

**Eastern District Planning Commission  
Thursday, November 26, 2020  
Minutes**

**PRESENT:** Warden Amanda Mombourquette, Chair  
Councillor Alfred Poirier, Vice-Chair  
Councillor Jason Aucoin  
Mayor Laurie Boucher  
Councillor Mary Farrell  
Councillor Mark MacIver  
Councillor Perla MacLeod  
Councillor Harris McNamara  
Warden Bruce Morrison  
Councillor Shawn Samson  
Mr. Terry Doyle, Advisor  
Ms. Leanne MacEachen, Advisor  
Mr. Don Marchand, Advisor

**STAFF:** Mr. John Bain, Director

**REGRETS:** Warden Laurie Cranton  
Councillor Bill MacFarlane  
Mr. Glenn Horne, Advisor  
Mr. Jeffery Lawrence, Advisor  
Mr. Keith MacDonald, Advisor

**1.0 Call to Order:**

Mr. Bain called the meeting to order at approximately 1:05 p.m.

**2.0 Welcome to new Members – Appointment of Officers**

Mr. Bain welcomed the new Councillors to the Board and asked for introductions. He then explained quorum for the Commission being 50% plus one, plus one member from each municipality. The same is true for a passing vote. It was explained that we need a majority, comprised of one vote from each unit, to pass a motion. The Director also explained the rotation of officers and asked for a nomination for a Richmond councillor to be the Chair of the Board.

**Motion** to nominate Warden Amanda Mombourquette as Chair of the Planning Commission Board. Moved by Warden Bruce Morrison, seconded by Mayor Laurie Boucher. Warden Mombourquette accepted the nomination. **Motion carried.**

There being no further nominations Mr. Bain turned the meeting over to the new Chair who asked for a nomination from Inverness County for the vice-chair position.

**Motion** to nominate Councillor Alfred Poirier as Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission Board. Moved by Councillor Mark MacIver, seconded by Councillor Jason Aucoin. Councillor Poirier accepted the nomination. **Motion carried.** There being no further nominations Councillor Poirier became vice-chair of the Commission.

**3.0 Items Added to the Agenda:**

- There were no items added to the agenda.

**4.0 Review of Minutes:**

The Board reviewed the minutes of September 10, 2020.

**Motion** to approve the minutes. Moved by Councillor Mark MacIver, seconded by Mayor Laurie Boucher. **Motion carried.**

**5.0 Director's Report:**

**1. 2020 – 2021 Operating Estimates**

Mr. John Bain explained the *Municipal Government Act* requires the Commission to have the 2021 – 2022 fiscal year budget submitted to the municipality's on or before January 15, 2021. His plan, as in past years was to meet with the CAOs prior to the next board meeting to discuss the same.

The 2020 – 2021 projection to fiscal year-end was reviewed in comparison to the first draft of the 2021 – 2022 budget.

Councillor Poirier asked if the Commission carried Director's Insurance. Mr. Bain confirmed that we did.

Ms. MacEachern asked about using an unchanged estimate for building permit revenues in the new budget given potential impacts from the Provincial State of Emergency for the Pandemic. She also noted an error in the projections used for Company RRSPs which resulted in significantly reducing the possible surplus this year.

Warden Morrison asked about the possibility of a four-day work week reducing some expenses for the Commission. Mr. Bain noted that he had received a request to amend the Personnel Policy to allow for this type of flexibility in scheduling but that the policy already permitted consideration of such adjustments on a case-by-case basis with approval of the Board.

**Action Item:** By consensus the Board agreed that the Director meet with the CAOs to review the budget and present a final budget at the January board meeting.

**2. Personnel – Building Officials Training**

Mr. John Bain noted that building official training was discussed as a line item when reviewing the budget but noted that our two Assistant Building Inspectors, Amanda Esterbrooks and André Samson have completed the courses required to become "Residentially Qualified" and are able to complete specific Part 9 inspections under a

mentor. They will remain assistant building officials until they complete two more courses and 120 required inspections. David MacKenzie, Harry Martell and Jonathan Martin all are enrolled in their last Level 2 course scheduled for December. After successfully completing this course and the required 120 Part 3 inspections, all three Inspectors will be Level 2 Qualified. Budget numbers for training and salaries reflect these changes.

### **3. Construction Trends in Region**

The board reviewed permit revenues and value of construction from January 1 to October 31 for the last three years (partial 2018 for Town of Antigonish). For the region as a whole, fees for the ten months increased from \$212,222 to \$217,892 (2.7%) and value of construction from \$91.5 to \$94.6 million (3.4%).

### **4. Town of Antigonish**

Mr. Bain noted that the Commission's Inter-Municipal Services Agreement states that the Town of Antigonish would only be a participating municipality for a period of three years, from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2021. Effective June 30, 2021, Antigonish Town shall have withdrawn and the Commission shall comprise only 10 members. The Director informed the Board of this automatic withdrawal of the Town of Antigonish but also noted that he has only prepared one budget for the whole of the fiscal year assuming the continued participation of the Town. He also informed the Board that he has raised the issue now since the agreement will have to be replaced and a new agreement needs unanimous consent from all the units if the Town is to stay in the Commission.

### **5. Staff Activity**

The board reviewed ongoing files and the Director noted the nine (9) new files received since the last report to the Board. The Director also explained to the Board the purpose of the review of files to the Board and emphasized that the merits of each file was not an item for discussion but the Board but rather the responsibility of the individual Councils.

## **6.0 Correspondence and Documentation:**

Correspondence and documentation were reviewed.

Correspondence from the Cape Breton Partnership (September 15, 2020) regarding participation by our Manager of Inspection Services in the Cape Breton Special Events Task Force; to the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Catherine Berliner (October 16, 2020) requesting provincial financial support for a Regional Land Use Plan under the Municipal Innovation Program fund; and a response from the Deputy Minister (November 16, 2020).

The Director also discussed with the Board the Provincial Mandatory Planning Legislation and the impacts of the pandemic on timelines and funding possibilities.

**7.0 Discussion – Items added to the Agenda:**

Warden Morrison raised the issue of Accessibility with the Board. He noted that the Municipality of the County of Victoria had had some difficulties getting representation on an Accessibility Committee and wondered if there was an opportunity to combine resources through the Planning Commission to approach the issue on a more regional basis. Mayor Boucher noted that Town had put out an RFP for a consultant to work on their Town of Antigonish Accessibility Plan. The contest had closed November 6, 2020.

**Action Item:** The Director was asked to review the status of each units progress in putting together an Accessibility plan and bring back his findings to the next Board meeting.

**8.0 Next Meeting Date:**

Next meeting scheduled on Thursday January 14, 2020, at 1:00 p.m.

**9.0 Adjournment:**

**Motion to adjourn.** Moved by Councillor Perla MacLeod, seconded by Councillor Jason Aucoin. **Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:45 p.m.



Warden Amanda Mombourquette  
Chair

  
John Bain  
Recorder