Public Consultation Meeting Notes
District #4 Blandford Community Centre
7:00 p.m. May 3, 2018

Attendance

Council:	Councillor Danielle Barkhouse Councillor Tina Connors Councillor Marshall Hector Deputy Warden Floyd Shatford
CPAC:	Mary-Ellen Clancey Trevor Hume
Staff:	Tara Maguire, Director of Community Development Garth Sturtevant, Planner Jonathan Meakin, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator Tammy Wilson, CAO
Gallery:	There were approximately 40 members of the public present.

Summary of Comments & Questions

QUESTION - If a resident has 21 farm animal units, what then?

ANSWER - The resident would be required to apply for a development permit, and introduce setbacks for any new barns and manure piles, and fencing would be required to keep animals out of a watercourse. However, existing barns and manure piles on the property that currently do not meet proposed new set-back requirements can continue to be used where they are.

QUESTION - How will these zone changes affect home-based businesses?

ANSWER - There are no changes to home-based businesses or stand-alone commercial activities in the General Basic Zone.

QUESTION - How many residents came forward to ask for zoning changes?

ANSWER - The number of attendees at public consultation sessions is on file. We can provide those figures upon request. Residents also provided input through a wide range of other means.

QUESTION - If no one was actively complaining about current zoning, and if permits fix problems that crop up, why go to the expense of this lengthy process for new zoning?

ANSWER - We are mandated to review our planning documents and have policy stating this should be done every 10 years from the date existing documents came into effect. The current planning documents were last reviewed extensively in 1997, and so Council authorized a review. There have been some complaints raised over the years, but these new documents have not been produced solely in

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response to complaints. Rather, the draft MPS and LUB documents have been developed from best practices and from a broad visioning exercise through the public consultation sessions.

QUESTION - What if people want to change what's in these new documents?

ANSWER - Keep in mind that the planning documents are DRAFT documents only. These public engagement sessions are designed to gather community input so CPAC and Council can review the drafts with feedback from residents and ensure we get things right. Even when this process is over, the MPS and LUB are living documents. Anyone can request an amendment to the LUB by presenting that amendment to Council. There is a public consultation process Council must undertake for amendments to all By-Laws, including the LUB.

QUESTION - Look at the advertisement for these public sessions in the paper (paper not specified). Do you think such a small advertisement is enough notice? And why not just respond to specific requests or complaints rather than change the whole thing?

ANSWER - That advertisement is one of several the Municipality placed in a number of newspapers. We have also widely promoted these sessions through flyers, the municipal newsletter, through community organizations, and through social media. As noted, there are a wide range of reasons for undertaking this review of our planning documents in terms of best practices, etc. The old documents are difficult to understand. One of our goals with the new planning documents is to ensure they are easier to understand.

COMMENT – Trevor Hume: I live in East Chester and am a volunteer member of the Citizens Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC). I saw an ad calling for volunteer members for the CPAC, and that the work of the Committee will be to work on revising the Municipality's planning documents. So I applied. That was in 2014, and since then I have read thousands of pages and revisions, and the Committee met once a month – I did all that as a volunteer. To say there has not been community consultation is incorrect. We have been looking forward to this public engagement process as we wanted to come and hear the community's feedback. This entire process has been open to the public, and there's been nothing but community input from throughout all districts in the Municipality.

QUESTION - How many people were told about these sessions?

ANSWER - As many as we could reach through all the communications channels listed.

COMMENT - I would like to congratulate MODC for the foresight in developing a planning strategy. The twinning of highway 103 could encourage more businesses to look at setting up in MODC. An updated planning strategy helps guide development as new opportunities arise.

QUESTION - What industries could move to MODC with the new zoning?

ANSWER - In the General Basic Zone, which is the zone covering most of the area in the Municipality, only refineries / heavy industrial uses are prohibited.

COMMENT – Mary-Ellen Clancey: I was also on the CPAC, and wanted to say a few words on how the Committee worked. The committee started with paperwork and a group of people from all over the

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MODC, and we learned about each other and about our municipality. We were trying to plan for 10-20 years down the road – reviewing zoning restrictions to guide the growth of our communities, but also ensuring we are open to new opportunities. The drafts we reviewed and discussed, the open houses, these sessions – we want to share these documents and help people understand them, to ensure you get all the information you need to provide informed feedback. My experience on the committee is that our review of the many draft documents resulted in draft documents fit to share with you through MODC staff's hard work in listening, responding, and refining the discussion and ideas MODC residents on the Committee generated. You don't like things in the planning documents? That's what this process is all about – getting the feedback from residents! MODC staff are always willing to listen.

QUESTION - What is the cost of development permits? What does the money generated by those fees do for the community? Why charge us?

ANSWER - The reason for permits is to enable enforcement, to ensure that agreed upon land uses are in place. Permit fees are set by Council as part of a fee schedule for municipal services. There are two ways a municipality can generate revenue: property taxes and user fees. Permits can either be assigned fees or not have fees and have associated costs for processing taken from the general tax base. The distinction is a philosophical one – user-pay for a specific service, or everyone pays for specific services only a few will access.

QUESTION - I am not in favour of user fees. They are a deterrent to development. Council should work to keep the community here, especially young people. Why can't Council choose not to over-tax the community, and just give us permits?

ANSWER - Development and building permits provide revenue to cover administration costs. The $40 for the basic development permit fee keeps things honest in terms of discouraging waste of Municipal resources.

QUESTION - I am a vet and a volunteer for 4H, and so I interact with many farms in the area. I also have kids studying animal science. It takes many years to develop an agricultural breeding stock operation. Limiting animals on a property and opening the door for an applied permit for more animals to be turned down – these are barriers for young people to stay in their area and develop their own breeding stock operation. Do you see how these changes could be economically devastating for farming families?

ANSWER - In the General Basic zone, as this area is, there is no limit on the number of animals that can be kept on a property. Other zones do have a limit, but that's related to lot size. The draft MPS is a long term, 20-25 year plan. Permits are not designed to be punitive, nor is there any discretionary decision-making – if you meet the condition of the LUB, then you receive the permit.

QUESTION - The concern for people is that this could change in the future. If permit requirements change, the result could be disastrous as people who invest in the development of a livestock operation have no time to alter course. How can you reassure farming families that their investment of time and money won't be suddenly lost due to changing regulations?

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ANSWER - Anything on a property, in a zone, that exists legally when any change happens is not affected by that change. People often refer to this as “grandfathering”. The formal or legal term we use is that it becomes a "legal nonconforming use", which describes the ongoing use of land or a structure that was legally established according to the applicable zoning and building laws of the time, but which does not meet current zoning and building regulations. If the non-conforming use is continuous and does stop for 6 months in a row, then even if zoning by-laws change, that use is legitimate and can contoniue to operate.

QUESTION - Farmers work all day. How are they supposed to attend these meetings?

ANSWER - The public engagement sessions are just one of the ways residents can provide feedback on the draft documents. All residents can call, email, come by the office any time, or engage us online.

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