

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Public Information Meeting
Case 20226

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

Tuesday, April 3rd, 2018

6:30 p.m.

Comfort Hotel, 88 Chain Lake Drive, Halifax

STAFF IN

ATTENDANCE: Sean Gillis, Planner, Planner, HRM Planning
Mapfumo Chidzonga (Maps), Diversion and Inclusion, HRM Planning
Kate Greene, Policy and Strategic Initiatives Project Manager
Ayo Aladejebi, Advisor, African Nova Scotia Affairs Integration Office
Genevieve Hachey, Planning Controller, HRM Planning

ALSO IN

ATTENDANCE: Councillor, Richard Zurawski, District 12
Adam Maclean, Armco Capital Inc.
Sam Armoyan, Armco Capital Inc.

PUBLIC IN

ATTENDANCE: Approximately 43

Case 20226 Armco Capital Inc. (Armco) has applied to change the Municipal Planning Strategy (the Plan). Armco is proposing a new development on about 60 acres of land near Lovett Lake, in Beechville.

The meeting commenced at approximately 6:31 p.m.

Call to order, purpose of meeting – Maps Chidzonga

Maps introduced themselves as the diversity and inclusion intern and acknowledged that they were on Mi'kmaq ancestral territory. Maps explained the agenda for the evening. They explained that council has directed staff to hold a Public Participation Program in order to understand what the community would like to see on the lands that are to be developed by Armco Capital Inc. Maps explained the reason for the meetings and what HRM hopes to accomplish by having open discussion with the local residents.

Sean Gillis introduced himself and explained how this planning process will unfold. They thanked everyone for coming and introduced councillor Richard Zurawski, Genevieve Hachey, Planning Controller, Kate Greene, the applicant Armco Capital Inc.

1. Presentation of Proposal – Sean Gillis

Sean Gillis provided a brief introduction to the application and then made a presentation to the public outlining the purpose of the meeting, what the planning process will be, what the zoning in the area of Beechville currently is and what the developer is requesting. Sean explained why it is so important to have the local community involved in this process and spoke about the history of these lands and the African Nova Scotian community that has been here since the early 1800s. They explained how and why it is so important to conserve and respect the history of the area including the Baptist church and historic lands around it.

Question and Answers

Danielle Jackson: Asked what will the community and cultural venues that were mentioned in the presentation will look like for the African Nova Scotian residents of the area.

Sean Gillis: Indicated that this has not been decided at this point, part of the reason for this process is getting feedback from the local residents as to what they would like to see on these lands. There are ideas that have come forward for a community centre, public art, commemorative plaques, and interpretive displays. There are many possibilities.

Eric: Asked for more clarification regarding the map and where the church's land and the baptismal path is vs the applicant's land.

Derek Letourneau: Stated the land is currently allowed to have 250 homes, just to have an idea, how many houses are in the Beechville Estates subdivision.

Sean Gillis: Responded there are about 350 to 400 houses there.

Eric: Stated they would like to know about traffic flow, buses and crosswalks.

Sean Gillis: Sean talked about the current bus routes in the area and explained that part of this project will be communicating with Halifax Transit and seeing if there could be more transit service in the area; sidewalks, crosswalks and a traffic impact study are all things that will be looked at in the scope of this project. There could be a different route opened from this subdivision into the Bayer's Lake area. There are other developments that will be coming to the Bayer's Lake area, all of these developments will likely be looked at together to determine what the traffic impact will be in the area.

Terry Gagnon: There is another development coming to Beechville, the development near Rains Mill Road, will the traffic studies for both of these developments be considered at the same time?

Sean Gillis: HRM will take all developments in this area into consideration with the Traffic Impact Studies. There is a new plan in HRM called the Integrated Mobility Plan, it looks broadly at various traffic modes with the idea of having less people using cars and more people using transit, bike lanes, communities where you can walk to places ect.

Member of the public: Wanted to know how real estate values would be impacted in the area and what schools will the children who will live in this development go to?

Sean Gillis: Responded, it is too early to see at this point what will happen to land values, in general when an area is built up, land values do tend to go up. The applicant can speak to the question about the schools.

2. Armco Capital Inc.

Adam Maclean introduced himself and Sam Armoyan and spoke briefly about the scope of the project. They explained that purpose today is not to speak about specifics as in unit counts, where the roads will be and what the project looks like but more to hear from the community about what potential issues are, and what we need to consider as we go forward with HRM staff working on this project. They explained that there is a previous Development Agreement on the original piece of land (a smaller portion of the current land) and since then we've acquired more land; this is why we are here, wanting to create a new development. They explained the importance of integrating small scale commercial, the history of the area and also to connect to transit and walking/cycling routes to create a community feel.

The province of Nova Scotia is responsible for the schools, they along with the Halifax Regional School Board would be looking at the needs of the community and the capacity of the local schools to see if a new school is needed and where it should go.

Sam Armoyan indicated they have been meeting with Pastor Grant of the Baptist Church as well as other senior members of the congregation to understand the importance of the church and the history of this land. We've spoken at length about the Baptismal Path where, historically, members would walk down to the lake to be baptized. Armco will be deeding land that connects to the Baptismal Path and also land that will extend the property of the Church to include historic unmarked gravesites to the Church. They explained how they plan on creating park land and a walking trail along the lake that will connect up to the BLT trail as well as having something commemorating the importance of the African Nova Scotian community to this area.

Ali Duale: Asked if the developer is held accountable for making sure the neighborhood is a safe place and properly finished and they would like to know what the playground may look like; will there be any large play areas. You have mentioned that HRM is consulting with the community in order to leave some kind of recognition for the church, what will this look like, will there be money and resources left to the church as opposed to simply putting up a plaque?

Adam Maclean: Replied this type of Development Agreements is required to have many things including park land, playground and green spaces. It is too early to know what the specifics will be on size however there will be at least one play ground.

Sean Gillis: Advised that council will decide what the investment into heritage and cultural resources will be. HRM staff will gather information and present a recommendation to Council. There are lots of opportunities here to discuss specifics about parkland and other amenities.

Once a development is finished HRM takes over ownership of the streets, sidewalks, trails, parks and open spaces. These are all maintained by HRM after the handover by the developer.

Terry Gagnon: Asked what do you take into consideration when you are deciding about how to keep the heritage of the area intact when planning large developments like this?

Adam Maclean: Asked when applying for the first development agreement for the smaller portion of this property we met several times with the community and the Baptist Church to see what was important to the community. The Baptismal Patch was part of the original proposal. The original consultation was not as elaborate as the process we will now be going through and we recognize that this process will go much deeper into what is best for the community.

Terry Gagnon: Asked are there environmental impact studies conducted, wind studies that show what the impact is when you tear down the forest? There were some trails in the woods where this development is proposed, there was no consultation done then to see what people thought of, we simply woke up one morning and machinery was cutting down everything.

Adam Maclean: Replied there are environmental impact studies however wind is not something we look at when doing single family low rise developments. From an Engineering point of view, it is often necessary to cut the vegetation back to see what the ground we will be building on is made of. The trail was not an HRM trail, it was on private land and not an officially recognized trail.

Councillor Zurawski: Explained that when a developer or resident wants to develop a privately-owned property and what they are looking to do is currently within the rules that no consultation is necessary. As a property owner it is your right.

Sean Gillis: Spoke about the CDD Zone and what the process was for the original proposal was. There are many interests involved in the process, the property owner, developer, community, African Nova

Scotian community, HRM, the province and more. This process is trying to bring us all together to decide what is best for everyone. HRM staff will be providing their recommendation to Council, at the end of this process Council will making the decision here. Our promise to the community is that we will work our best to get all the information needed in order to make the proper recommendations to Council.

Danielle Jackson Had questions about the baptismal path location, current graves and where the future graves might be.

Sam Armoyan: advised that this is something that will be looked at.

Patsy Crawford: Asked will there be a consideration for senior housing in this development?

Adam Maclean: advised that this is something that they are interested in and would be looking at incorporating.

Eric: Asked will there be rodent control and what will HRM do to make sure that the people who move here will have ties to the community, that it won't simply be people moving into apartment buildings and not staying and building roots.

Sean Gillis: Advised that he wasn't sure about the rodent control but he would look into it. HRM can state through zoning what percentages of single family homes and apartments there will be. HRM can also have a say as to what the development will look like, that it will be a place where people will want to sit out on their front porches and be proud of how their neighborhood looks and feels. HRM park planners and Heritage staff will be working on the parks and heritage components of this project.

Carolann Wright: Stated there are multiple zones in Beechville that you don't see in other communities and asked will this be looked at? Zoning tends to happen to a community; the community doesn't always have a say in it. What can we do to have more say as to what happens in our communities?

Sean Gillis: Advised that council has asked HRM to look at some of these concerns, for example, why is there an I1 zone here? We will be looking at the area as a whole within this process.

Maps: Explained that as part of his work at HRM that he would love to hear from members of the public about how the process can be more inclusive.

Lynn Jones: Asked has HRM thought about ongoing financial compensation to the community over a long period of time and they would like to say that they enjoyed that the history of the community with regards to the African Nova Scotian community and the Atlantic slave trade was included in the presentation tonight. How do we have a ongoing conversation about reparations.

Sean Gillis: explained that there could be a financial mechanism that could benefit the area however we are too early to know what that would look like. The discussion around reparations is something outside of the current scope of what we are here for tonight however there should be a conversation about this in general. There are many concerns here about land, land ownership and other issues that have happened in the past and HRM will be moving forward with an open discussion about these issues.

3. Closing Comments

The meeting continued with group discussions.

4. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:47 p.m. with group discussions until 9:15pm.