

Eastern District Planning Commission
Thursday, March 30, 2023
Minutes

PRESENT: Warden Bruce Morrison, Chair
Councillor Bill MacFarlane, Vice-Chair
Councillor Jason Aucoin
Councillor Michael Diggdon
Deputy Warden Catherine Gillis
Councillor Mary Farrell
Councillor Mark MacIver
Councillor Paul MacNeil
Councillor Harris McNamara
Warden Amanda Mombourquette (Virtually)
Councillor Claude Poirier
Ms. Leanne MacEachen, Advisor
Mr. Troy MacCulloch, Advisor

STAFF: John Bain, Director
Tammy MacLellan

REGRETS: Mayor Laurie Boucher
Councillor Perla MacLeod
Councillor Shawn Samson
Mr. Terry Doyle, Advisor
Mr. Glenn Horne, Advisor
Mr. Jeffery Lawrence, Advisor
Mr. Keith MacDonald, Advisor

1.0 Call to Order:

Warden Bruce Morrison called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

2.0 Items Added to the Agenda:

- a. Coastal protection legislation; and
- b. In Camera Session under Discussion Items.

Motion to approve the agenda with additions. Moved by Councillor Bill MacFarlane, seconded by Councillor Mark MacIver. **Motion carried.**

3.0 Review of Minutes:

The Board reviewed the minutes of January 12, 2023.

Motion to accept the minutes as presented. Moved by Deputy Warden Catherine Gillis, seconded by Councillor Harris McNamara. **Motion carried.**

4.0 Director's Report:

1.1 2023 – 2024 Operating Estimates

Mr. John Bain reviewed the revenue from building permit fees, taking into consideration the 2022 Association of Municipal Administrators Nova Scotia's salary review report (for possible salary adjustments) and to accommodate the Gerald Walsh Associates report. After his review, Mr. Bain prepared a draft 2023 – 2024 budget with no increase in the units' contributions from last year. The draft budget was presented and reviewed with the Board.

Motion to accept the 2023 – 2024 operating estimates and to have John Bain forward to the units, in accordance with the provisions of the *Municipal Government Act*. Moved by Councillor Mary Farrell, seconded by Deputy Warden Catherine Gillis. **Motion carried.**

1.2 Salary Review

Gerald Walsh Associates is providing a salary review with an anticipated deliverable date of February 2023, however, that date was extended to the end of March 2023. The review has not been received by the Commission. This item will be moved to the next session scheduled for the May/June board meeting.

1.3 Personnel Committee Recommendations

This item has been moved to in camera at the end of the meeting.

1.4 Plan Eastern Nova - Updates

Mr. John Bain explained the mandatory planning requirement from the province was extended to the end of the year. Uplands is employed to provide an extra consultation to the municipalities and will meet with the CAO's to discuss this. As recommended, the Commission's municipalities adopted a public participation resolution by the end of March.

1.5 Guysborough Building Inspection Service

The Municipality of the District of Guysborough (Guysborough) does not have building inspection services to provide level two inspections. They reached out to the Commission to provide this service. Mr. John Bain provided a contract for Guysborough consisting of a fee structure and a requirement to appoint two of the Commission's building officials as the authority having jurisdiction. Guysborough's council made this appointment.

Mr. John Bain discussed the concern of insurance with providing such a service to a neighboring municipality. Guysborough and the Commission have the same company for insurance and they reached out to them for a ruling on coverage. More information was requested by the insurer and this information was provided to them. Mr. Bain is waiting for the underwriters to provide feedback on the implications of this.

The building in Guysborough has not been started, however, site preparation is under way. The Commission's building inspectors have been provided with plans and have started their plan review. The inspectors will not go onsite until the insurance issue is addressed.

1.6 Lease – 606 Reeves Street

The lease for 606 Reeves Street expires March 31, 2023. Discussions with the Town of Port Hawkesbury for a lease renewal are ongoing.

1.7 Additional Audit Expenses

In mid-January, Mr. John Bain received notice from Grant Thornton on their inability to complete the 2022 – 2023 audit for \$9,500, as quoted in 2021. They provided a new quote of \$13,500 plus HST and a 7% administrative fee.

After discussions with the CAO's, Mr. John Bain asked Grant Thornton to remove the 7% administrative fee. Grant Thornton removed this fee and is continuing with the audit.

It was recommended by Mr. John Bain to go out to the market next year and get firm pricing from various auditors for the 2023 – 2024 audit.

1.8 NSBOA Course

Sean Donovan has become certified to teach Nova Scotia Building Officials Association courses. He taught a level 1 course at the Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre, attended by twelve building inspectors from across the region.

1.9 Czech Republic Information Gathering Trip

In Victoria County, the company planning to build the Tree Walk in Ingonish has reached out to the Municipality of the County of Victoria and the Commission's staff at the possibility of going to the Czech Republic to see the Tree Walk facility in that country.

Mr. John Bain made the recommendation for the board to allow staff to attend the Tree Walk in the Czech Republic and if agreeable, Mr. Bain would work on a proposal for the board's approval. The trip would be approximately \$4,000/person for flights, accommodations, etc. and it would be in conjunction with staff going from Victoria County.

It is the consensus of the board to have Mr. John Bain provide a proposal for the board's review.

Staff Activity:

Staff Activity – Major Projects and Municipal Planning Processes, Plan Amendments, Rezoning, Policy Changes and Miscellaneous Projects were reviewed.

5.0 Correspondence and Documentation:

Correspondence and Documentation were reviewed.

Flood Line Mapping

The Commission received \$146,850 in funding from the federal and provincial governments to provide flood line mapping around the south and the west rivers of Antigonish County. An additional \$35,000 was requested for extending the sampling period into the end of the calendar year. This additional funding was approved.

6.0 Discussion – Items added to the Agenda:

Coastal Protection Act

Mr. John Bain received notification from the province that the implementation of the ***Coastal Protection Act*** is no longer imminent, as the province reassesses their approach to the new legislation. All units have been supportive of coastal protection legislation, however, there is the concern that resources available to municipalities to implement it are limited.

Motion that the meeting proceed to in camera session at 1:30 p.m. Moved by Councillor Jason Aucoin, seconded by Councillor Mary Farrell. **Motion carried.**

Motion that the meeting come out of camera at 1:56 p.m. Moved by Councillor Michael Diggdon, seconded by Councillor Jason Aucoin. **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the revised salary scales for the Commission and the proposed salary classification of various staff. Moved by Councillor Michael Diggdon, seconded by Councillor Jason Aucoin. **Motion carried.**

Motion to send the proposed response to the Ombudsman Office from the Chair of the Commission. Moved by Councillor Mary Farrell, seconded by Deputy Warden Catherine Gillis. Nay from Warden Mombourquette and Councillor Michael Diggdon. **Motion defeated.**

7.0 Next Meeting Date:

Next meeting scheduled on June 1, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.

8.0 Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn meeting. Moved by Councillor Jason Aucoin, seconded by Councillor Mark MacIver. **Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 2:02 p.m.


Warden Bruce Morrison
Chair


Tammy MacLellan
Recorder