

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
MINUTES
JANUARY 20, 2003

PRESENT: Mr. P. Connors, Chair
Councillor Meade
Councillor Sarto
Mr. Donald Mullins
Ms. Peggy Brown
Ms. Cynthia Street
Ms. Elsie Cholette
Mr. Bob Venus
Ms. Betty MacDonald
Ms. Anne Langille
Mr. Patrick Harrington
Ms. Joanne Coffey

ABSENT: Ms. Sally Campbell (regrets)
Ms. Jane Cale (regrets)
Ms. Maureen Reynolds
Mr. Kevin Hindle (regrets)
Supt. Cliff Falkenham (regrets)

ALSO PRESENT: Ms. Charla Williams, Diversity Program Coordinator
Mr. Wayne Groszko, Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator
Mr. Chris Racine, Interpreter
Ms. Laura Bartlett, Interpreter
Ms. Lynne LeBoutillier, Legislative Assistant

TABLE OF CONTENTS

0.1	Welcome to New Member	3
0.2	Election of Chair and Vice-Chair	3
0.3	Newspaper Article - Anne Langille	3
1.	Call to Order and Introductions	3
2.	Approval of Minutes	3
3.	Approval of the Order of Business and Approval of Additions and Deletions ..	3
4.	Business Arising out of the Minutes/Status Sheet	3
4.1	Endorsement of the Policy Statement of the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee	4
4.2	Sidewalk Cafes	4 & 5
4.3	Draft to Council re CNIB Bus Passes	5
4.4	Timberlea Area Sign - Caution - Hearing Impaired Person	5
4.5	Interpreters	5 & 6
4.6	Crosswalks and Curb Cuts for Wheelchairs	6 & 7
4.7	Update Concerning Pedestrian Issues	7
5.	New Business	
5.1	OMG Atlantic - Sidewalk Receptacles	7
	Congratulations	7
	Snow Clearing	7
6.	Date of Next Meeting	7
7.	Adjournment	8

0.1 **WELCOME NEW MEMBER**

The Chair introduced Mr. Patrick Harrington to the Committee.

0.2 **ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

Postponed until the February meeting.

0.3 **NEWSPAPER ARTICLE - ANNE LANGILLE**

Councillor Sarto brought to the members' attention a newspaper article from the Chronicle Herald which refers to Ms. Langille and the brain aneurysms which left her partially blind.

The Board's Secretary was asked to see if the article can be obtained electronically for braille.

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m., Training Room, 3rd Floor, Duke Tower.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

References to 'report' in item 4.4, Draft to Council re CNIB Bus Passes, should be changed to 'letter'.

MOVED BY Councillor Meade and seconded by Ms. Brown that the minutes of the November 18, 2002 meeting be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

Ms. Langille requested that item 4.7, Update Concerning Pedestrian Issues - Wayne Groszko be added to the agenda.

MOVED BY Ms. MacDonald and seconded by Ms. Brown that the agenda as amended be adopted.

4. **BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES/STATUS SHEET**

4.1 ENDORSEMENT OF THE POLICY STATEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

For the benefit of the new member, the Chair summarized the background of this item. Mr. Connors noted that he has been unsuccessful in contacting Ms. Thomas, Chair of the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee. He will consult with Ms. Cale on how to proceed. For the time being he requested that this item be taken off the agenda.

4.2 SIDEWALK CAFES

It had been requested at the November meeting that Mr. Barrett be invited to today's meeting. The Secretary advised that Mr. Barrett indicated that he is no longer involved with this issue. He was to provide the Secretary with the name(s) of those who will be working on this item. Nothing has been received to date.

During discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- C It would be desirable if the Committee could have some input on how Sidewalk Cafes are constructed.
- C The CPA has been championing this cause for years.
- C Each year an application is made to renew the Encroachment License. They should be inspected.
- C Cafes don't allow enough width for a wheelchair and pedestrian to pass.
- C The blind find the sidewalk cafes cause problems.
- C Does the HRM (Development and Planning Services) have design criteria to be used when issuing permits?
- C It may take two years for the Sidewalk Policy to be adopted.
- C If any new sidewalk cafes are planned for 2003, make sure they conform to the bylaws and regulations related to construction.
- C The blind have had positive dealings with the Municipality when providing input.
- C Different responsibilities of Environmental and Right of Way Services verses the Streets and Roads department.

The Committee gave the Chair authority to write correspondence on its behalf regarding this situation.

Mr. Groszko understood the permits related to encroachments on sidewalks are issued by Environmental and Right of Way Services. Brian Robarts and Carmen Eisan are associated with this business unit. Mr. Rick Paynter would be the Director, Public Works and Transportation.

The Chair indicated he would contact Rick Paynter, Director, Public Works and Transportation, before writing any correspondence. Ms. Coffey volunteered to draft the correspondence.

4.3 **DRAFT TO COUNCIL RE CNIB BUS PASSES**

Ms. Williams circulated a draft letter. It was noted by the Secretary that this item has been removed from Regional Council's Status Sheet. Nevertheless, it was felt that the correspondence should be sent.

There was a review of how the matter arose, i.e. during debate of Metro Transit's budget, it was noted this might be an area of cost saving. Given the few individuals who take advantage of the passes, it was felt there would be no significant cost savings or revenue generated if the practice was stopped. During discussion of the item, consideration was given to asking for a policy which would include all disabilities.

As a result of the discussions, Ms. Williams will revise the draft. She requested that the members e-mail her any additional comments.

4.4 **TIMBERLEA AREA SIGN - CAUTION - HEARING IMPAIRED PERSON**

Ms. MacDonald reported on correspondence she and Ms. Williams have had on this item. They continue to work on the matter, i.e. the use of correct terminology and provide information to HRM staff.

Councillor Meade noted that this is the wording used by HRM's Sign Shop, i.e. hearing impaired versus deaf. He understood parents preferred this terminology. Ms. MacDonald noted that this may be the preference of parents of a deaf individual, but the deaf community prefers to be referred to as deaf.

4.5 **INTERPRETERS**

Ms. Williams updated the members on the situation with respect to interpreters for the New Years event. She noted there had been a previous commitment from the organizers to include interpreters, but by the time they got around to hiring them, no one was available. The organizers have assured Ms. Williams that they will be included in plans for New Years Eve 2003.

The CAO has asked that Ms. Williams draft a policy related to sign interpreters. She is using the City of Winnipeg's as a starting point. She anticipates having a policy drafted within the next six months/year. To date the HRM policy is to provide interpreters on a request for service basis, but the policy is not well known within the community. She

noted that HRM's ability to provide documents in braille is also not well communicated. The Committee will have an opportunity to review the draft policy. Ms. MacDonald congratulated Ms. Williams on the work she has been doing.

The second issue related to sign interpreters to Regional Council. It was acknowledged that while HRM would like to have them for their Regional Council meeting, there are none, or not enough, available. The alternative is closed captioning which is very expensive. Ms. MacDonald has discussed the situation with Deborah Story. The whole situation needs more discussion with the Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

The Chair proposed pursuing Federal, Provincial and HRM grants to help in certifying interpreters. Ms. MacDonald will raise this suggestion with the Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Ms. Story.

Ms. Cholette wondered if no young people are becoming interpreters or are they going elsewhere to work. Ms. MacDonald explained that most interpreters have day jobs and it is very difficult to do this mentally and physically demanding job after work. Three or four interpreters would be required for a Council session. While eleven individuals will be graduating in June from the Community College program, they would likely not be available for this work due to other work commitments and experienced interpreters are needed for this role.

Ms. Street referred to closed captioning of programs on a TV set. A discussion followed on whether the programs had been taped earlier and closed captioning added or whether the captioning was being done electronically as the programs were broadcast, by voice activated software. Perhaps this might be an alternative for Regional Council programming. It was noted that these programs are set up to recognize an individual's voice, thus they may not be a feasible option for Council.

4.6 **CROSSWALKS AND CURB CUTS FOR WHEELCHAIRS**

Councillor Meade reported that he has learned from Mr. Paynter that the lip to the curb cuts has been reduced to 1/4".

Ms. LeGay recalled that this project would require a comprehensive survey. Mr. Connors noted that he has again spoken to Mr. McCusker, who confirmed that this is too large a job for the Committee to take on. An alternative, is to just report difficult locations as they are identified to HRM. The use of 490-4000 was encouraged. Councillor Meade noted that each year funds are budgeted for twenty (20) intersections to be modified. Once an area is identified, an Inspector will check it and add it to the list, if modifications are required.

Ms. MacDonald felt that the area around Barrington and Sackville to be very dangerous due to the height of snow banks making it very easy to fall. A snow clearance issue.

4.7 UPDATE CONCERNING PEDESTRIAN ISSUES

Deferred to February meeting, as Mr. Groszko had no formal update to give. In response to comment from Ms. Langille that she was anxious to know what progress had been made, Mr. Groszko noted there is no HRM pedestrian Transportation Plan, but things are happening in this regard. For example, today he received a list of proposed new sidewalks.

ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUNDS

Councillor Meade, referring to the information item circulated with the agenda package, i.e. copy of the report the Committee sent to Regional Council on Accessible Playgrounds, was pleased to report that Regional Council referred the matter to Recreation for a report back by the end of February. By the end of the year, he anticipates HRM having a policy in place. There is no policy of this kind in Canada to date.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 OMG ATLANTIC - SIDEWALK RECEPTACLES

Councillor Meade indicated this item can be removed from the agenda, as HRM has not given permission for the company to install their three-tier receptacles along streets.

CONGRATULATIONS

Extended to Councillor Sarto on his receipt of the Queens Jubilee Medal and Ms. Brown receipt of an award for twenty-five (25) service with DIAL.

SNOW CLEARING

Councillor Meade requested that this item be added to the February agenda. The Committee may wish to recommend to Regional Council that snow clearing of sidewalks by HRM be put into affect for Halifax through the general tax rate. Reference could be made to the fact that those with disabilities would appreciate this approach.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 17, 2003.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 5:39 p.m.

Lynne Le Boutillier
Legislative Assistant