

## Chairman's Report

By Kevin Umlah

# "Stay the course," encourages outgoing chair Umlah

As I look back over my last two years as Chair of the Spryfield and District Business Commission, I can't help but reflect on, and remember, the positive changes we've seen with the sense and feeling that tomorrow's unfolding will show even greater results for both the Commission and our communities.

It was two year's ago this spring that the Commission hired its first staff member, and it was in November of that year that staff changed and new targets were set. Through the fall of 2004 and into the spring of 2005, the Commission's

efforts encouraging the Halifax Regional Municipality to complete a long awaited study of Herring Cove Road were rewarded when Councillors Linda Mosher and Stephen Adams secured funding for the Herring Cove Streetscape and Planning Study.

The study, undertaken by Ekistics through the fall and winter months, followed a "community consultation" process involving as many residents and organizations in the area as possible. The Commission pushed for, and received, a number of in-depth opportunities to

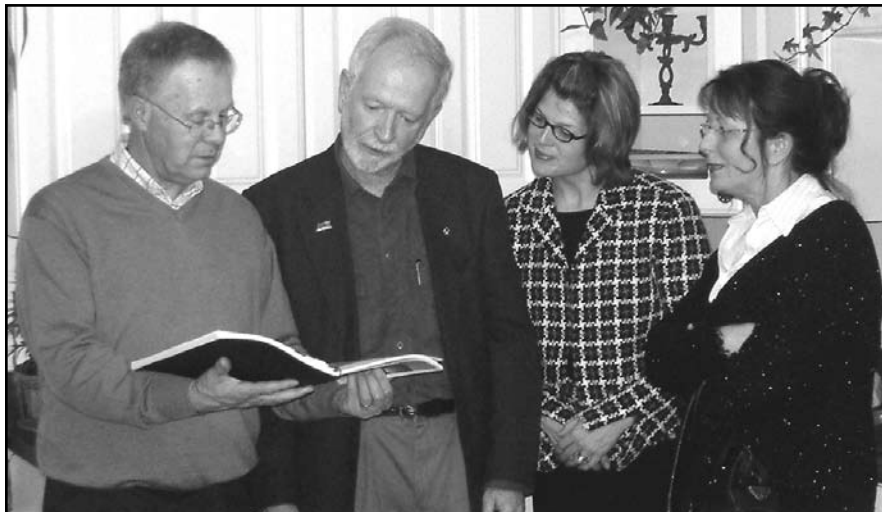
input to the study, and its voice was heard. What transpired from the process was a "far more reaching" final report than was originally conceived by the review mandate. And this spring some of the recommendations of the report will be seen on our streets when HRM unfolds its spring work projects.

And while the Commission was monitoring this activity, staff and Board members were also monitoring HRM's Regional Development Plan process, and studying the affects of the plan's proposals on our community. In a spirit

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## Boards and Committees

# There's Room - the Commission needs your input



Cecil Caines, left, of Cemanco Properties, reviews the final report of the Herring Cove Road Streetscape and Community Planning Study with Dan Doherty, Exit Realty Citadel, Erin Jennings, J. Albert Walker Funeral Home, and Sandy Martin, Cuts of Class, at a Business Mixer session sponsored by J. Albert Walker Funeral Home.

The Annual General Meeting of the Spryfield and District Business Commission will be held April 24 at the Earl Francis Memorial Spryfield Legion. The AGM represents an opportunity for the business community to input to two important areas – the Commission budget for 2006/07 and the Commission Board of Directors.

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# Commission offers Streetscape Plan “Wish List”

Now that the Herring Cove Road Streetscape and Community Planning Study has been completed, planning staff at Halifax Regional Municipality have asked the Spryfield and District Business Commission to provide what it considered its priority list of study recommendations to be implemented.

The HRM is interested in a number of recommendations as its own priorities, including creating a look-off at Winchester Avenue and Herring Cove Road, upgrading the park area at St. Michael's Avenue, beginning to develop a park for the Captain William Spry Community Centre fronting on Herring Cove Road,

creating a skateboard park and installing street benches and waste baskets at nearly 20 sites along Herring Cove Road.

In its response, the Commission forwarded the following “wish list” to HRM staff:

1 – Move forward, at every possible opportunity, toward the call for higher density housing and increased commercial density in the “urban core” area surrounding the Dentith Road and Herring Cove Road intersection:

2 – Provide for and move toward the realignment of Herring Cove Road to a three-way streetscape with a centre turn lane. Most important for this process is

the area between Old Sambro Road and Sussex Street but the concept could be extended to include an area from Glenora Avenue to Sylvia Avenue and could include concepts to increase the number of trees, boulevards and greenery in the community:

3 – Move forward as required by the needs of density housing in the urban core area with development of the transit terminal and rapid transit “Link Service” to be located at or near South Centre Mall:

4 – Intersection realignments – Realigning intersections such as Northwest Arm Drive and Old Sambro Road, Old Sambro Road and Dentith and Dentith and Herring Cove Road will expedite access and egress for automobiles traveling through Spryfield to places along the Ketch Harbour Road and Sambro Loop. This will mean less traffic in the “shopping district” and serve to direct through travelers away from the community and the Armdale Rotary:

5 – Review Land-Use By-Laws and Planning Strategies with a view to encouraging density housing development, identifying future commercial sites and infill strategies to encourage commercial development:

6 – Parks and Open Spaces – All opportunities for creation of parks and open spaces, in particular the area of Herring Cove Road fronting the Captain William Spry Community Centre which will serve to give the community an identity:

7 – Street Furniture and Waste Receptacles – If accompanied with an anti-litter campaign, a dedicated maintenance program and greenery aesthetics:

8 – Redesign the intersection of Purcell's Cove Road and Herring Cove Road so as to allow a left hand turn from Purcell's Cove Road to Herring Cove Road.

A copy of the study is available at the Commission offices by calling 452-7472.

## Spryfield Days Return Bringing People To Our Community

The Spryfield and District Business Commission has initiated a program to try and return a once lost community celebration, “Spryfield Days,” back to the community.

The intention is to help increase community involvement and bring people from outside into the community as they attend events and activities organized under the Spryfield Days banner. Staff of the Commission will be preparing an application to the Chebucto West Community Health Board to support the project. The application will be submitted in early May.

In the meantime, staff has already begun gathering names and contacts for organizations throughout the Eastern Chebucto Peninsula which may be interesting in participating. “The intention is to bring people together who can put on an event highlighting our unique history, culture, or lifestyle, sporting activities and other events,” said Executive Direc-

tor Reg Horner. “We hope to encourage people and organizations to put on an event during a specified time period that we can add to a Spryfield Days schedule of events and promote that schedule to residents both inside and outside our community.”

Already, he said, there have been expressions of interest from such organizations as the Mainland South Heritage Society, the Spryfield Lions Club, the Spryfield Residents Association and others. “The first task is to arrange a meeting of individuals representing interested groups, decide on an appropriate time period, and then have these organizations arrange their own events,” he said. “Our task in the Commission is to organize, administrate and market the event.”

Any organization or individual wanting more information should contact the Commission at 452-7472.

# Commission offers "position paper" on BC Silver School Site

The Spryfield and District Business Commission has forwarded a position paper calling on Halifax Regional Municipal planners and Councillor Stephen Adams to be cautious about making quick decisions on the future of the BC Silver School site.

Last summer the municipality issued a call for "Requests for Proposals" from parties interested in redeveloping or utilizing the now declared surplus school site. The Commission only learned of the request in January of this past year.

Adams calling for due diligence before a decision. The Commission believes the site, which is identified in the Herring Cove Streetscape and Community Planning Study as a potential site for higher density housing, can be an integral location to achieving the Streetscape Study's long term ambitions of creating a "city centre" in the Dentith Road and Herring Cove Road area.

A decision to proceed at this point in time with what may be a single family housing project is at least a 50 to 100



HRM has received two applications for its "call for proposals" on the BC Silver School. The Business Commission has encouraged the city to look carefully at the site before making a decision that may impact long term improvements to the community.

Although confirmed information is not available because of the "confidential nature" of the proposal system at HRM, the Commission has indication that two proponents answered the call. It is believed that one proponent is a not-for-profit organization and the other is a for-profit business. The Commission's belief is that one of the proponents has been selected by HRM staff which is preparing to recommend the proposal to Halifax Regional Council.

The Commission however, has forwarded a letter to staff and Councillor

year decision the Commission's letter to HRM suggests. The Commission says that efforts to create a Rapid Transit Link and bus terminal at South Centre Mall, as recommended in the study, and proposals in the study to increase densities in the core area, may be negatively impacted if HRM makes a decision on the site which does not take the long range planning requirements into consideration.

The Commission forwarded its letter to HRM and Councillor Adams in March this year and awaits a reply.

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of cooperation and understanding, the Board and staff prepared a presentation to the Regional Plan Committee seeking to increase Spryfield's status within the proposed 20 to 25 year document.

The success of our presentation lies for the moment in the subtleties, but having gained a higher level of status for Spryfield within the context of the Regional Plan means our community, over the longer term of the Plan, will receive a higher priority, greater attention and, we can hope, larger financial commitments by HRM to make positive change here.

It is my hope that the importance of these two documents and the Commission efforts in becoming involved deeply in them is, in the short term, hidden in one of those obscure moments in time when Councillor Mosher offered an "off-the-cuff" comment at a Chebucto Community Council meeting.

Council was discussing the Streetscape Study at public hearing when someone inquired of the members how the Streetscape Study fits together with the Regional Development Plan. Mosher, knowing that the Regional Plan is a global document which will require more in-depth local planning activities to fit the pieces together properly, said "it would be (her) hope that the Streetscape Study will form the basis of a local land-use and planning by-law review for the community (of Spryfield)."

It is at this stage of the planning process that existing land-use regulations, planning by-laws and HRM's legal and financial commitments to making this community a better place can be, directed, altered and prepared for change.

This is not activity members of the business community can undertake. As a group we do not have the legislative or financial ability to undertake this kind of change. What we do have is the ability, and we hope, interest in continuing to move the municipal political process in the right direction for change. We have been successful in doing that over the past two years. As I leave the Chair after two years, I can only encourage those who will follow to stay the course and build on what has been accomplished so far.

# Fifth "Business Mixer" planned for May 16

One of the objectives of the Board of Directors, Spryfield and District Business Commission, is to provide opportunities for business owners and managers to interact and meet each other. The hope is that over time and through networking sessions, informal discussions about business needs, community needs and solutions to existing difficulties for business in the community will be discussed and possible solutions found.

Today, beginning in late 2005 when the Herring Cove Branch of the Royal

Bank hosted the first "Business Mixer," there have been four sessions including one at Umlah Insurance, one at J. Albert Walker Funeral Home and the last held to date at Spryfield Physiotherapy Community Clinic.

Any business wishing to highlight its services to other business representatives can organize a "business mixer." All that is required is to set a date and the Business Commission staff will assist by helping the sponsoring business issue invitations to all Commission members.

If your business is interested contact David Watts at 452-7472 or by e-mail at david@umlah.com.

All business representatives in our area are encouraged and welcome to attend any of the session offered. The next "Business Mixer" is being sponsored jointly by Cemanco Properties and Dr. Elaine Carey. It will be held in their offices, Royal Bank Building, May 16.

*Everyone welcome!*

## [Boards & Committees - Continued from Page 1]

This year the Commission, according to its by-laws, will lose three of its nine Board members. They include Chair Kevin Umlah who has chaired the Commission for three years; Past President Fred O'Hearn who has served in almost all capacities with the Board for the past seven years; and long-term Board member Doreen Archibald who was also one of the original Board members elected to the Commission.

Any business considered in good standing as a member of the Commission is eligible to propose a representative for inclusion to the Board of Directors. The Commission will be offering a slate of officers for the coming years at the AGM later this month. Nominations are also accepted from the floor during the meeting.

But not the work of the Commission is done at the Board level. The Commission has a number of committees which meet regularly. They include the following:

- The Community Liaison Committee whose purpose is to meet with other local organizations to both help promote Commission work and open communication lines in an effort to help solve community and business issues:

- The External Relations Commit-

tee whose job it is to monitor activities at Halifax Regional Municipality and pursue the municipality's bureaucratic and political representatives for on-going change in our community. This committee worked with both the Regional Plan Committee and the Herring Cove Streetscape and Community Plan study this past year:

- The Communication Committee is responsible for production of this newsletter on a quarterly basis and other activities aimed at increasing the Commission ability to community more ef-

fectively with its members:

- The Special Events Committee is responsible for managing and organizing all special events of the Commission including the upcoming AGM, the Annual Golf Tournament, informational seminars and the annual involvement in the Spryfield Santa Claus Parade. Additionally this committee will begin preparations to re-constitute Spryfield Days and create an anti-litter campaign in the community:

- A relative new and emerging committee this years is the Retail Committee. Identified as S.M.A.R.T. (Spryfield Marketing And Retail Team) this committee of primarily retail interests ambition is to develop and undertake programs to help bring consumers to store counters and encourage people from outside our community to visit the area. The upcoming Spryfield and Area Business Directory and the return to Spryfield Days project are outgrowths of this group.

While not all business owners and managers or their employees have the desire to become members of the Board of Directors, there are opportunities for business representatives to serve on committees of the Commission. Anyone interested should contact the Commission at 452-7472.

**Our Web Site Is**

**"A Work In Progress"**

**Go Visit!**

**[www.spryfield.ca](http://www.spryfield.ca)**

**Upcoming Events**

**Annual General Meeting**

**April 24th, 2006**

**3:30 pm - 6:00 pm**

**Earl Francis Memorial Spryfield Legion**

**Fifth Business Mixer**

**May 16th, 2006**

**Royal Bank - 2nd Floor**