to the Regional Plan again, they are looking to intensify closer to the city center there are side walks and bike lanes there that we don't have here, we don't have good service here on First Lake Drive.

This area is mostly single-family homes with 3 to 4-storey apartment buildings that were approved in 1980 and 1985 under the old MPS. These do not set precedent; development is approved based on the MPS and Land Use By laws. What I like to see rather than piecemeal amendments the entire site should be considered for redevelopment for the best possible layout and opportunities. Any potential changes to the Regional Plan policy to negate staff's assessment of the original application, that the Sackville MPS does not contemplate an increase in density and supports deferring this application until both application for this property can be considered at one time.

Greg Morrison- Provided clarification on heights and separation distances.

Resident – How high is the building going to be off that parking lot.

G. Morrison - The full size of the building is 6-storeys, depending on the grading you would see about 3-storey from Polara Drive.

Resident - so we will see 3-storeys from my back yard. What is the height, what does the applicant say? Is it 60 feet?

Andrew Roof – is there a second application? What is the applicant that was being referenced?

D. MacDougall – no there is not a second application this is the only active application on the property. A suburban plan is being written, it's the new community plan. The property owner asked that in that process that the developments be looked a little more closely. The development rights on all properties are going to be reexamined with the suburban plan. That is just one factor that goes into looking at the development of the suburban plan, council, the community, the stakeholders, the priority plans that we have in place, and the Regional Plan all play into factor to see what makes it appropriate for a new development.

T. Scratch, Sackville – is the request for an 11 and 20-storey complex under the suburban plan? It's same plan as they submitted before minus a couple storeys. So that is kind of like an application.

D. MacDougall – the property is going to be reexamined through the suburban plan, but it is not an application like is here tonight. The entire rights of Sackville are being reexamined not just this site.

Louise Plass, Sackville – so is there two applications? L. Plass has been here for 36 years now, my back yard is right on the Stapels parking lot. I have seen the first plan with the 22-storey and the two small ones, knew right off the bat that this area could not handle it and then the new plan came out and I was never so happy to see the two 6-storey buildings. How do you plan to handle the electricity when we lose power every storm we have now? The water in the parking lot is like the Niagara Falls, will this be fixed?

You spoke about the new suburban plan does this mean that they can come back when the laws change and build the 22-storey buildings? So you are saying that they will be able to change this to whatever they want if the law changes.

D. MacDougall – I will try to make the best clarification as I can on that. The rights of some properties could change under the suburban plan, it will all be reexamined under the suburban plan. We do not know what the regulations, rules will be yet, that is why they are still trying to get feedback from the communities to see how people would like to see their community developed. It is important to get in touch with the suburban plan team to make sure you are providing your comments about how you vision this community being developed in the future. Property owners can only change their property to whatever the rules allow.

A. Roof - What is the plan for the drive in? One of my concerns is that we will have two drive ins on both ends of the parking lot and cause traffic issues.

D. MacDougall – it will be commercial use that are allowed with the C2 zone and land use by-laws in mind.

A. Roof – the traffic study report doesn't add up, the exit out of the rink was not even shown, the hockey rink is packed every night. Sewage infrastructure sewage goes directly into the lake when it rains more than 30-40 mils. Halifax Water said it could be years to fix it. Schools have no room for more kids. The safety of pedestrians, kids crossing with no lights, brush not cut back, hopefully we will have better walkways, better ways to contain the water if this is approved.

D. MacDougall – the stormwater management will be examined.

Lorne Piercey, Sackville – concerned about the development we think it is not a great fit for our community. Understand the need for housing, but it's just not housing it is affordable housing. This may meet the needs of people but not the needs of affordable housing, the market. Traffic, speeding, First Lake Drive has become a parking lot. This is going to impact that road even more. Major traffic issues. 150 vehicles moving each morning.

Concerned that the quick and easy fix to accommodate the housing is giving the developers a blank cheque to develop without any oversight. I feel that the 2 buildings are a start to building a much taller building. Unfortunately, any increases that are required for infrastructure will be paid for with our taxes.

Andy Geldart, Sackville – putting buildings like these are going to impact the movement. Traffic impact statement didn't mention too much about the lights on First Lake and Glendale. There use to be a left-hand turning lane, but they took that out because of the trucks going to Sobey's.

School kids use Sobey's each day and they walk there, the traffic from the rink, bingo hall. How this is going to affect the schools, the buses.

Community part of it, not just the infrastructure part of it but the mental health, affordable housing. Having 18 decks looking into my back yard, don't want it. And the stress it will have on schools.

Heather Geldart, Sackville – What about the retaining wall, what are the plans for that. Will it be staying or taking it out. How far is the footprint of that building going to be from that wall? The chain link fence in my backyard that was put in there in now falling down. All these people are going to be in my backyard. If this development goes ahead, will you be talking to us about it. What are you going to do to make our properties beautiful that are now going to have 18 balconies' looking in our yards. Planting trees, hedges, giving us some privacy.

Greg Morrison – The wall will not be touched. Provided clarification on separation distances.

Resident – Context is essential, we are missing the context that is coming with public housing being delivered. to do all this planning and not looking at that I think it is to our detriment and our community's detriment. We are planning for the next few years, but it should be generational planning.

Brenda Piercey, Sackville – First Lake is a real source of enjoyment, and joy to the community. The white sucker fish, people go down and watch them every spring. I would hate for us to lose this and with the paths. There will be an impact with increased traffic, on the sewer system, increase of salt usage and the construction in itself will affect the lake.

Jamie Hughs, Sackville – Chair of the water committee of Friends of First Lake. Concerned about the impact that this will have on the lake that is already suffering with high e coli counts. The increase of the storm water is already overwhelming the system. I am concerned that we are being asked to put our opinions and input out without knowing what that full picture is.

James Green, Sackville - traffic report was done in March of 2022 if you look at the lockdown numbers for covid we were moving from 25 to 50 percent open which meant we were 75% shut down. Don't think those figures are correct.

Bob Pye, Sackville – Concerned about First Lake, this is a residential community this does not belong on first lake in belongs more in the city or Sackville Drive.

We draw people from Bedford, Windsor Junction, Kingswood for activities. Glendale is gridlocked, First Lake Drive is gridlocked This apartment is not appropriate for this community.

The path going from Sobey's to Polara has lights in it and the lights were burnt out, trees need to be cut back. It took 6 weeks for the light be fixed. Two years ago, a sign went up saying no winter maintenance on the path. This path has been there for 50 years.

Resident – Just a question for the applicant, have you considered any other areas in Sackville?

B. Chaisson - this is the only land we own in Sackville. The path that was talked about, HRM has stopped plowing it. We are listening to your comments and concerns that is why this application has changed. The staples building use to have 650 parking spots for cars that were flowing in and out of it daily, so with regards to traffic you have to keep that in mind as well.

We have nothing planned past this application.

Resident – what are the apartment sizes in the buildings?

B. Chaisson – there should be a mix of 1 bedroom, 1 plus den and 2 bedrooms and maybe some 3 bedrooms.

L. Plass – when will you start building.

D. MacDougall – first it has to go in front of community council then they apply for a permit and then once you get the permits, construction could take about 2 years. Part of the permit process is that they have to have a plan for the trucks, that plan lays out detail on how they are going to operate, what routes the trucks will take. That is another public meeting, and the community will be notified on that meeting.

Resident – First Lake Drive is like a speed way, kids racing down, the traffic is a lot, and nothing has been done.

T. Scratch – is there any reason why you picked the back lot to build, if the staples building is being turned into an apartment why would you not start there with building.

Ben Chaisson – there is no intention of turning the staples building into an apartment building. We just found out today that they do not need that big of a space now, they are still under lease and they are still a tenant in that building. Staples is a big part of the community, and we are wanting them to stay and we are trying to work with them.

T. Scratch – the proposal under the suburban plan identifies that building for an 11-storey building and if staples is closing down why haven't you considered starting there?

The traffic on First Lake Drive from the town center and Caviler Drive cars are parked on the roads and you have to cross that center line to get by them. From Crimson to Cobequid Drive there is no sidewalks with hardly any shoulder and ditches, the roads were not built for this traffic.

Resident – you need to present the whole package and let us know what you have looked at as a whole. Will these apartments be affordable housing or just housing.

B. Chaisson – this is still in the early in the stages, and we want your input. We have spent about 18 months trying to come up with a plan, height was an issue, so we had to go back and revise it and now this is our new plan. We understand that is hard when you get a piece here and there, but it is because things have to change. We are trying our best to benefit the community.

It will be market housing not luxury housing, we will be trying to make it cost effective, we still don't know what we are building, nothing has been approved yet and may not be approved.

Resident - we need a plan for affordable housing, the province and city need to come up with something.

D. MacDougall – affordable housing is not something we can ask for with our current plan but with the new suburban plan will change that but that is in the future.

5. Closing Comments

D. MacDougall thanked everyone for their participation in the meeting. Explained how they could forward their concerns and comments to HRM and the Councillors.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:36 p.m.