



## REPORT OF ECONOMIC VITALITY COMMITTEE

*For City Council – April 22, 2024*

**From:** Office of the City Clerk

**Date:** Thursday, April 04, 2024

**Title:** Mandate and Function of the Planning Advisory Committee

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The Economic Vitality Committee, at its meeting held on Thursday, April 4, 2024 considered an Administrative Report from the Director of Planning and Development, seeking approval of amendments to By-law Z-3, A By-law to Establish a Planning Advisory Committee for the City of Fredericton and By-law Z-5, a Zoning By-law for the City of Fredericton and other by-laws.

There was some degree of consensus from the March 13, 2024 Economic Vitality Committee Meeting that the City move forward with planning process reform as follows:

- Public engagement will remain a critical component of the planning process but a portion of the public process should occur prior to application submission for major applications.
- Development proponents (the developer) are best placed to engage adjacent property owners in advance of application submission.
- The Planning Advisory Committee needs to assume a more technical role in the planning process.
- PAC meetings must remain open to the public and fully transparent but public engagement in the legislated planning process should be restricted to the Hearing of Objections at City Council as envisaged by the *Community Planning Act* and consistent with practice in nearly all municipalities in New Brunswick.
- The PAC role in the subdivision consideration process should be reformed based on the roles assigned to the Committee in the *Community Planning Act*.
- Council should populate PAC with members with diverse skills but that can contribute to a thorough technical review of applications.
- Council will further review the appropriate number of city councillors sitting on PAC (there appeared to be some consensus that 2 or 3 councillors should serve on PAC going forward).
- Prior to the implementation of process changes, the views of the PAC be sought.
- Opportunities to lengthen the period of advance notification to adjacent property owners of an application should be explored.
- Opportunities to improve building and urban design as part of the planning process should be explored.

- PAC must be accountable to fully explain recommendations it makes that are contrary to the professional planning report. Council wishes to require that PAC provide clear, written reasons in these situations.
- Process changes should be identified to ensure that the minutes of the Planning Advisory Committee relevant to an application are available to Council prior to a decision being made on an application.
- The City should explore alternate methods of public notification of applications including placing signage on a property.

Accordingly, the Committee directed that the following resolution be forwarded to City Council for consideration:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the City of Fredericton direct the Planning and Development Department and the City Solicitor to prepare amendments to By-law Z-3, A By-law to Establish a Planning Advisory Committee for the City of Fredericton and By-law Z-5, a Zoning By-law for the City of Fredericton and other by-laws as required to establish pre-application engagement for major planning applications, establish a more technical role for the Planning Advisory Committee, direct PAC to continue to deliberate in a fully public and transparent manner, direct the PAC to provide detailed written reasons when a recommendation from the Committee is inconsistent with the professional planning report, and other reforms consistent with this Request for a Decision report dated March 26, 2024.