

**Town of Amherst
Public Hearing
Minutes**

Date: March 22, 2023
Time: 12:00 pm
Location: Council Chambers, Town Hall

Members Present Deputy Mayor Leon Landry, Acting Chair
Councillor George Baker
Councillor Charlie Chambers
Councillor Hal Davidson
Councillor Lisa Emery
Councillor Dale Fawthrop

Staff Present Jason MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer
Andrew Fisher, Director, Planning & Strategic Initiatives
Abilola Falaye, Land Use Planner/GIS Coordinator
Kim Jones, Director, Corporate Communications & IT
Tom McCoag, Corporate Communications Officer
Natalie LeBlanc, Municipal Clerk

1. Call to Order

Acting Chair Deputy Mayor Landry called the meeting to order.

2. 3,4,5,7 Robie Street

2.1 Staff Report

Abilola Falaye presented the application for a Development Agreement for properties located at 3,4,5, and 7 Robie Street to permit a change of use from a community hall to an expanded commercial office.

2.2 Council Questions/Comments

Councillor Baker expressed he was glad the applicant is working with Campbells Funeral home to provide parking for their clients when possible.

Councillor Emery asked for clarity on the parking. Mr. Falaye confirmed there are a total of 28 parking spaces, including 2 handicapped spaces.

2.3 Public Questions/Comments

No public comments or questions.

3. 264 Church Street

3.1 Staff Report

Andrew Fisher presented the application for a Development Agreement for the construction of a 96-bed long term care facility at 264 Church Street.

3.2 Council Questions/Comments

Councillor Emery asked about the size of the proposed facility in comparison to the current facility, as well as if there is a parking space per bed, where visitor and staff parking is and the distance to the entrance(s).

Councillor Davidson noted there appears to be more parking available at the proposed facility compared to the current facility.

Councillor Baker asked what the intentions for the current facility are.

3.3 Public Questions/Comments

Jennifer Tsang with Sunrose Land Use Consulting representing Gem Health Care Group advised that they follow LUB requirements when designing parking areas, adding that there should be approximately 40 staff on-site at a time, with the rest of the parking for visitors, and that the spread-out parking design as proposed allows for more green space.

Ms. Tsang added that there is no definite plan for the current facility however they would like to repurpose it, perhaps for assisted living apartments, or something similar.

The Architect for the proposal was also in attendance. He added that a 1 to 1 bed-to-parking ratio is very generous for a long-term care facility as typically less than 1% of residents drive. He advised that the staff entrance will be at the rear of the facility and visitors will enter through the front. The building will be 2-storeys, with four wings, each wing having 12 residents with their own private room and washroom. Some adjacent rooms will also be connected. There will also be common community rooms shared by two wings each with a balcony. He further stated that the design meets the provincial requirements for Long Term Care Facilities and the concept is presently one of the best in Nova Scotia. There is also the potential to increase the facility by a storey in future if needed.

The CAO asked Mr. Fisher if adding one more storey to the current design is considered a substantial change to the agreement and the possibility of accommodating this potential change/ increase in the Development Agreement that is under review. Mr. Fisher replied that an additional storey is a substantial change, particularly considering its implication on parking. He therefore concluded that it is better to consider the application as it is and review the Development Agreement for any upgrade in this regard separately.

4. Adjournment

There being nothing further Deputy Mayor Landry advised that Council will consider second reading of these Development Agreements at their meeting on March 27, 2023, and closed the public hearing.

Deputy Mayor Leon Landry
Acting Chair

Natalie LeBlanc
Municipal Clerk