

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

MAY 15, 2000

MINUTES

PRESENT: Darrell Robar, Chair
Cynthia Street
Betty MacDonald
Anne Langille
Jane Cale
Donald J. MacDonald
Maureen Reynolds
Barbara LeGay
Paul Connors

ALSO PRESENT: Charla Williams, Diversity Coordinator
Roel Vis, Schedule Planner, Metro Transit
Mandy MacDonald and Sandra Spears, Interpreters
Lynne Le Boutillier, Assistant Municipal Clerk

REGRETS: Margaret Hiltz, Peggy Brown, Ron Alley, Bob Venus and Sally Campbell

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES - 2 - May 15, 2000

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	Approval of Agenda, Additions and Deletions	3
2.0	Approval of Minutes	3
3.0	Business Arising from Minutes	
3.1	Upcoming Events and Provisions to Accommodate Disables	3 - 6
3.2	HRDC Newsletter	7 & 8
3.3	Braille Printer - Update	6
3.4	2000-2001 Workplan - Update	6 & 7
3.5	–	8
4.0	New Business	
4.1 - 4.4	8
4.5	8
4.6	8
5.0	Access-a-Bus Committee Minutes	9
6.0	Next Meeting	9

1.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

The following items were added to the agenda:

Under New Business:

Item 4.3 Snow Removal - Marg Hiltz

Item 4.4 Northwood Centre - Wheelchair Accessible Van - Marg Hiltz

Item 4.5 HRM Disability Challenge - Charla Williams

Item 4.6 Audible Pedestrian Signals - Barb LeGay

2.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was noted that Bob Venus' name had been omitted from the list of attendees at the April meeting. The minutes of the April 26, 2000 meeting, as amended, were adopted on motion of Ms. Reynolds and Ms. Cale.

3.0 BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

3.1 UPCOMING EVENTS AND PROVISIONS TO ACCOMMODATE DISABLED

Andrew Cox and Mike Gillett, Coordinators, Festivals & Special Events, Tourism, Culture and Heritage had been invited to today's meeting to discuss with the Committee special events planned for the year and what accommodations had been made for those with disabilities. Mr. Cox noted that the Coordinators are responsible for facilitating or directly delivering events funded by HRM and facilitating events for outside event organizers.

Mr. Cox referred to a Special Events Task Force which he co-chairs. This group meets on a monthly basis, with more frequent meetings during the busy summer months.

One of the functions of the Coordinators is to try to educate people putting on events on the issue of corporate risk management, in addition to trying to support them in the delivery of their events. In addition to trying to educate individuals on the need to make the venues accessible to those with disabilities, they try to encourage event organizers to make their events accessible from a fiscal point of view.

Specific reference was made to the fact that the location of a particular event largely impacts on its accessibility. There are some excellent locations within the HRM from a grade perspective and Access-a-Bus service.

One of the points Mr. Cox raises with event organizers relates to height restrictions, ie. accessible areas, particularly for fireworks and concerts, must take in account visibility for

**HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES - 4 - May 15, 2000**

those in wheelchairs.

Mr. Cox indicated it would be nice to have guidelines for accommodating those with disabilities to handout to event organizers. The Chair felt this document to be an excellent idea. It was suggested that the representatives of the Committee get together in the fall with the Events Coordinators to address issues to be contained in this document. Reference was made to Vancouver's success in this area and there may be things in place in that City which could be included.

(Ann Langille arrived)

The focus of much of the presentation was on the logistics of dealing with the crowds expected for the Tall Ships event. Accessibility and public safety are challenges. Mr. Cox outlined some of the measures being taken to take pressure off the waterfront, ie.:

- Closure of a portion of Lower Water Street from July 19 to 24. Only public access will be permitted on this section.

With the closure of Lower Water Street, the Chair questioned whether those with disabilities, working or residing in the area, will have any options. Mr. Cox indicated letters will be going out in due course to identify this closure to people in the area and the next step will be to make accommodations where necessary.

- Provision of an ongoing bus shuttle service in an attempt to discourage the use of personal vehicles.

Mr. Vis was questioned on the provisions being made by Metro Transit for wheelchair users. Mr. Vis noted that low floor accessible vehicles will be utilized, together with the Access-a-Bus Service. A total of 8 wheelchairs could be accommodated in any given hour. Mr. Vis does not anticipate any problems with Transit service.

Bus shelters should be wheelchair accessible. Some shelters present a problem due to the interior bench. Bus shelters in future will have to be wheelchair accessible, it was noted.

- Two areas have been set up on the Halifax side of the harbour to accommodate wheelchairs for the fireworks and the Parade of Sail. 30 to 40 individuals can be accommodated on these jetties.

Efforts are being made to determine similar locations on the Dartmouth side of the harbour.

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES - 5 - May 15, 2000

Barb LeGay felt these areas should also be accessible to individuals who are seeing impaired. Mr. Cox felt this was an excellent suggestion and he will make a recommendation to the Board.

It was felt that provision of a covered area, particularly for the motorized wheelchairs, will be required. They are not weather proof. Also a power outlet.

- Those with disabilities will be encouraged to either come early or very late to the venue to avoid congestion.
- A portion of the waterfront towards the southend will have a mile of barricades erected, due to the height of the drop off to the water.
- To facilitate Emergency Response Teams, standing areas for emergency vehicles were identified.
- Police officers will be employed to direct both vehicular and pedestrian traffic at major intersections.

Ms. Williams questioned if anything is being done to educate on public safety associated with the disabled and children on the venue site. The Committee was assured work is being done with Fire Services and the EMC in this regard. A Child Find Service is being provided by MTT and a communications system is planned for the waterfront.

During discussion of the event, it was suggested by Committee members that the following be considered:

- Scent free portable washrooms, ie. instead of using scented deodorizers, baking soda be employed. Other recommendations could be obtained from the Environmental Clinic.
- Bringing any animals to the site should be discouraged, except for seeing eye and service dogs. Mr. Cox will raise with the public relations people.
- Interpreters for the deaf on site, for any presentations related to the Tall Ships event and in the event of an emergency. Mr. Cox will raise with the Committee the provision of interpreters in the event of an emergency. As for having interpreters present for Tall Ships related presentations, he noted that a number of events will be televised live. If the members wish to explore such provisions further, Mike Gillett indicated he could provide telephone numbers to the appropriate individuals. Mr. Cox noted that they are always looking for support from other groups and perhaps the members could liaise.

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES - 6 - May 15, 2000

Ms. Williams noted that the role of the Committee is as an advisory committee to Council. The members don't represent any particular disability organization. The members' role is not to establish contacts, so staff should not expect that a number of organizations will be contacted with the information.

- The Chair questioned whether there are any persons with disabilities on the Special Events Task Force. There are not. Staff was assured that Committee members would be more than happy to assist.
- The use of scents and smoking be restricted from a pier to accommodate those with sensitivities. Mr. Cox noted that technically no smoking is allowed on piers. The installation of more signs might assist and reference made in the advertisements.
- The need to have someone to assist those using the portable accessible washrooms get in and out.
- Restrict the use of pesticide soaked bark mulch in the area.

The Chair thanked Mr. Cox and Mr. Gillett for their attendance.

3.3 BRAILLE PRINTER - UPDATE

It was suggested that this item be brought forward in six months.

3.4 2000-2001 WORKPLAN - UPDATE

Circulated with the agenda package, was the second draft of the 2000-2001 Work Plan which reflected comments made at the previous meeting, ie. reference to Metro Centre removed. These changes were made before the minutes had been received.

Ms. Cale noted that problems have been encountered with Activities 5 and 6 being too specific. She suggested the reference to, for example, "traffic signage for deaf child" be removed. She also proposed deleting the reference to "Access-a-Bus Service" for employees working in, but living outside of the Municipality's bus boundary".

Ms. Cale noted the inclusion of a section on Resource Requirements in this version.

It was cautioned that the Work Plan is really for the future. It was recommended that an accomplishments document be developed, which could be placed on the HRM Web site. The accomplishments list could include for example, renovations to City Hall in 1996/97. It was felt that it would be very useful to keep track. As an alternative, Ms. LeGay felt it

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES - 7 - May 15, 2000

would be a good idea to prepare an Annual Report. It was noted that it would be beneficial to have a separate accomplishments document as well for ready reference to help define the Committee's role.

(Maureen Reynolds left)

It was felt that the subcommittee consisting of Cynthia Street, Jane Cale, Charla Williams and the Chair need to meet in person. Monday, May 29th was selected at 2:00 p.m., in a conference room on the 3rd Floor.

3.2 HRDC NEWSLETTER

Mr. Paul MacDonald was in attendance to give some history on the "News for Persons with Disabilities" newsletter. The members had been in receipt of Volume 1, Issue 1. At the meeting he distributed copies of the second edition for April 2000. He reviewed with the members the various articles and the importance of letting people know what programs are out there.

It was suggested that copies be provided to the Councillors, as an information item, and the HRM storefronts. Ms. Williams will ensure HRM Directors and General Managers receive a copy to help raise awareness. Reference was also made to the Corporate Library and the Committee's Web site. It was proposed that a link to this site would be worthwhile.

During the review of the actual format of the newsletter, it was suggested that the font size be increased in future.

During his presentation Mr. MacDonald provided information on the STP Program and one of HRDC's focuses to create partnership committees across the province and thus promote cooperation between organizations to share best practices and work as one. He referred to CCRW's focus being shifted from focusing on disability but inclusion for everyone.

It had been established that the newsletter should focus on the following:

- success stories
- best practices
- programs
- what is happening on the Internet

Reference was made to the problems associated with trying to get articles for the publication. Ms. Williams suggested that consideration should be given to HRDC providing a workshop for the organizations to train their staff in making such submissions.

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES - 8 - May 15, 2000

The newsletter is distributed by using the Disabled Persons Commission's mailing list of 130 organizations. All universities, libraries, schools and provincial and federal politicians receive a copy. Copies also go to municipal units and it is posted on the Working.com site.

Mr. MacDonald was also questioned on whether the Newsletter is available in alternate format. He advised that they have just purchased a braille printer. He felt that a disk of the newsletter should be available. It was further suggested to Mr. MacDonald that reference to the newsletter being available in alternate format should be mentioned in the publication.

The members were polled on whether there is anything they would like to see covered in the newsletter or concerns. The Chair suggested the members call Mr. MacDonald if anything comes to mind.

Mr. MacDonald proposed that an article on the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities Committee might be worthwhile in the next newsletter for June 1. The article could refer to the Committee's mandate and what it has accomplished to date. Other municipalities upon reading it, may decide they need a similar advisory committee.

A discussion ensued on matters associated with editorial control.

ITEMS 3.5 TO 4.4 and 4.6

Deferred.

4.0 NEW BUSINESS

4.5 HRM DISABILITY CHALLENGE

While it had been initially intended that the Challenge be held Tuesday, May 30, it has been tentatively rescheduled to the following Tuesday, so as not to conflict with an all day Access Awareness Group event at the Sheraton.

Ms. Williams noted that it is planned for the event to run from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The staff Implementation Committee is coordinating. Ms. Williams provided an outline of what will take place which can accommodate 12 to 18 participants this year. The members were invited to attend.

5.0 ACCESS-A-BUS COMMITTEE MINUTES

The approved minutes of the Access-a-Bus Committee for March and April were circulated

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES - 9 - May 15, 2000

with the agenda package.

6.0 **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 19, 2000. The Chair indicated he will be resigning and elections will be on the agenda.

Darrell Robar
Chair

Lynne Le Boutillier
Assistant Municipal Clerk