

Town of Amherst
Planning Advisory Committee
Minutes

Date: June 1, 2026
Time: 4:30 pm
Location: Council Chambers, Town Hall

Members Present Ronald Wilson, Citizen Representative, Chair
Paul Diamond, Citizen Representative, Vice Chair
Deputy Mayor Charlie Chambers
Councillor Terry McManaman
Councillor Dwayne Ripley

Members Regrets Jim Lamplugh, Citizen Representative

Staff Present Jason MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer
Andrew Fisher Director, Planning & Economic Development
Torben Laux, Planner
Marc Buske, Building Official
Emily Wainwright, Dangerous/Unsightly Premises Administrator
Sean Payne, Marketing & Communications Officer
Natalie LeBlanc, Municipal Clerk
Cindy Brown, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order.

1.1 Territorial Acknowledgement

The Chair gave the Territorial Acknowledgement.

2. Approval of Agenda and Acceptance of Minutes

2.1 Approval of the Agenda

Moved By: Councillor Ripley

Seconded By: Councillor McManaman

That the agenda of the Planning Advisory Committee be approved as circulated.

Motion Carried

2.2 Acceptance of the Minutes - April 7, 2026

The Chair called for any errors or omissions in the minutes. There being none, the minutes of the April 7, 2026, meeting of the Planning Advisory Committee were accepted as included in the agenda package.

3. 99 Rupert Street

3.1 Staff Report

Emily Wainwright reviewed her report included in the agenda package, describing an appeal by the property owner of the Administrator's order to engage a qualified pest control professional to carry out a thorough inspection and eradication of cockroaches and bed bugs in unit 15 of the apartment building at 99 Rupert Street.

The Administrator noted that the first complaint was received on April 10, 2026, for cockroaches and bedbugs in Unit 15. On April 14th an interior inspection was completed by the Administrator, Building Official and Fire Inspectors. Both live and dead pests were observed in the unit, which were identified to be cockroaches. Visual evidence of bedbugs could not be obtained at that time due to the nature of such infestations.

Following the inspection, an order was issued on May 1st under Section 10(3) of the Minimum Standards for Residential Occupancies Bylaw, where Buildings shall be kept free of rodents, vermin, and insects at all times. Methods used for extermination such pests shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Pest Control Act of Nova Scotia. This was to be completed by May 17th with a follow-up inspection scheduled for May 18th.

On May 19th, the Municipal Clerk received correspondence from the owner advising that treatment of Unit 15 for cockroaches was completed on May 14th, along with the service report. However, the property owner confirmed that they wished to continue with the appeal stating in the May 26th email included in agenda package that the tenant should be responsible for the bed bug infestation.

The Administrator noted that there have been 3 additional complaints by separate units since May 5th regarding pest concerns. However, the complainants have not yet provided the required documentation as outlined in the Minimum Standards for Residential Occupancies Bylaw.

The Administrator added that risks associated with this matter include potential health and safety impacts to the occupants of the unit and building. Failure to require remediation may allow an infestation to persist or worsen and increase the likelihood of pests spreading to adjacent units, and further advised that it appears from the property owner's May 26th email that the issue in question is not the presence of pests, but that a specific type of pest, bed bugs, are the tenant's responsibility, not the property owners. The subject Bylaw does not differentiate between types of insects but simply requires that building be kept free of insects and the methods used for extermination must be in accordance with the NS Pest Control Products Act. Following a strict interpretation of the Bylaw, it is the property owner's responsibility to comply with the Bylaw, rather than the tenant.

3.2 Owner / Representative Questions/Comments to PAC

The owner of the property was not present.

3.3 Complainant / Representative Questions/Comments to PAC

Amy Coady, a tenant of 99 Rupert Street presented to the committee photos and videos showing a cockroach and bed bug infestation. She said that her unit is still having issues despite her unit being treated recently, and that she recently had to be hospitalized due to the insect problem in her unit. She has spoken with other tenants of the building who are also experiencing an issue with cockroaches and bed bugs; however, the owner is denying that they can spread and migrate. She had to throw away her mattress and couch as well as groceries, store all her clothes in plastic bags and spray her other furniture in an attempt to treat her unit on her own but she has not been successful and believes the spray does not kill the eggs.

Ms. Coady's mother was also in attendance and indicated the first complaint of bed bugs was sent to the owner in March of 2024 via text, and that her daughter has gone door to door through out the building getting signatures confirming bed bugs in other units. She is also concerned that tenants moving from the building are taking the bed bugs with them which will only lead to further infestations at other locations.

Moved By: Councillor Ripley

Seconded By: Councillor McManaman

That the Planning Advisory Committee uphold the decision of the Administrator that the subject property is in violation of the Minimum Standards for Residential Occupancies Bylaw, P-4, specifically Section 10(3) and deny the appeal.

Against (1): Deputy Mayor Chambers

Motion Carried

Moved By: Deputy Mayor Chambers

Seconded By: Councillor McManaman

That the Planning Advisory Committee direct the Administrator to order that the property owner engage a qualified pest control professional to carry out a thorough inspection and remediation of the entire building at 99 Rupert Street.

Motion Carried

4. 1 Albion Street

4.1 Staff Report

Andrew Fisher presented the application for a Development Agreement on the property located at 1 Albion Street (PID 25009432) to permit the construction of a 24-unit and 12-unit Apartment Building with the applicant's comments regarding the Planning Advisory Committee's concerns from the previous meeting.

Paul Diamond made a motion that the Planning Advisory Committee recommend that Council enter into the Development Agreement for 1 Albion Street as drafted; however, as there was no seconder the motion did not move forward.

Deputy Mayor Chambers asked if there are any policies not being met with this application. Andrew Fisher answered no.

Jason MacDonald commented that this application will still go to Council without a recommendation from the Planning Advisory Committee and if it is defeated the applicant can appeal to the Nova Scotia Utility Review Board (NSUARB), and that they will more than likely win the appeal, adding that the NSUARB look to see if the application follows policy which this one does, and that it will not look positive for the Town that the Planning Advisory Committee is not recommending this application without good reason.

Paul Diamond added that he believes the application is well within all relevant policies, and that new buildings that people can afford need to be built especially when old ones are being torn down.

Jason MacDonald said the Town is criticized for allowing market value apartment buildings and now that a proposal for affordable housing is put forward, the Committee is failing to act. He added that if the Planning Advisory Committee refuses to make a recommendation it could hurt the Town's reputation for attracting developers, as they will not know how their application will be handled. He further expressed that Council's strategic plan speaks explicitly about inclusivity and housing, and the recently adopted new Land Use Bylaw and Municipal Planning Strategy not only permits but encourages this type of development.

Councillor McManaman expressed that he has concerns about the lack of parking. The Chair replied that according to policy there are no parking requirements for this type of development in the downtown, adding that the applicant worked with Town staff since the last meeting to address this concern.

The Chair said that the Planning Advisory Committee's function is to review applications and see if they meet the Town's Land Use Bylaws and Municipal Planning Strategy policies, which this application does, therefore the Planning Advisory Committee should be supporting this.

Councillor Ripley said had this come to a vote he would have voted yes since this application meets policy; however, he did not second the motion because he did not like it.

4.2 Public Participation Opportunity Summary (Including written submissions from the public)

Information item only.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting.

Natalie LeBlanc
Municipal Clerk

Ron Wilson
Chair