February 18, 2021 Lunch and Learn - Official Plan Summary of Discussion

Present: Residents Leone Curtis, Joy MacIntyre, Linda Sullivan, Planning Board Members Zach Stephens, Paul Poole, Betty Pryor, Mayor Hal Parker, CAO Shari MacDonald, Development Officer Michael Olubiyi, Consultants Samantha Murphy, Greg Morrison and Mitch Underhay.

Samantha Murphy of SJ Murphy Planning and Consulting opened the meeting and introduced the Official Plan review process and the framework for the Official Plan and Development Bylaw. The consultants have been gathering and reviewing background information and data. The public information sessions and community survey are to gather feedback from residents to determine if the Official Plan and its policies and actions are still relevant. Much of the current Official Plan is a very strong document. The consultants will review the information gathered and make recommendations for any changes to Planning Board. They will then determine what changes may be required to the Development Bylaws to help the municipality meet the goals and objectives of the Official Plan.

Maps of the community were distributed, and residents were encouraged to mark workspaces, places of interest, natural areas that should be protected, and areas of problem or concern.

Discussion followed:

IRAC – Planning Board and Council should be as clear as possible for reasons for decisions, especially if they are using discretion to make any planning decisions. Policies in the Official Plan should be referenced.

Resident – Likes the look of the community as she travels through from her home. Wants to be "in the country."

COVID – Covid is changing how people work and live. COVID brought the realization that many systems are fragile. There is a greater focus on farming, food sustainability, greenhouses, hobby farming, and chickens. Roosters are more problematic, as they are loud. Residents want to also protect the farmers and their livelihood.

Accessory Buildings/Agriculture - Most of the municipality is zoned Agricultural. If accessory buildings are limited to two on a two-acre property – this may not be enough. Why are they limited? Aesthetics? A resident has hobbies, antique vehicles, and three cars – more space is needed. People have different needs; is there the possibility to looking at some items on an individual basis? Are they limited to decrease visual clutter? Want to have a rural residential feel? Does the number of accessory buildings matter? Are they more acceptable if they have an agricultural use, vs storage or hobbies? Should the size of the accessory buildings be better tied to the size of the property. There is a concern that large accessory buildings could lead to commercial uses. What about home chickens in residential, serviced residential or mini home park? Resident from Sleepy Hollow Road – if others are allowed a small number of chickens, they should also be allowed in that area; but unsure of larger livestock. What about greenhouses on small lots? Is a Community Garden feasible? (There is already a small one at the community park). Some greenhouses are elaborate/year-round. The municipality should not have barriers to growing food. Accessory buildings not currently permitted in the front yard. Perhaps this could be evaluated on a case-by-case basis -although the criteria should be the same and consistent. It is important not to be detrimental to adjacent neighbours, and compatible with the neighbourhood.

Seniors – It is difficult for seniors to leave homes as they age, especially if they have always lived in the area/family home when they can no longer live at home, but there are no special seniors housing or needed services (medical/groceries/public transportation) in the Municipality, aside from the Convenience Store.

Difficulty in buying a lot - Resident has lived in Miltonvale Park his entire life, with parents and grandparents also living here but is unable to buy a lot to build a home.

Zoning Map – shows a dense residential area. Where would more homes go? Is there an opportunity to increase the serviced residential area? Not everyone wants to live in a subdivision and many live in Miltonvale Park so they can have a large property.

Commercial Uses – At what level can business grow or expand? When does it become problematic to neighbours? Special permit or conditional uses need to be very clear. What are considerations? - If it is a child-care facility– traffic, parking… The evaluation method must be consistent, so applications are evaluated fairly without bias or too much discretion. "Keeping the property tidy" is not valid evaluation criteria, as the criteria should involve the use. "Commercial Creep" is a concern. Other concerns – smells, noise, traffic, hours of operation, protection of the environment, public health and safety, aesthetics. The community must decide what is not acceptable. In a rural area there is the expectation of agricultural noise and smells. It is difficult to find a balance.

Storm Water Management Plans – are expensive; are there instances when they may not be necessary?

Rural vs Serviced/Residential – The areas have a different character. If there are on-site services, those lots need to protect the area for septic systems (less space for buildings). May have more emphasis on aesthetics in a residential area.

Zoning -What should be universal and what should be specific to each zone? Different size standards are likely required for different zones.

Parkland and Open Spaces – The Miltonvale Community Park is a place to be proud of. The Rails to Trails goes through part of the municipality but is leased to the PEI Snowmobile Association in the winter so is not accessible then. Additional parking is needed near the Confederation Trail. The municipality is not in the position to manage additional parkland. Right-of-ways and easements may create strips for future trails. It would be good to be able to connect to future or existing places. Unless the municipality was planning to buy particular parcels of land, it can't pre-zone lands for public places. Miles Boulter Drive receives significant traffic, and it was believed this is due to people using the Confederation Trail.

It is important to identify the values that Miltonvale Park holds as a municipality. Sustainability for energy and food needs has been mentioned.

Many residents are not familiar with the rules and do things anyway. In another municipality it was suggested that having people like this on Council helps them understand the rationale for the rules.

Miltonvale Park is an agricultural community – the look, the feel, and the function. The Resort Municipality has a much greater emphasis on the look and feel due to their reliance on tourism.

Residents were invited to share their thoughts with the team, through the map and survey.