

TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE
MINUTES

February 5, 2014

MEMBERS

PRESENT:

Councillor Reg Rankin, Chair
Councillor Barry Dalrymple
Councillor David Hendsbee
Councillor Darren Fisher
Councillor Jennifer Watts
Councillor Russell Walker

REGRETS:

Councillor Waye Mason
Councillor Tim Outhit , Vice-Chair

STAFF:

Mr. Mike Labrecque, Deputy CAO
Ms. Kirby Grant, Senior Solicitor
Ms. Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 3rd Floor, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 4, 2013

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Dalrymple, that the Transportation Standing Committee minutes of December 4, 2013 be approved (as circulated) (as amended). MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

Deferral:

Item 5.3.1 Presentation – New Federal Regulations for Transportation of Dangerous Goods – *Barry Manuel, Coordinator, EMO*

Addition:

7.3.2 Chain of Lakes Trail Paving – *Councillor Watts*

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Walker, that the order of business be approved (as amended). MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES/STATUS SHEET - None

5. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & PRESENTATIONS

5.1 Correspondence - None

5.2 Petitions - None

5.3 Presentations

5.3.1 Presentation – New Federal Regulations for Transportation of Dangerous Goods – *Barry Manuel, Coordinator, EMO*

This item was deferred to the March 5, 2014 meeting.

5.3.2 Accessible Taxis in HRM – *Dave Buffett, Halifax Taxi Drivers Owners Association*

Mr. Dave Buffett, President, Halifax Taxi Drivers Owners Association, presented to the Committee on the topic of accessible taxis in HRM. A copy of Mr. Buffett's speaking notes are on file. His presentation included the following:

- The Taxi Drivers Owners Association has been working with Mr. Hindle to improve the way the taxi business has been done in HRM.
- Previously drivers drove minivans as accessible taxis, although these are difficult for some to access. These have been replaced with accessible vans, the majority of which can accommodate one wheelchair passenger at a time. The Dodge Caravan can accommodate two wheelchairs. Accommodating two wheelchair passengers saves passengers money by sharing a ride.
- There are currently no accessible limousines in HRM, and this is an unacceptable standard for persons with disabilities.
- There are currently 35 accessible taxis in HRM, although there is no signage on the accessible taxis to indicate that they are accessible. The Association recommends three inch lettering on cabs to indicate they are accessible vehicles.
- Accessible taxis should be dispatched in the same way as regular taxis, but instead customers are given individual accessible taxi driver phone numbers to call themselves.

Councillor Watts thanked Mr. Buffett for bringing this matter to the attention of the Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Dalrymple, that the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report based on recommendations provided in the presentation, in consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Watts inquired where the municipal/provincial jurisdictional latitude lies with regard to the restricting of zones and implementing signage in accessible taxis.

The Chair inquired what constitutes an accessible taxi.

Mr. Kevin Hindle, Supervisor, Regional Licensing, Municipal Compliance, advised that staff have been in contact with members of HRM's Accessibility Advisory Committee on this matter, and will be attending the February 17, 2014 AAC meeting. Mr. Hindle reviewed the regulations for accessible taxis, noting that they are based on the specific vehicle design itself. The guidelines are established by the Motor Vehicle Act s. 305, and follow the Taxi By-law. With regard to accessible limousines, Mr. Hindle advised that they have not been able to find any luxury class vehicle models that have been converted to accessible vehicles, although they would be open to the licensing of accessible limousines if a vehicle met the guidelines. Mr. Hindle further reviewed the provincial legislation under the Motor Vehicle Act which sets out that the number of accessible taxi drivers cannot be limited, and the zones cannot be limited. He noted that municipal compliance and legal staff have begun discussions with the province to clarify the guidelines.

Councillor Hendsbee, commenting on the presenter's suggestion to have accessible taxi signage on all four sides of an accessible taxi, inquired whether this would be

beyond what is currently required for signage. Mr. Hindle indicated that staff could look into this.

Referencing the portable ramps component of the Mayor's Healthy Communities Initiative, Councillor Hendsbee questioned whether portable lifts could benefit taxi passengers. Mr. Hindle indicated that as per the regulations, all accessible taxis are equipped with a boarding and lighting ramp, or a lift.

Councillor Walker noted concern that licensed drivers may apply for more than one accessible taxi license, if they have more than one vehicle that meets the standards, and that this may be abused since accessible taxis are able to operate in any zone.

Councillor Walker noted concern with accessible taxi drivers not using meters for fares, and asked that this be included in the report, along with discussion on how HRM can have more control over the issuing of accessible taxi licenses. Mr. Hindle clarified that all taxis, regular or accessible, must use the same meter fare, noting that drivers are also permitted to reach an agreement on a fare with a passenger prior to departing.

The Chair commented on how the introduction of accessible taxis could change the industry in HRM, noting that demand to get into the accessible taxi business could increase accessible taxis not being restricted to zones, and the provincial grant program making the purchase or retrofit of accessible taxis more affordable. He questioned the equity and fairness with non-accessible taxis being restricted to zones, and accessible taxi drivers not.

Councillor Rankin left at 2:28 p.m. and Deputy Mayor Fisher took the Chair.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – None

7. REPORTS

7.1 STAFF

7.1.1 Integration of Transit Routes 401 & 370 (Information report referred from Jan. 14/14 Regional Council)

An information report dated December 19, 2013 was referred from the January 14, 2014 session of Regional Council to the Transportation Standing Committee.

Councillor Hendsbee indicated that he would like to see Routes 401 & 370 integrated to redirect the routes to merge at the park and ride at Exit 20 (Highway 107), including looking at rerouting through Lake Echo along Bell Street, Thomas Street, and down Beech Hill Drive to the No. 7 Highway.

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Walker, that the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report to re-evaluate the possibility of integrating Routes 370 and 401, to redirect the routes to merge at the park and ride at Exit 20 (Highway 107), including looking at rerouting through Lake Echo along Bell Street, Thomas Street, and down Beech Hill Drive to the No. 7 Highway.

Mr. Reage indicated that the Council information report didn't cover that as it wasn't part of the original motion. He noted that staffs' experience with the Highway 103 park and ride is at people don't generally do any backtracking. He acknowledged that the Councillor wishes to have service start earlier in the morning in East Preston.

Councillor Watts noted that there are many small transit changes requested by constituents that members of Council would like to bring forward to staff, although Metro Transit is currently undertaking a major service review and changes should be held off until that review is completed.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7.1.2 Monthly Update – Commuter Rail Plan (verbal)

Mr. Dave Reage, Manager, Planning & Scheduling, Metro Transit, provided a brief update on staff's efforts to move forward with a commuter rail study, noting that a positive response was received from CN with regard to their participation. He advised that staff are setting up a conference call for next week with staff and CN to move forward.

7.2 ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

7.2.1 Update from Councillor Watts (verbal)

Councillor Watts provided a brief update on the activities of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, noting that Mr. Gerry Post presented to the Committee on points from his experience on how to move HRM accessibility forward. She advised that the Committee held a full discussion about the refusal of service dogs in taxis. Councillor Watts noted that the Committee is continuing to monitor the roundabout, and there is a public consultation session tomorrow evening on the topic.

7.2.2 Service Dog Exercise area – Rainnie Drive & Cogswell Road

A report from the Accessibility Advisory Committee dated January 27, 2014 was before the Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Walker, that the Transportation Standing Committee request staff, as a part of the North Park Intersection Redesign project, consider relocating the service dog exercise area

at Rainnie Drive and Cogswell Street to a more accessible area located within the urban core, that has more space, that the area be grassed, that the rules be clearly posted in writing and braille, and that the relocation be done in consultation with the individuals who use the area.

Councillor Walker suggested that staff look at an area on the Mainland Common, noting that there is an empty soccer field that could be used, and there is parking.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested exploring a creative partnership with Canada Post on Almon Street, adjacent to the CNIB office. He noted that an area on the Canada Post property could be fenced off with a management agreement with HRM.

Councillor Watts commented that a question to consider is whether it would make sense to have more than one site. She noted concerns from the Accessibility Advisory Committee that sighted people are using the park, which is why clear signage would be required.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7.3 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

7.3.1 Update from Councillor Watts (verbal)

Councillor Watts provided a brief update on the activities of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee, noting that the Committee received an update on crosswalk and cycling rules from Sgt. Reynolds, Halifax Regional Police, and the Committee are awaiting the return of the Active Transportation Plan for review.

7.3.2 Chain of Lakes Trail Paving – Councillor Watts

Councillor Watts noted that a motion was approved by the Active Transportation Advisory Committee to support the Chain of Lakes Trail Association to have the Chain of Lake Trail be paved to the Bayers Lake intersection upon reconstruction.

Mr. Mike Labrecque, Deputy CAO, indicated that the Capital Budget will be coming back to Committee of the Whole on February 26, 2014 and Council will have an opportunity at that time to request that this be included in the 2014/15 budget.

7.4 CROSSWALK SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

7.4.1 Update from Councillor Dalrymple (verbal) - None

7.4.2 Making Our Communities Safer – Crosswalk Safety Work Plan

A report from the Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee dated January 30, 2014 was before the Committee.

MOVED BY Councillor Dalrymple, seconded by Hendsbee, that the Transportation Standing Committee:

- 1. Approve the Actions for each Goal, as identified in Attachment A of the January 30, 2014 report;**
- 2. Approve the crosswalk safety Work Plan, Attachment B of the January 30, 2014 report; and**
- 3. Recommend to Halifax Regional Council that the work plan be forwarded to staff for analysis, budget implications and implementation.**

Councillor Dalrymple acknowledged the hard work of the Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee and staff in developing the Work Plan. He also acknowledged the presentations that were made to the Committee, and the many emails, phone calls and letters with input on the Work Plan.

Councillor Dalrymple indicated that the Committee had considered budgets and costs to tax payers in developing the Work Plan, and he was pleased that staff have allowed funding in the advanced budget for items in the Work Plan. Councillor Dalrymple commented that the Committee focused this Work Plan on action items with an immediate impact. He indicated that the Work Plan is all encompassing and wide-ranging, and includes education, enforcement, and infrastructure improvements. Councillor Dalrymple suggested that with the diverse range of urban, suburban, and rural communities throughout HRM, different options will work for different locations.

Councillor Dalrymple commented that the Committee will continue to meet quarterly, and there are many other ideas for the Committee to explore over the next year, at which time another report will likely be brought forward.

Councillor Dalrymple indicated that the recommendation for zebra crosswalk markings was an early recommendation to Council from the Committee and will be the most expensive of the initiatives put forward by the Committee. The Chair noted that the recommendation for zebra crosswalk markings will be coming to Regional Council on February 11, 2014.

Councillor Dalrymple explained that the crosswalk flag program is one of the Work Plan recommendations, although the onus for operating and funding the program will be on area Councillors and community groups.

Councillor Watts expressed appreciation for Committee members and staff for their work on the Work Plan. She requested clarification on the process set out in the motion. Mr. Mike Labrecque, DCAO, indicated that the third recommendation would go forward to Council for direction to staff. He indicated that the Work Plan could be implemented as a part of the annual capital plan, and that Work Plan recommendations may come forward in phases after staff analysis. Mr. Labrecque indicated that staff

have to respond to the Regional Council motion put forward by Councillor Craig with regard to pedestrian safety, which report should be ready no later than March 18, 2014. He clarified that there may be items in the Work Plan that can or cannot be done, which is the purpose of the analysis from staff.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

8. **MOTIONS** - None
9. **ADDED ITEMS** - None
10. **NOTICES OF MOTION** - None
11. **NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, March 5, 2014, 2:00 p.m.**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 5, 2014, at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 3rd Floor, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

The Chair requested that the Legislative Assistant ensure that the March 5th meeting date does not conflict with the Committee of the Whole budget session that is tentatively scheduled for that day.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Jennifer Weagle
Legislative Assistant

INFORMATION ITEMS

1. **Ideal Carsharing City** (*Information Report dated January 29, 2014*)
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