

Greene challenges Waterfront Plan

by Brad Warner and John MacLeod

Last Tuesday April 15, Fisherman's Market owner, Fred Greene, made a formal presentation to Halifax City Council, to intercede on his behalf with the public urban renewal body known as the Waterfront Development Corporation (WDC).

The problem at hand is that the WDC intends to purchase and demolish the present Fisherman's Market building, replacing it with — no one appears to be quite sure. There exists an official conceptual plan for the development of Halifax Waterfront, "The Intergovernmental Waterfront Committee Halifax/Dartmouth Waterfront Plan". The "Bluebook" as it is referred to, shows Greene's location being preserved at least in the interim transition period where the WDC is empowered to acquire the lands in majority along the waterfront up to Hollis Street. Questions have been raised, however, about his corporation's real plans for the entire project — Greene's property as well as other enterprises based in this area. Some suggest that the Bluebook of February 1976 is now a master plan approved in principal. As one concerned party expressed, "If this is the approved master plan, what are the procedures for its amendment. Does the Board of the WDC, in fact, possess this authority?"

The drive to renew Halifax Waterfront dates back to the Stephenson Report commissioned in 1957 by the City of Halifax on the status of the downtown area — condition of, residential and commercial uses, as well as proposals for change if considered necessary. Out of this plan we now have Scotia Square, Mulgrave Park and Uniacke Square, and the demolition of Africville. But in the Stephenson study a Harbour Drive expressway also was proposed, a transport artery surrounded by limited private and public development. Additional plans for Harbour Drive included the construction of the present Cogswell St. Interchange of which the present Court House complex was designed to accommodate the roadway.

interests, namely the Downtown Halifax Business Association.

Some of these interests have criticized the operations of the WDC as to their lack of soliciting public input into the planning process — avoiding consultation, in favour of commissioning government-style surveys except for the token public unveiling of the Bluebook last year.

Last year, the "Statement of Objectives for the Halifax Municipal Development Plan" was approved by the City in principal. Policy 3.1 states "On the peninsula along the Harbour's edge only those industries which are harbour-related shall be encouraged and allowed to grow. Areas for such development to occur shall be designated on the basis of existing uses, possible alternative uses, and compatibility with residential areas, the central business district, major community facilities, and the transportation network." As Alan Ruffman, marine geologist and erstwhile member of Halifax Community Planning Association, has suggested: "It is a question of philosophy: we have to be careful not to sterilize the waterfront like buying out viable businesses such as Fred Greene's Fisherman's Market, and destroying such buildings of historical and commercial value." The source of designation comes mainly from the Halifax Landmark Commission and the Historic Properties Designation Act (N.S. 1976). Many of the properties are listed by the Heritage Trust as worthy of preservation, but it has been observed that there is really no teeth in the provincial government's Act which protects any building or property so designated.

The Case of Fred Greene, Fisherman's Market, and the Waterfront Development Corporation.

Fred Greene has sought many times this past year to justify his position, being an owner of a waterfront property that provides what he considers to be a useful service as well as providing himself with a source of livelihood. He does not wish to be removed from his present location, sacrifice his equity,

tourist trade, which as a source of City income is drawn by such attractions into the area. The fruits of Greene's newspaper campaign were presented to City Council last week and it is the relative numbers which local politicians, and intelligentsia have regarded with significance. Greene said that one Saint Mary's University professor remarked that it takes only some 700 to 2000 votes to elect a City alderman and it is rare that a mayoral candidate wins the chair by more than 4000 votes. As recorded in the minutes of Council, a result of Greene's presentation is that they wish to be kept informed and consulted should the Corporation decide to expropriate Fisherman's Market.

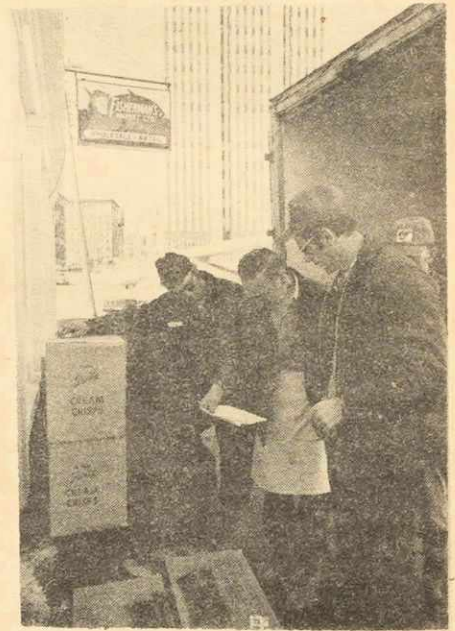
At what cost waterfront development.

Also threatened here is the adjacent Halifax-Dartmouth Ferry Terminal, a concern to Greene as well as interested private citizens such as Alan Ruffman. Again, Ruffman has expressed concern "that we are going to tear down the Ferry Terminal, which is one of the most photographed buildings in Halifax, and sacrifice it to the bulldozers in the interest of creating an aesthetic waterfront."

Plans for this waterfront area, although presented in the

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street in the planned Chebucto Square. We're still in the process of negotiation". Thomas said that the Corporation intends to finalize the plan next week and that within the month it will be presented to the public for scrutiny. He has suggested that the WDC is trying to ac-



Dal Photo/Walsh

Fisherman's Market: a colourful enterprise natural on the waterfront of a port city. Do boutiques or fishermen plying their trade attract tourists!

commodate existing business in the final draft, mentioning Atlantic Salvage Company and the Fisherman's Market in particular. Atlantic Salvage are staying where they are but Greene will be moved elsewhere, probably to Chebucto Square.

Fred Greene himself said that there are many more questions to be answered about the waterfront and its future since he considers himself to be a desirable fixture on the waterfront. "The people of Halifax, if they want to preserve what's left of their heritage must do more — I cannot do it alone. I support myself on my own property and serve the interests of the fishermen and you, the community, with my market. It really depends on your point of view. What do you want to see down on our waterfront, or in the whole city for that matter? So much of the old town is being torn down in stages, but what are we getting that's good in return? I still remember the views of the waterfront and its activity from the Citadel. Walter Fitzgerald at least gave us the 'view planes' to preserve some of the old flavour of the city crowned by the Citadel. But now, the WDC is plunging on with its own plans — but who gave them all that authority, and where does it begin and end?"

Walter Fitzgerald, ex-Halifax mayor and present provincial Minister of Labour said he will seek the support of the members of the legislature for a resolution designed to show support for the Preservation of Fisherman's Market. And from present mayor Edmund Morris's reactions at last week's Council presentation it can be inferred that he'd like to wash his hands of the matter. There was no explicit mention of expropriation of Fisherman's Market at the meeting. Several Aldermen spoke in support of Greene. Corporation representative, lawyer James Cowan advised that it "would be pleased to receive details of Mr. Greene's requirements". The City is agent for land acquisition of the Waterfront Development Corporation.

The market's heavily used. Wouldn't a face-lift be better than demolishing it?



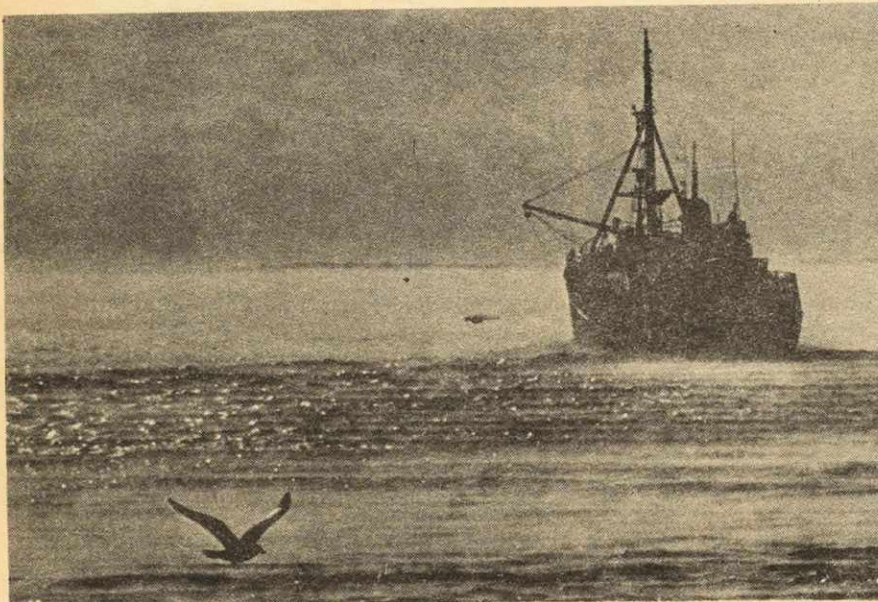
Dal Photo/Walsh

Fred Greene owner of Fisherman's Market is very concerned with the development of the Halifax waterfront.

Bluebook, are not finalized. Some of the concepts being considered are boutiques, government offices, small commodity stores such as the Fisherman's Market — as tenants of the Corporation. Persons interviewed, plus random discussions with people on the street, elicited questions of the desirability of "still more government office buildings", or "antiseptic arts-and-crafts boutiques". One of many other criticisms of the Corporation's plans to acquire title to all waterfront property, with some exceptions, is that they are trying to drive private business out at random, supposedly in line with that Policy Statement 3.1.

'DREE provided the funds and their hybrid WDC takes the flak,' says a member of the Historical Society.

When interviewed, executive director of the Waterfront Development Corporation, Hugh Thomas said, "It is not the goal of the Corporation to drive anyone, yet alone Fred Greene, out of business. We have offered him a location in the vicinity, more than likely, across the



Dal Photo

Halifax Private Initiative versus Urban Renewal:

The Harbour Drive concept as originally proposed was stopped in part by strong widespread opposition to the destruction of what is now Historical Properties, the latter a public expression which has managed to preserve some of the old character of Halifax. By actions such as that of Greene, the Historical Society, Heritage Trust, the Halifax Community Planning Association and even commercial

and become a tenant of the Waterfront Corporation, always having to pay rent. He also has remarked on the difficulty of running his operation but he would rather not do anything else under the strictures of the corporation.

Many people feel, as evidenced by some 4000+ signature responses as well as some 130 personal letters of support, that Fisherman's Market has become an organic part of the Halifax port, serving the fisherman as a dependable buyer of their catch, the citizens, as an interesting place to shop, and the