



**Public Information Meeting
Case 2023-00178**

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

Monday, March 18, 2024

7:00 p.m.

Cole Harbour Place, (51 Forest Hills Parkway, Cole Harbour, NS) – Westphal Room

STAFF IN

ATTENDANCE: Melissa Eavis, Planner III, HRM Planning
Matthew Conlin, Planner III, HRM Planning
Tara Couvrette, Processing Coordinator - Planning, HRM Planning
Lisa Arblaster, Planning Information Analyst, Planning Information Services

ALSO IN

ATTENDANCE: Jenifer Tsang – Applicant, Sunrose Land Use Consulting
Sydney Dumaresq – SP Dumaresq Architect
Dean Dumaresq – SP Dumaresq Architect
Roger Boychuk, P. Eng. – Trans4m Development Group
Trish Purdy – Councillor, District 4
Loreli Nicole, Liberal MLA for Cole Harbour
Hon. Tony Ince, Liberal MLA for Cole Harbour Cole Harbour

PUBLIC IN

ATTENDANCE: Approximately: 105

1. Call to order and Introductions – Melissa Eavis, Planner

Case 2023-00178: Application by Sunrose Land Use Consulting requesting to enter into a development agreement on lands at 1226 Cole Harbour Road and 77 Bissett Road, Cole Harbour to allow for a long-term care facility with 144 bedrooms and 4 multi-unit buildings containing 511 units.

Ms. Eavis introduced herself as the Planner and Facilitator guiding Sunrose Land Use Consulting' application through the planning process.

2. Presentations

2a) Presentation by HRM Staff – Melissa Eavis

Ms. Eavis presentation included information on the following:

- (a) the purpose of the meeting including to share information and collect public feedback about the proposal - no decisions were made at this meeting;
- (b) the role of HRM staff through the planning process;
- (c) a brief description of the application including site context, explanation of what a development agreement is, proposed site plan, proposed changes, policy and By-law overview, policy consideration;
- (d) and status of the application.

2b) Presentation by Sydney Dumaresq – SP Dumaresq Architect

Mr. Dumaresq presented a site summary – Information about the long-term care facility, site context, building layout, wetlands as well as servicing for the site.

3. Questions and Comments

Ms. Eavis welcomed attendees to ask questions to staff and the presenters and provide their feedback, including what they liked and disliked about the proposal.

I. Angie Pro, off Ashegrove Ave:

No lights – concerns with safety. Feels lights or a turning light going onto Bissett Rd. is needed. Likes the idea of the long-term care facility (LTC). Feels the 12-story building off Ashgrove (which is what they will be looking at) takes away from surrounding area. The infrastructure needs to be upgraded first.

II. Dave Clark, Ashgrove Ave:

Knows the importance of long-term care and can live with that but the rest of the development does not fit in this neighbourhood. Housing density like this belongs in the downtown (core) as the city has been preaching for the last couple of years. There are issues in this neighbourhood with stormwater and wastewater and feels before any units are development this needs to be addressed. Flooding is an ongoing issue here. The underground infrastructure is not there to support what is here now let alone any new development. Doesn't feel the traffic study report is not showing a correct representation of what this development is going to bring to this area. This land is all marsh land and marsh grass, the previous owner, Harry Pool – owner of a construction company, this became the unofficial landfill site. That land is full of dirty fill – to the developer, if there was site testing done around the outside you may want to do more testing all over the site and in the middle. This site will need to have a lot of hauling of dirt and debris out and infilling done before it would be suitable to build on. The joy of the area being vacant will be gone – the wildlife, the wetlands.

Melissa Eavis – spoke to the wastewater system and advised HRM was looking into it and will update the website with any information that is received.

III. Henry Chiasson, Armbr Lane:

Will the LTC be subsidized?

Jennifer Tsang – Isn't sure of the exact answer currently.

IV. Brett Pasoner, Bissett Rd.:

Is curious of the administration of that road that is proposed to connect to Bissett Rod. Traffic is an issue, and they feel people are going to cut through this proposed road site to get around the backup of traffic trying to get onto Cole Harbour Rd., and this will affect them as their home is right next to the proposed road. Also, if they wanted to subdivide their property could they use that road?

Melissa Eavis – It is a driveway not a public street so you couldn't use that is you were to subdivide. The shortcutting was flagged in the traffic study.

V. Gary Trovac:

It is one thing to look at lights, but Cole Harbour Rd. is already congested all the way to town. With services like fire, police, schools, and recreation, they need to be looked at, is there a tipping point where all this considered there would need to be additional staff and equipment? Who would pay for that or is that included in the plan? Are developments approved because there is sufficient services or tuned down because there aren't sufficient services?

Melissa Eavis – spoke to traffic congestion and the traffic study. Spoke to traffic on Cole Harbour Rd. and services in the area – that the application is circulated to fire, HRCE etc. for feedback.

VI. Claire Mafranc, Allison Dr.:

Concerned about flooding at this location because it is a marsh. Concerned with the sewer system being able to deal with the rainwater. All they see is concrete and not a lot of green – where will all the water go? The infrastructure needs to be updated first. Transit isn't adequate in this area, how will the employees of this LTC get there? Schools are over capacity now; how many portables are you going to put at these schools? Doesn't think that the LTC will be affordable to the average senior. Thinks the marshlands should be protected by the governments – marshlands is what helps with global warming.

Melissa Eavis – spoke to capacity and flooding issues, stormwater controls. There is no policy to govern affordability.

Jenifer Tsang – Affordability, not sure yet. that will depend on the market, the number of units, building configuration etc. and what the economics are.

VII. David Higgins, Ashgrove Ave:

Gem Healthcare do a nice facility. All the pictures that were shown are of a mature site and you aren't going to get that here for many years. Concerned with size and density of these buildings. The city has already approved a 101-unit apartment building for Cole Harbour Rd., right across from the Irving station. They have already approved a 49-unit building for the second lot past Bissett Rd. and now we are going to put another 551-units here. The entire A section of Colby Village is the same number of units that you are going to put on that one lot. If you look on a map there is no comparison in size between the two. That is their biggest concern. Their other concern is stormwater, it does flood, the water comes right up to the trail during a big rain, Jennifer Places floods all the time. That is only going to increase. As my neighbour stated, Harry Pool dumped fill there for years and it was nothing but a dumping site and because of that the only thing this site could be used for, was a driving range because it couldn't support anything but a golf cart. If you are going to put building, there you have a lot of work to do. It is a wet, wet site. I am concerned about the electrical gride, every storm the Ashgrove area losses power. Concerned with phasing and how long this is going to take to complete. Will there be 10+ years of constant construction? Traffic – 661 units proposed (1000+ vehicles) in the area plus all the workers that it will take for the LTC facility. They don't think the traffic studies are done during the daylight hours because they are not at all accurate. Traffic is backed up in every direction from Forest Hills Parkway now. Was told by the planner that they will not put lights into the entrance of this facility. Contrary to that, they will put them in, but you would have to pay for them. LTC facility – great, keep it to the far side of the lot and leave the rest as greenspace. The province already issued the statement back in May that it was a go, the LTC facility, so are we just going through a preliminary process here?

Melissa Eavis – spoke to David's concerns and the provincial statement, timeline of construction.

Jenifer Tsang – spoke to phasing.

VIII. Shawn Perry, Brookview Dr.:

Concerned with traffic, in the summertime it is terrible. Has been trying to get the city to do something at the end of Bissett Rd. and they will not do it. How can you build that and then all the sudden you can put a round-a-bout there? They say there is no room for a round-a-bout there. Worried about seniors trying to get out of there, Bissett – Cole Harbour Rd., they will just sit there and hold up everyone else in an already bad situation. Frustration will grow, safety will be an issue. Thinks the driveway on Bissett R., is wrong and yes, there is going to be water issues because it floods all the time. This site is constantly wet, standing water all the time.

IX. Liby Roudolph:

Is not against LTC facilities, yes, we do need them, but doesn't think to mix it with these high-density apartment buildings is a good idea. What would the age group be for the proposed apartment buildings? A lot of the people that live in a LTC want young children making all kinds of noise around. The traffic on Bissett Rd.- will there be safety measures in place if there are young children living there? How long will this project take, the noise for over 10 years will be a lot. Traffic is an issue on Cole Harbour Rd & Bissett Rd. Traffic lights needs to be put in at the end of Bissett Rd. Flooding is an issue.

X. Karen, Bissett Rd.:

You can say it isn't approved but the premier can designate this as a Special Planning Area at any time and then veto anything that has been said and approve this and it is a done deal. Wants to hear from the traffic person – the report states there is no problem with traffic, and they don't see in the future there being any problems – would like some clarification on that. Wanted to know about the wetland buffer, 20 metres, which is the min allowed on a watercourse. That is all they have proposed, nothing great. That buffer comes right to the edge of some of those buildings and it is less than 10 metres in places that the buffer serves a purpose to those wetlands and watercourse. That is going to be mowed down monoculture grass be put down and tar, bike path put through, so it is not really going to be a buffer with plants that helps to filter and prevent erosion and do all those habitat carbon storage things that buffers are supposed to do. Feels the site plan, of the apartment buildings, are set up in the worst possible way for wetlands. Thinks it makes more sense to combine all the greenspaces and put them along the buffer, 30 metre buffer and don't touch it, and put the buildings and the bike path along the road.

Roger Boychuk, P. Eng. – Trans4m Development Group – spoke to traffic study and offered to speak in more details with anyone after the meeting. Agrees there are issues on Bissett Rd. that need to be addressed and made suggestions on how to correct some of these issues.

Melissa Eavis – spoke to the wetlands – they are required to do a 20-metre buffer. Spoke to what the regulations are.

Jenifer Tsang – spoke to how they are going to honor the buffer, also told them about the berm they were building and the benefits of this.

XI. Byran willet, Forest Hills area:

HRM will have to address the stormwater issue. Flooding is an ongoing issue.

XII. Mark - Cole Harbour Funeral Homes:

Concerns with congestion going out of Cole Harbour Rd.

XIII. Samantha, Amaranth crescent:

Concerns with stormwater management. Walking along the trail, something that they observed, and something that was called out in the wetland assessment, is the stress vegetation, which they can only assume is the invasive multiflora rose. It is shallow rooted and doesn't do the best job at stormwater management. The berm was proposed as one of the living infrastructures to help the stormwater management but was wondering if there were any other developer initiatives or city initiatives to help with the living infrastructure stormwater management? Has concerns with the road that is going through the wetlands in the southern position of the development. How will that compromise the ecological integrity of the site?

Melissa Eavis – Spoke to the stormwater management guidelines that are set out by HRM.

Jennifer Tsang – explained at this phase it is a stormwater schematic that they have. Spoke to the wetlands, the berm, vegetation etc. Explained it is a driveway and not a road going through the wetlands and there is a difference in the construction standards for this.

XIV. Steve Connor, Attwood Crescent:

Would like to know the height of the building that is being built in their backyard and how close is this to their property line. Will people be looking down off their patios at us? In 2021 myself and 4 neighbours were asked by Halifax Water Commission to sign over 20 feet of footage of our properties for a dollar for easement away. I was wondering why, because it wasn't on our deed, and they said it was because they were going to do a development. Concerned that they are going to have these enormous structures in their backyard with a lot more people, a lot more traffic, activity etc. After the pathway was put in behind the property there was all kinds of activity which required me to put up a fence for safety and then the flooding started. Water damage is an ongoing issue. Traffic issues will also cause concerns for EMT, Fire etc. to access people in the area in a timely manor. Will there be a fence around the area, people in long term care have dementia and other issues – what security measures are there going to be to keep the residents safe. And the other people in the apartment buildings mixing with the LTC – is that safe? The ages of the two will be vastly different and could cause issues. Are they tying into the system that

Halifax Water is trying to purchase the land from us to upgrade the infrastructure?

Jenifer Tsang – explained the distance from the building to the property line. Said Halifax Water would tell them where they would tie in at. They are unaware of the purchase of land from the surrounding properties by Halifax Water. The property they are developing on is private property and has never been a public park.

Melissa Eavis – offered to get in touch with Halifax Water to find out what it is they are asking for.

XV. Nick Harris:

Shocked to see something so large and so dense being proposed directly behind their property. The draw to the area was having the trail, greenspace, the wildlife that frequent the area. Knowing that the area was R-2 homes and thought those would be the types of buildings in the area – not something like this. Doesn't feel this is the right community fit for something of this size. This is something that would fit more in Downtown Dartmouth or Halifax not here. There is no consistent transit in the area for this development. Concerned with Bissett Brook – some of the brook is missing from the site plan. Would hate for that waterway to be diverted. LTC – great, the size of it is great but the apartments – not the right location. It also said potential for commercial space, in the plans but that hasn't been discussed today. The commercial space would also have an impact on the traffic. Concerns with noise during the day from construction because they work from home.

Melissa Eavis – spoke to missing wetlands and that is with the wetland's specialists, commercial space - it is something they can ask for.

Jenifer Tsang – the proposal is to have commercial space on the ground level of the multi-unit buildings. That is desirable now so that you can have amenities right where you are.

XVI. Carolyn Hicks, Eastwood Court:

Traffic is an issue. Will there be a bridge going down the driveway across the wetlands? Concerned with affordability of the apartments and seniors housing. How will this affect property taxes?

Melissa Eavis – not a bridge, they are going to alter the wetlands to build the driveway. There is no policy that allows us to ask for affordability. Property taxes – can't say how this will affect the property taxes in the area.

XVII. Brett Pasoner, Bissett Rd.:

The wetland with the road running through it – how will that impact my property. Will it make it wetter or dryer? Across from where that proposed road ends are the mailboxes and there is a path, community easement or something, where people like to walk their dogs and walk etc. How will that be managed? Concerned with there being a lot of people using that driveway, that is right beside his property, to cut across to use that pathway.

Melissa Eavis – The stormwater management legislation state they must balance the pre and post flow of water on the site.

XVIII. Gary Trovac:

Marshland is always wet. Just did a quick check and the NW end of the development area is about 52 metres above sea level and Bissett Lake, north end, is 44 metres above sea level which is an 8 metre drop in about 1000 metres with .8% gradient. That means that water does not flow it is stagnant. Right now, with the marshland – that will absorb some of it but when the marshland is gone any rain that falls is going to try to flow to Bissett Lake and it is just going to backup.

Melissa Eavis – understands all the concern around stormwater and will take that away.

XIX. Dave Clark, Ashgrove Ave:

Stormwater is supposed to be handled on that site. Right now, flooding is an issue – very concerned about the stormwater. Has the tie-in to the sanitary pipe been identified?

Jenifer Tsang - doesn't know the exact location. Gave a general location but that is provided by Halifax Water.

XX. Loreli Nicole, Crestwood Place, Liberal MLA for Cole Harbour

Spoke to the lakes and brooks, in the area, and the concerns of how the water moves from the lakes to the ocean. Feels there is knowledge in the history of the area. The Suburban Plan was not proposed before they left council and The Land Use Bylaw for Cole Harbour only allowed 4-sotreys so why are they not going through public consultation for the Suburban Plan first before considering this proposal?

Melissa Eavis stated the Suburban Plan is coming but this is under the current enabling policy.

XXI. Steve Low, Broom Rd.:

Concerned with street traffic. Sidewalks, speedbumps etc. Lack of infrastructure is an issue.

4. Closing Comments

Ms. Eavis thanked everyone for their participation in the meeting.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:06 p.m.