



HRMbyDesign Public Hearing  
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Valerie Payn

President Halifax Chamber of Commerce

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Mayor, Councilors and fellow citizens:

**I wanted to be here today to express the Chamber's full and official support of HRMbyDesign.**

I am not here to bore you with details. By now, you are all familiar with the technicalities, the opinions and the larger debate about what kind of a city we want Halifax be in 10, 25 and 50 years.

Now it is time to vote, and when it comes down to it, you will vote by listening to what your conscious tells you is right for our city.

In the past year we asked councilors how they felt about HRMbyDesign and listened carefully to their thoughtful opinions.

While all the indications are that this motion will pass, we are still in a battle for public opinion. I do not want you, the media or the people of Halifax to forget, that if they could, the working people of Halifax would be lined up around down Barrington Street, to the tip of Point Pleasant Park in to support HRMbyDesign if they thought it would make Halifax a better city for them and all those who will follow.

**So why am I here today? I needed to be here today to represent the tens of thousands of people who make up our membership who cannot be here today.**

What I wanted to be here to tell you is to not be swayed from our collective vision by small, but vocal segments of our population. Rather, as leaders, you must do what you believe is best for Halifax in the long term. By voting yes for HRMbyDesign, you are indeed voting for what is best.

It is too late in the process and this issue too important to miss words at this point so here it is, one more time:

- Downtown Halifax is dying. Dying from neglect. It is not that there isn't the interest, or the money, to develop the downtown core. We have just been tied up in this incessant debate of old vs. new, tall vs. short, and urban vs. suburban.

- The unintended message from this process is that Halifax is not a place that looks to the future and does not welcome change or growth.
- This prolonged process has torn apart people and organizations who should be friends. We all knew the different positions years ago and yet insisted on pitting one side against the other in a battle to see who loves Halifax the most.
- No plan will please all the people, all the time. This was true of the Economic Strategy in 2005, the Regional Plan in 2006 and will be true of HRMbyDesign. The fact that we don't have absolute consensus should not be a reason to hold up this plan, which has already brought a new spirit of optimism, a feeling of pride and a continued belief that Halifax has the potential to be the greatest small city in the world.
- Finally - We need to get this done because it's just the beginning!

The regional plan requires detail and vision similar to this for every major community in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

The importance of well designed urban areas, including the central business district, supported by well design surrounding communities has become of monumental importance as we face a changing environmental picture and a rapidly deteriorating energy security situation.

On top of this we are in a race with the rest of the world to attract the most sought after resource, people, who increasingly making decisions about where they want to live before they decide where they want to work.

While we debate 5 story building vs. 15 story buildings, countries in the Middle East are building whole “green” cities from the ground up.

While we fight about busses for Porters Lake versus Sambro Vancouver is adding to it light rail and recreation infrastructure.

We need to get it done and that means saying YES to positive Change,

to saying YES to create the city that is wanted by the next generation and the ones after that,

to saying to YES to new ideas, new ways of doing things, and new people

and most importantly to voting YES to HRMbyDesign.

Thank you and good night.