

PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday May 27, 2025
Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor William McCormick, Chair
Deputy Mayor Paul Saulnier
Councillor Shane Weir
Mayor Mike Bartlett, Vice Chair (Via Zoom)
Councillor Rick Foote
Charles Haliburton, Citizen Representative (6:11 PM)
Ed Moore, Citizen Representative (6:11 PM)

STAFF PRESENT: Tom Ossinger, CAO/Development Officer
Leslie Brinton, Executive Assistant
Chris Millier, Town Planner 4 Site Group (Via Zoom)
Anya Chin, the 4 Site Group (Via Zoom)

REGRETS:

OTHERS:

A. Call to order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

B. Agenda

B.1 Additions/Deletions

None.

B.2 Approval

Motion:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Saulnier and seconded by Councillor Foote that the Agenda for May 27, 2025, be approved as presented.

Motion Carried.

PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
May 27, 2025

C. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

C.1 March 11, 2025

Small grammar errors were noted and will be corrected

Motion:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Saulnier and seconded by Councillor Weir that the Minutes of March 11, 2025, be approved as amended.

Motion Carried.

D. Business Arising/Unfinished Business

D.1 None.

E. Correspondence

E.1 None.

F. New Business

F.1 “What we heard” Engagement Session

The notes were compiled and then incorporated into the document which can be added to the website information. We have the email set up for the plan review and we can receive information to this email from items that we load to the site. Deputy Mayor Saulnier spoke about the information taken at the planning engagement event. Councillor Foote asked about the list provided is this in an order of importance and that answer is no.

We can add a statement to that document that the information is not ranked in order of importance.

Deputy Mayor asked about the document provided. Chris spoke about a call to action for the document. A draft strategy related to density perhaps how the feedback plays into this. Short term if we want the public to provide feedback, we can do that. But the recommendation that the Committee will make can reflect back to the “what we heard document”.

PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
May 27, 2025

Charles asked about the information collected and relate it back to the policies and does it align and support the MPS/LUB. Some of the items discussed have already been implemented such as Alertable, newsletter.

Chris will make the required amendments as discussed here tonight and then we can post on the website and email to those who attended the session. Once we have this document we can post it on the Town website. Maybe plan to have this out to the public before the next meeting and allow Sometime to review and compile the documents provided.

Chris continued the “What we heard document”. The question where residential development should go this location were identified High Density and low impact areas. We haven’t identified any changes to the current future land use map that isn’t already in there. The generalized future land use map is a tool to use for identifying future development. We have the option to predetermine density for the Town. Predetermined density is a question for the committee and what are the thoughts.

- Ed Moore liked the idea of having predetermined areas
- Charles was for pre-determined areas to lessen the red tape do a site tour to see what area of town might be able to be used under this process.
- Councillor Foote asked about the pre-determined area would this eliminate or lessen the process. It can be structured to go from say 1 to 24 units in this land or create a high-density area. Stacking was discussed by Chris to the Committee. Councillor Foote also discussed medium density from the public engagement session.
- Charles spoke about the designation of certain areas the value of property will change so if you want to put 1 unit vs 20 units there will have to be more consideration into this.
- Deputy Mayor Saulnier discussed the Digby Pines what would happen there, and the Deputy Mayor would like to see a model of somewhere else.
- Chris spoke about predetermined high density will have supports and non supports. It won’t be cart blanch it will be based on lot size, and
-

PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
May 27, 2025

- Other tools to align the density with the criteria. Sewer and roads are important to people.
- Mayor Bartlett would not be in favor of predetermined areas he currently lives on the top of the hill as referred to in the document
- Councillor Weir said in a perfect world with the way life is going and with the budget being tight and encourage folks to build in area that area serviced. If the high density is determined folks may not want to build high density and a small home is what people are moving toward. Money is tight for folks and any development would be important.
- Councillor McCormick spoke about developers who are always willing to come in and build.
- Ed Moore spoke about R1 designation in HRM and there are models out there that we can review and discuss. Ed spoke about being on the ground and having a look around at lots that are available for development.
- Deputy Mayor spoke about restricting the use of property that people own similar to Bedford area models is this a model that we should be looking at.
- Charles Haliburton spoke about the potential for townhouses or other development and not forcing people on what to do on the land.
- Councillor Weir spoke about Edmonton being very cookie cutter and that is one of the reasons he came back to live was the unique area.
- Chris spoke about the Mountain Gap development that has been spurred by the market. Directing growth is what is to be expected is we move forward with the predesignated areas.

- Where should development not go?

Shore line, heritage properties, waterfront these are from the engagement session and are there other areas. The mayor said that is no place we shouldn't consider development.

- Ed Moore asked about why or what the shoreline reference was in regard to. Was it referring to environment study and if that was done

PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
May 27, 2025

it could happen. Shore line protection, coastal protection was discussed at Public Engagement Session and some of those were referring to the Thomas Road Development.

- Deputy Mayor Saulnier spoke about say the former convent and it was discussed if Queen Street was designated historical and we left our current development agreement model. We might lose committee, council and public input to allow (or not) for a large scale development on that double lot As we might loose out on a development while trying to streamline the process. Because of too stringent guidelines being in place for what might be allowed. With a "historical" designation.
- Chris spoke to all the comments coming from the public all these items are currently permitted with in the current MPS/LUB. Public awareness will be needed moving forward. And in terms of housing types there was none identified outside of what we currently allow.
- Ed Moore asked if there was an inventory of what is currently in the town no, we have not Chris said. The housing coalition has done some study work, and the province has done some work around housing needs assessment.

Character of Development was discussed

The proposed character or the impact on the character by new development. The Town has chosen to minimize the cost for the developer was thought be excessive for development controls, landscape controls the town has chosen not to use these guidelines. What we heard from the community the character of the development goes along way.

- Mayor Bartlett would like to see the character added to the process. Is that an unsightly policing problem or a development problem? Such as people not likely a building downtown
- Ed Moore spoke about the comments that relates to character it's a concern
- Councillor Foote asked about would this only be certain areas of town where this would be done or would it be the entire town.

PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
May 27, 2025

- Chris spoke about infill and re development of properties of an area of say Victoria Street outside of downtown. Lots of discussion about Annapolis, Wolfville and other areas of the towns.
- Deputy Mayor Saulnier said it dove trails into a conversation about commercial property and people say small fishing town, color, etc. the main street discussion maybe should be had as well.
- Charles spoke about the Downtown green ugly building on Water Street and spoke about a new bank that was done many years ago and that architect said that the town didn't have any character etc. and do what they wanted. And perhaps we should consider designing what we can and can't do but either way the detail or imagination would be very complicated but preserving the heritage would be important.
- Ed Moore said that the residents of Digby prefer traditional architect would be preferred but the downtown façade would be a great place to start. Adding some level of protection to preserve the downtown architect that might be better.
- Deputy Mayor said that Annapolis and Wolfville are doing is great, but we need have a Digby Plan based on the area and bring in the façade program with funding for downtown and develop the made in Digby strategy and it starts with an idea and have one person by in and move it forward.

Chris spoke to all these comments:

The principal to be addressed is incorporating character into the policies and what it is and where it applies is another discussion. This has been discussed in the past and folks in the past didn't want to go down this route. And we need to focus on how we integrate character into the development process. The development officer will need the tools in his hand to approve the developments. The committee

PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
May 27, 2025

can be involved in the process is we move to this change. The policy can support the main street character.

Read pages 4 through 7 of the remaining documents and come prepared to talk about that.

G. Date of next meeting

- G.1** Thursday June 26, 2025, at 6:00 PM
- Tuesday July 22, 2025, at 6:00 PM

H. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned by Deputy Mayor Saulnier and seconded by Councillor Weir at 8:11 PM

CHAIRPERSON


DEVELOPMENT OFFICER