



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Planning & Heritage Advisory Committee (PAC/HAC) Minutes
May 14, 2026, 6:00pm-9:41pm
AMENDED 2026-06-11
Sanford Council Chambers, Zoom / YouTube Live

PRESENT: Michel Bourgeois, Chair, WHRM Representative
Councillor Kayla Leary-Pinch (District 7)
Councillor Jim Ivey (District 11)
Dave Moore, Windsor Representative
Guido Furlani, Windsor Representative
Tim Carr, Hantsport Representative
Jane Davis, Hantsport Representative
Mark Kehoe, WHRM Representative

STAFF: Kari Fougere, Acting Director of Planning and Development
Alex Dunphy, Senior Planner
Will Hong, Planner
Derek Robertson, Manager of Development Control Services
Vanessa Lake, Planning Assistant

GUESTS: Erin Sauve, WSP
Gregory Bender, WSP

GALLERY: Councillor Paul Wheadon (District 4)

REGRETS: Abraham Zebian, Mayor
Beth Easson, WHRM Representative

1.0 Call to Order and Attendance

Chair Bourgeois called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Quorum was achieved. Mayor Zebian and Beth Easson had sent regrets. All other Committee members were present.

2.0 Announcements

Chair Bourgeois read the Land Acknowledgements, reminded everyone of the expectations from the Code of Conduct, and outlined the emergency exit procedure. There were no further announcements.

3.0 Approval of Agenda and Additions

Moved by Tim Carr and seconded by Guido Furlani that the agenda be approved as circulated. Motion carried unanimously.

4.0 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts were declared.

5.0 Approval of Minutes (February 12, 2026)

There were no changes and the minutes were approved as circulated by unanimous consent.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Amendments to Planning Documents: Building Permits Prior to Final Subdivision Approval (Derek Robertson)

These amendments are being proposed by staff as directed by the CAO, based on conversations with local developers. The amendments would allow building and development permits to be issued prior to final subdivision approval, for developments that have already received tentative subdivision approval. The amendments would be general in nature and apply to the West Hants and Windsor planning areas and are intended to improve construction timelines for subdivisions on new streets. The developer would be able to construct up to 4 dwelling units on up to 12

proposed lots, concurrent with the construction of the street and servicing infrastructure. In the current process, streets and infrastructure must be completed before residential construction can begin. All existing municipal requirements still need to be met before the lots are created or occupancy permits are issued. No final approval would be guaranteed and all work done would be at the developer's own risk. Manager Robertson gave a presentation to review the amendments and proposed process. The staff report is available with the agenda package.

Discussion points:

- For the current process, all new infrastructure must be completed and handed over to the municipality, final subdivision approval granted and plan registered, and all lots created, before development and building permits can be issued and construction can begin. It was set up this way as the Land Use By-law outlines what is permitted on a property and does not account for properties that don't exist yet. The proposed process could shorten the timeline by 6-12 months.
- The design of the subdivision is basically complete at the time of tentative approval. If the developer follows the plan as submitted, final approval is extremely likely. If the developer does run into any issues, they would be subject to the same processes as now. The developer would be tied by their own investment. Public Works and Building & Fire Inspection services did not feel an additional contingency bond was necessary.
- "Up to 12 proposed lots" is a fixed number. It would not increase for larger developments.
- Neither the Municipal Specifications Manual nor Subdivision By-law are being amended.
- The Municipality would not take ownership of a road until the subdivision is finalized.
- Similar amendments have been seen in other areas, such as Wolfville and Kentville.
- The intent is for these amendments to be carried forward into the consolidated planning documents and would apply to the entire region. Prior to the adoption of the new documents, they will only apply to West Hants and Windsor, not Hantsport.
- If a property would need to be rezoned to facilitate subdivision, the rezoning would have to take place before this process could begin.
- The proposed process is not likely to become an extra burden to staff.

- All risk is on the developer. Staff will clearly communicate this and all conditions for approval will be outlined in the permitting process.

Moved by Tim Carr and seconded by Guido Furlani that PAC/HAC recommends that Council give First Reading and hold a Public Hearing to consider amending the Town of Windsor and Municipality of the District of West Hants Municipal Planning Strategies and Land Use By-laws, and WHRM Building Code Act By-law, in a manner substantively the same as proposed in Attachments A and B to the report #26-03 to the Planning and Heritage Advisory Committee dated May 14th, 2026. Motion carried unanimously.

6.2 Plan Review Update

Currently, there are three sets of planning documents in use, for a total of nine. Windsor, Hantsport, and West Hants each have a Municipal Planning Strategy, Land Use By-law, and Subdivision By-law. The end goal of the plan review is to have one comprehensive set of documents for the entire region. The project has the following objectives:

- Consolidate, modernize, and align the planning framework
- Improve clarity, efficiency, and predictability
- Support complete, inclusive communities
- Plan for sustainable and resilient growth, and
- Reflect community values and priorities.

Acting Director Fougere, with assistance from Senior Planner Dunphy, Planner Hong, and Erin Sauve and Gregory Bender from WSP, gave an overview of the key components of the draft documents and highlighted the major changes. This was an information report to facilitate discussion. A formal recommendation will follow at a future meeting. The staff report and a copy of the presentation are available with the agenda package and on the municipal website.

The presentation covered project process and updates, community and stakeholder engagement, a summary of major changes, and next steps. Most of the presentation and subsequent discussion was around the summary of major changes, which were divided into the following sections: settlement and growth, environment and sustainability, transportation and mobility, infrastructure/stormwater management, recreation and parks, culture and heritage,

agriculture, and plan implementation and amendments. The Committee discussed these changes at length.

Chair Bourgeois called for a break at 8:02pm. The meeting resumed at 8:12pm.

Discussion points:

- “Rural character” came up a lot in the public feedback as something important to residents. It is not clearly defined, but can be understood as larger lot sizes, one main street, a smaller amount and size of commercial development, and primarily agricultural uses. It may also refer to a certain lifestyle which residents would like to preserve. “Community” also has no set definition and is an over-arching term.
- All plan review work that was done prior to consolidation was considered in the drafting of the documents.
- During the online comment period, not a lot of public feedback was received, and feedback was mostly received from other stakeholders (i.e. agricultural society, public health, provincial government). There has been significant engagement and engagement opportunity, and staff have tried to reach the largest audience possible. The public feedback can be included in the recommendation package going forward.
- Staff can compile a “fact sheet” after adoption so residents can understand the basics without having to read the entire document or staff report.
- Hantsport’s noted capacity issues are to do with the water supply. Public Works are looking into this issue. Staff can bring more information back to the Committee.
- “Capacity” refers to freshwater (drinking water), storm and sewer utility/service. Public Works can give another presentation to the PAC/HAC for a refresher.
- Map 6 only shows a part of Windsor, as it was identified as area of concern for flooding given the combined sewer and stormwater system.
- Accessibility requirements are outlined within the building code. This is on the federal level, and the municipality cannot override them.
- Temporary windmill exploration is a carry over from the current documents. A testing pylon would be on a different scale than a commercial turbine. Large scale turbines are under the province’s jurisdiction. Aesthetics cannot be used as part of the evaluation.

- There were concerns over the deprecation of residential uses within resource areas, as residential is a considerable use within the resource zones.
- Secondary egress for subdivisions is not a requirement, though staff do informally approach developers to request it. It would be better suited as a requirement within the Municipal Specifications Manual than the planning documents.
- Garbage collection on private roads is an ongoing concern. Control measures are within the Solid Waste By-law and Private Road Policy. More control could be negotiated through a development agreement.
- The Climate Action Committee (CAC) is still active, and the Municipal Climate Change Action Plan (MCCAP) is set to be updated in the future.
- It is not expected that cisterns will become a requirement for new builds. Staff are researching how to support homeowners in the event of another drought.
- Large scale solar energy is discouraged where municipal services available so that it does not take up space where the infrastructure can support housing. From a tax generative standpoint, as commercial and industrial development is more valuable.
- Storm drainage is an existing requirement carried forward from the current documents.
- Staff intend to keep the parkland requirement within the Subdivision By-law.
- Stronger language to protect the Fort Edward view plane. “Preserve and protect” should be used rather than “encourage.” The view pane is considered as the view from the historic site outward. The view from Windsor to Avondale is also significant to the shipbuilding history of the area.
- Existing agriculture uses within the Three Mile Plains Growth Centre will not face the same restrictions as new agricultural uses.
- There seems to be a disparity between the Windsor and Hantsport Growth Centres, particularly around household livestock (such as chickens). Staff received informal direction from Council on this matter. The Committee felt there should be consistency among all Growth Centres. The municipal definition of “livestock” differs from the Province as the provincial definition does not include poultry or fowl.
- Stronger protections for agricultural land were requested.

- Watersheds are zoned differently than other resource zones and have very strict allowances. They are largely under the Province's jurisdiction.
- References to the transportation master plan are a policy statement and enabling criteria.
- The Wentworth Road Gateway District was originally intended to be commercial only, but that seems to have changed. Is the intent still the same for this Designation? Ground floor residential would be acceptable at the rear of the building, not along the street.
- The maximum height of 210ft (64m) within the Nesbitt Island designation, by development agreement, was a concern. This was taken directly from the previous Windsor documents and was previously approved by the Committee. The Committee may want to revisit this.

Staff will continue to review the drafts and take all feedback into consideration. The final draft of the documents is not expected to look much different than those presented, save for some of the changes requested by the PAC/HAC. All three documents will be presented in their entirety for approval. Staff commented that it is not possible to get everything 100% correct at the beginning. The “new” planning documents will be living documents and will be continually updated and amended through research and applications. Once the plan review is completed, staff will have more capacity for individual projects. Completing the plan review will free up the time to amend specific parts of the documents without prolonging the timeline of the entire project. Until the final drafts are approved, the existing documents remain in effect.

7.0 Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business.

8.0 Upcoming Public Information Meetings – May 20, 2026

8.1 File #26-07 Rezoning: 5398 Highway 14, Currys Corner (Will Hong)

This is an application to rezone a portion of the subject lot from Institutional (I) to Low-Density Residential (R-1) to facilitate the subdivision process for future residential use. The meeting will be held at 6:00pm in the Council Chambers at 76 Morison Drive, Windsor, with the option to participate virtually via Zoom. The meeting will also be livestreamed on the municipality's

YouTube channel with the recording available to watch at any time. Questions and comments can be directed to Will Hong by noon on June 3, 2026.

9.0 File Updates

The file updates were circulated with the agenda package and are available on the municipal website. Acting Director Fougere provided an update on item 9.6, File #25-20 Rezoning: PID 45285103, Old Walton Rd, Upper Burlington. As of May 13, 2026, the appeal has been withdrawn, and the rezoning and text amendments may proceed. Councillor Leary-Pinch asked if there were any updates on item 9.7, File #25-18: Bear Lake Wind Farm. Acting Director Fougere replied that staff are still awaiting the Board's decision but expect to have an answer by the end of the month.

10.0 Building and Development Activity Reports (April 2026)

The report was circulated with the agenda package and is available on the municipal website. Councillor Ivey asked if there were any changes in activity compared to last year. Acting Director Fougere replied that permit and subdivision activity is consistent with previous years. Meetings were not held in March or April because there were no planning applications ready for PAC/HAC consideration. A lot of work goes on in the background before an item can be presented for recommendation. Staff have not seen a decrease in applications and their work does not stop outside of the Committee.

11.0 Notices from Adjacent Municipal Units

No notices have been received.

12.0 Public Comments

The public is encouraged to attend the meetings or contact staff directly if they have any questions or comments. Contact information is available on the municipal website. If you are unsure who to contact, an email can be sent to planning@westhants.ca and the appropriate staff member will respond.

Councillor Wheadon commented as member of the public. As a farmer, he would like to see stronger protections for farmland. Many older farmers are close to retirement, and young

farmers can't afford to take over an entire operation, leading to the sale and redevelopment of farmland. The result is rapidly disappearing agricultural zoned land that cannot be reclaimed.

13.0 Next Meeting Date / Adjournment

The next meeting is scheduled for June 11, 2026, at 6:00pm. A notice will be sent out if there are any changes. With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:41pm.