

July 26, 2018

BEECHVILLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION
QUESTIONS FOR HRM PLANNERS
July 12, 2018

1. Council knew this was happening 25 years ago – throwing bomb into Lovett Lake

The Planning Strategy for Timberlea/ Lakeside/ Beechville is from 1992. A major goal of this plan was to permit and regulate new subdivision development. At the time, the Halifax County planners and Councillors likely thought that most growth would be single family homes.

2. This wouldn't happen in another community – South End? No

HRM is processing around 40 requests for new planning policy, in communities across the Municipality.

3. Why weren't we included in writing the policy from the very beginning?

There are standards for public engagement to create land use policy, but they are minimal. In 1992, Halifax County council was likely required to hold information meetings, and to hold a public hearing. They were likely required to advertise in the newspaper. We don't have information on the process from 25 years ago.

4. Boundary lines keep moving overnight!!??

The boundaries for the community of Beechville were last set by HRM Regional Council in 2004. Boundary lines for different zones (which control development) can change more frequently. The community boundary and the zoning boundaries are not linked.

5. Why ask questions when answers won't be considered? (enraging)

Planning staff made two mistakes handling Raines Mill Road. First, we missed that the project was happening and impacting our Beechville/ Lovett Lake project. Second, after we realized that not many African Nova Scotian residents knew about the Raines Mill Road project, we tried to do a quick meeting to cover that mistake. We should not have done that – we should have reached out and had a better conversation with the community about Raines Mill Road.

6. Feel like trying to get rid of US – being sandwiched

7. Make promises but nothing gets done – say what you think

We are trying to make realistic promises, so that we can deliver results around housing, heritage, parks and community spaces. We are trying to balance being realistic, without dismissing community ideas. We are early in the planning process, so sometimes we don't know.

8. 2nd phase to Munroe couldn't happen because couldn't have 2nd access – why can it happen here?

We don't know much about previous attempts to develop Phase II of the Munroe Subdivision. But, through this process we can work towards creating new policy to expand the Munroe Subdivision. For Raines Mill Road, the application is to rezone to a Comprehensive Development District, a zone which allows Council to consider multiple-unit residential buildings. A policy in the existing planning strategy (Policy UR-11, f) states that Council must look at whether the land being rezoned has two access points.

9. Weren't informed about PIM – only went to those in subdivision

Again, we made a mistake and didn't realize that the Raines Mill Road project was ongoing. The information about the PIM was sent to the standard notification area, which is 100 metres. The planner working on Raines Mill Road did not make the connection between this project and the Beechville planning project, and we did not make the connection between the two projects. This was a mistake.

10. Policy already written – have been here since 18th century – can you write a policy to give back to Beechville the Rotary to Five Island Lake?

This is beyond the scope of our planning project.

11. Have asked planners / council / developers how they'd feel if this was happening in their community?

We have put together a five-phase public participation program. HRM has not done a good job in the past of working with communities to know what they feel.

12. Policy has been so negative for community – lost land, economic development, lost so much

This project is an opportunity to create policies that better fit the needs of Beechville residents.

13. Planners not being transparent as agreed to with Community about known developments (Raines Mill) – once again government breaking trust.

We made a mistake. Several teams work on different types of applications. Applications are assigned to individual planners based on the type of application, not on where the application is located. A planner on a different team was working on the Raines Mill Road application, while we worked on the broader Beechville project. Nobody realized what the other team was doing, and what impact the applications might have.

14. If the entrance to the future subdivision for Raines Mills Road is across from the current Munroe Subdivision entrance, how can the future address for the Raines Mills Road Subdivision be in Lakeside?

The boundary between Beechville and Lakeside curves on one side of St. Margaret's Bay Road, so that the proposed driveway is in one community (Beechville), but most of the development is in Lakeside.

15. Relating to the Heritage Impact Statement that ARMCO is supposed to undertake as part of the Phase 4. This was referenced in the November 4th staff Report.

a. What is the process for the creation of the RFP for this Report? Terms of Reference? Does ARMCO issue it to the 'public' or is it one of those cases where ARMCO sends the RFP out to certain researchers/ consultants?

b. What is the process for selection? Will the company do it on its own, or will city staff be involved, and will the community have any input? To whom will the researcher/consultant report?

c. If the company is solely responsible, I see the potential for a conflict of interest. Example: ARMCO contracts person, and the person may therefore feel responsible to prepare the kind of report that the company seeks. Will the report go to ARMCO first before it is sent to HRM and to the community?

d. It is essential for this process be fully transparent.

Jonathan Folwer is the consultant doing the heritage impact statement. Jonathan is a pretty well-known and respected member of St. Mary's Archaeology faculty, and has completed sensitive and renowned studies around the Province, including First Nations and Acadian sites.

A Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) is a standard document that is sometimes requested as part of a heritage application, or any planning application which may affect a registered heritage property (such as the Beechville Baptist Church).

Staff have the ability to request this information in order to better inform their evaluation of a proposal and heritage planning staff are fully qualified to assess whether the information provided is acceptable or correct in relation to the historical record. In this particular process, given the unique community engagement program that Sean and his team have developed, there may be opportunities to have the community comment on the information provided in the HIS.

When staff request an HIS, it is up to the applicant to choose a consultant and as such, they have the ability to review and change the document as they see fit. Fortunately, a Heritage Impact Statement is based on historical record, and any conclusions that are drawn can be evaluated by HRM staff and clarified when necessary.

Essentially, an HIS is another piece of pertinent information (like an engineering study or site plan) that allows HRM planning staff to have a fuller picture of the context on the site. Together with the information provided through community consultation and stakeholder engagement, we are able to clarify what the site sensitivities are, and how the applicant should address any heritage issues specifically.

Should HRM staff find that the HIS is lacking in detail or diverges from the factual information that we have access to, then we are able to request revisions as necessary.