

Hanwell Working Group Meeting – St. James Presbyterian Church (7:30 – 9:45pm)
January 09, 2007

Attendance:	Dallas Gillis (Planner, RPDC)	Carla Slaunwhite (Planner, RPDC)
	Charles Davies	Will Hyslop
	Chris Weadick	Muriel Weadick
	Serge Levesque	Kristel Desjardins
		Tony Hetherington
		Reade Moore
		Colleen Adams

Meeting began at 7:30pm with 10 WG members in attendance.

Dallas asked if there were any questions regarding the last meeting or the minutes. There were none. At the previous meeting the WG developed residential policy. This meeting would focus on developing the other policies.

Dallas began reviewing the recommendations from the background report concerning commercial and industrial uses and explained that these recommendations were based on research that was completed to produce the background report.

Dallas began to review the recommendations.

- a. Commercial enterprises should be carefully located on arterial or collector roads. It is necessary to consider the operational activities of the commercial business when locating the zones, particularly transportation requirements and disturbance to the uses in close proximity.

Dallas pointed out that this recommendation was pretty straight forward and works with the current industrial uses in the Hanwell area because they are close to existing transportation amenities. The WG may have to look more closely at the commercial uses because there's a lot of highway commercial development all along the Hanwell Road, unlike much of the Industrial operation which has been somewhat concentrated.

- b. It is recommended that neighbourhood commercial uses be permitted in locations that will provide safe and convenient access for consumers and not become a nuisance to neighbouring residential uses.

Dallas mentioned that recommendation may go against some subdivision covenants and refers to uses such as corner convenience stores. This may be something to consider because it is currently quite difficult to walk to the local store safely.

A WG member pointed out that there are people who walk along the shoulder and they are very difficult to see when driving and that there are quite a few accidents, especially around the store.

Dallas commented that the Plan will be unable to provide sidewalks, but it can allow for convenience stores to establish within neighbourhoods.

WG members raised the concern that convenience stores are open late or sometimes 24 hours a day and create a lot of vehicular and commercial traffic. WG members were also concerned that a small store now could be renovated into a larger store in the future. Dallas pointed out that the plan could put limits on things like hours of operation and scale to deal with potential issues.

WG members also wanted to know where these shops would be located in the plan.

Dallas explained that those decisions will come later. At this point in the process we are looking at the broad picture and will get to the zoning details later on, as the process progresses.

WG members had an issue with the wording of the recommendation, but Dallas pointed out that these were only recommendations and that they are used as a reference when drafting the actual policies and proposals. It's not as important to wordsmith the recommendations as it is for the policies. What's important is whether or not you agree with the idea behind the recommendations.

A WG member asked what the difference was between neighbourhood commercial and home based businesses.

Dallas explained that neighbourhood commercial uses are commercial uses meant to serve the areas in which they are located with community members being the main clientele. A Home-based business is a secondary use to the main residential use. Usually, retail uses are not permitted as a home-based business because those types of uses usually generate larger amounts of traffic. Retail is generally permitted if it occurs in conjunction with the business – i.e. if the home-based hair salon wants to sell hair products to its clientele.

Dallas read the 3, 4 and 5th recommendation and commented that the terms cottage industry and home-based business can be used interchangeably at times. The term "Cottage Industry" is an older term used for small, rural operations that usually involve producing some type of product. A Home based business is a secondary use of residential property. Both however are staples of the rural economy, and economy as a whole.

The 6th recommendation was read and a WG member asked if it was possible to include a statement to address health and safety of residents and air quality. They pointed out that items were frequently burned which could impact the air quality and that machines and vehicles are being repaired frequently, which raises concern about groundwater contamination.

Dallas read the 7th recommendation and pointed out that it refers to not zoning one property industrial and the adjacent property residential. He said that non-complimentary land uses should not be placed next to each other.

Dallas read the 8th recommendation and then moved on to the Policy Worksheet handout that was given out at the last WG meeting and via email.

Dallas and WG reviewed the 3 commercial policy examples and after much discussion developed the following policy and proposal:

It is a policy to protect the natural environment and the residential character of the community through the control of the type and location of commercial and industrial development.

It is proposed that the health and safety of residents, transportation requirements, and impacts on the environment and surrounding land uses be considered when locating commercial and industrial development.

The group then went on to discuss Institutional uses.

Dallas pointed out that the term "institutional" refers to a range of uses including hospitals, daycares, penitentiaries, and schools and that there is a need for some of these types of uses in the area. He stated that just because an area is identified as suitable for a park or school, it can only be zoned to allow those types of uses to occur but his process will not involve any physical constructions or directly produce financial resources for their construction.

A WG member clarified that through the plan, the LSDAC is unable to purchase land for certain types of uses.

Dallas agreed and added that zones are placed on land, which correspond to a list of permitted uses that can occur within that zone. The government can exempt itself from plan's rules and could place the hospital or school wherever they felt it was best suited or land was available. However, in many cases those types of construction jobs are contracted out to a 3rd party and the contractors are not exempt from the plan's rules/standards.

Dallas continued and pointed out that other institutional uses such as senior daycare or children daycare seem to be needed in the area, but if the plan does not include or allow for them in the list of permitted uses, it means they must go through a rezoning process, which can be lengthy and has an associated cost, which can deter the use from establishing.

A WG asked if lands owned by a rural community or municipality could be exempt from the plan's rules.

Dallas responded that a rural community and/or municipality would make the land use and planning decisions so they could do whatever they feel is in their best interest, but they would have to change the plan, which they could do, rather than exempt themselves from it. They would not have the power to exempt themselves.

A WG member asked if the group will be going through the process of determining which land is good for certain uses.

Dallas responded that yes, but later on in the process. Currently, the group is looking at the broader picture. Ideally, in order to determine the zoning and what uses should go where we'd look at current uses and anticipate future potential uses. The plan should try and avoid, where feasible, creating non-conforming uses (existing uses that are not listed as a permitted use in the zone where they are located) because it places restrictions on those uses with regards to enlargement, renovation, re-building and re-establishment. The plan should endeavour to stop the new uses that the community does not want, but at the same time the plan should not block, or over restrict all other uses – there should be a range of permitted uses in each zone. The plan should be a type of screen or filter that will let what is reasonable pass, provide for review where there's uncertainty, and keep out what's unreasonable.

Dallas continued by saying if a landowner proposes something that isn't listed as a permitted use then planners at RPDC would review the proposal and make sure the use does not go against the plan's requirements or the policies and proposals. In relation to institutional uses, the group should look at the broader picture right now and not try and plan out where specific uses will be located.

Dallas read through the institutional policies listed in the handout and pointed out that there is a difference between the NM policy and the KG & RW policies. He stated that the NM policies tend to be a bit more conservative because that's what the community group wanted to implement in order to protect their rural lifestyle. He noted that the KG policies tend to look for a balance.

A WG member commented on the fact that the NM policy uses the word "permit" while the other two policies use the words "encourage" and asked if this means that NM wants to invite more institutional uses to the area.

Dallas responded that it didn't mean that necessarily and that using words like "permit" really make it difficult for an area to say no to a proposed institutional use, for example a penitentiary.

Another WG member noted that whatever the institutional uses are, the policies say they must fit with the community and it seems that they must serve the local community.

Dallas answered that that's not necessarily true because if the plan identifies areas through zoning that the group would like to have used for institutional uses, then the developer who proposes an institutional use could just go ahead and build it and not even come to the planning commission for a rezoning. So the zoning would list which specific types of institutional uses would be permitted rather than just saying institutional uses are permitted.

A WG member asked if the group could start identifying good institutional land for development. Dallas explained the should zone areas for a range of uses. Once the process moves past the policy and proposal creation stage and move toward creating the provisions, the zones will start to take shape.

After the discussion regarding the institutional policies the group decided on:

It is a policy to encourage the provision of institutional land uses that serve the current and future needs of the local community.

Dallas mentioned that by using the term "local community" it denotes a distinction between more regional institutions which address issues of size and nature of institutional uses that would be encouraged in the LSD.

Dallas then moved on to discuss Recreation.

A WG member asked what the difference is between passive recreational uses and non-passive uses.

Dallas answered that hiking, snowshoeing can be considered a passive recreational use, while motocross would be non-passive, but the difference between an open field used for passive recreation and an open field used for a conservation use is difficult to see sometimes.

Dallas read through the policies from KG, NM, and RW and WG discussed them and decided to use:

It is a policy to encourage a range of recreational uses in order to meet the current and future needs of the population, encourage the interaction of residents, and foster a strong sense of community.

The group then moved on to discuss Resource Uses.

A WG member asked if clear cutting could be controlled through the plan.

Dallas responded that clear cutting is more of an activity than a land use the rural Plan controls the land uses which would be "forestry", it's difficult, especially for forestry to regulate the practise, other than basic provisions. He also stated that it is a difficult issue for a Rural Plan to address because if you don't allow forestry for fear of the practise of clear cutting and you zone the land for some other type of use, how many of those uses would not involve cutting down the trees and clearing the land.

Dallas went on to say that the resource section is typically a very large section of a plan and includes such uses as forestry, agriculture and aggregate extraction (pits & quarries). He explained that he would like to give a use like farming the opportunity to have a range of uses occur on the property like sell farm produce at the end of the driveway, a shop to fix the farm machinery and non-farm machinery, or shops to sell value added items like wool from sheep or alpaca, etc... This could potentially increase the viability of farming in the area. He added that reciprocal separation distances would also be included so that livestock buildings could not be built too close to an existing home, and new homes could not be built too close to an existing livestock building.

Dallas explained that typically in the forestry section it would address such things as encouraging good forestry practices. The plan can deal with what happens to the trees after they've been cut, because the plan can control things like the location of mills.

Dallas asked the group of thought there is a distinction to be made between large forestry operation and private woodlots.

WG reviewed the background report recommendations for resource uses. Dallas read the first recommendation and explained that basically said not to put the houses next to an existing quarry or on a deposit that could have extraction value.

The second recommendation, Dallas explains, refers to not splitting up large parcels of land into smaller parcels that are more difficult to use for forestry. Large parcels of land used for forestry do not typically get subdivided into smaller parcels for other forestry uses. By discouraging the subdivision of those properties, the plan can encourage forestry uses to continue.

A WG member asked why surface and groundwater were not listed as resources.

Dallas answered that water is a resource, but this section of the plan deals with resource land-uses, which is typically forestry, agriculture and aggregate extraction.

A WG member also pointed out that the woodland canopy in Hanwell is a resource.

Dallas commented that the resource policies may reflect the broader interests, which may go against some WG members' individual interests, but we, the Planners, have to keep those interests in mind while developing policies and provisions with the community.

The meeting ended after reviewing the recommendations from the background report. We will pick up on resource uses and hopefully complete the policy section, and move on to discussion the general and zoning provisions at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

The notification of the Next meeting will be emailed out in the near future.