

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

MINUTES

April 19, 2004

PRESENT:

Ms. Betty MacDonald, Chair
Ms. Joanne Coffey, Vice-Chair
Councillor Sarto
Mr. Nigel Allison
Ms. Peggy Brown
Ms. Lynn Demont
Mr. Patrick Harrington
Ms. Barbara LeGay
Ms. Joan Loveridge
Mr. Warren Reed
Ms. Cathy Robertson
Ms. Janet Spears
Ms. Ruth Szabo

ABSENT:

Councillor Meade (regrets)
Ms. Sally Campbell (regrets)
Mr. Kim Kenney

STAFF:

Ms. Charla Williams, Co-ordinator, Diversity Program
Mr. Kevin Hindle, Metro Transit
Supt. Cliff Falkenham, Halifax Regional Police
Ms. Roxanne MacInnis, TDM Coordinator
Two Interpreters
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:15 pm.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES - February 16, 2004**

MOVED by Ms. Joanne Coffey, seconded by Ms. Peggy Brown that the minutes of February 16, 2004 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

Additions:

8.1	Urban Design Awards 2004 - Joanne Coffey
8.2	Sidewalk Snow Removal - Joanne Coffey
8.3	Professional Week - Peggy Brown
4.1.10	Accessible Taxi Update - Patrick Harrington

MOVED by Mr. Patrick Harrington, seconded by Ms. Joanne Coffey that the agenda be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. **BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES**

4.1 **Status Sheet Items**

The Legislative Assistant advised a Status Sheet Sub-Committee was formed in late 2003 to update the pre-existing Status Sheet. This work is still in progress and the Status Sheet Sub-Committee will provide a report as soon as possible.

4.1.10 **Taxi Service for Persons with Disabilities - Accessible Taxis**

Mr. Harrington provided background information for the new members to the Committee explaining a meeting was held on December 22, 2003 with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Regional Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee. It was agreed at that time to hold a second meeting when information was available regarding the issues raised. Further, there was initial discussion regarding the formation of a joint Accessible Taxi Sub-Committee with the Regional Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee and the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities.

MOVED BY Mr. Patrick Harrington, seconded by Mr. Warren Reed that the Legislative Assistant draft a letter to the Chair of the Regional Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee requesting a second meeting in order to obtain an update on issues raised at the December 22, 2003 special meeting regarding accessible taxis. Further, that the meeting be scheduled prior to the May 17, 2004 meeting of this Committee. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4.1.25 Report to Regional Council

A report dated February 17, 2004, was before the Committee.

The Revised Terms of Reference, approved by Regional Council on February 24, 2004, indicating the change in meeting coverage to include coverage by the Municipal Clerk's Office at **all regular and special meetings** of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities was distributed for information purposes. No further action required.

5. **CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS** - None

6. **CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS** - None

7. **REPORTS**

7.1.1 Affordable and Accessible Housing in HRM - Barbara Nehiley/Kasia Tota - Staff Presentation (*verbal*)

- Ms. Nehiley/Ms. Tota distributed summaries of their report on *Homelessness in HRM*.

Ms. Nehiley informed the Committee that due to the size of the report, two copies would be brailled and sent to the CNIB library as it would be too costly to provide individual braille copies. Another option would be a talking book format. She added the report is over 110 pages including charts and tables. Ms. Nehiley advised a copy of the report on Homelessness will be made available to all members of the Committee.

Ms. Brown commented she was not pleased with copies not being available in braille. Ms. LeGay added that 110 printed pages would result in over 300 pages in braille and not many people would spend the time to read the entire document. Mr. Harrington agreed copies available on tape or braille copies available at the CNIB library is acceptable.

Ms. Nehiley presented her report on *Homelessness in HRM* assisted by Ms. Kasia Tota.

The Committee raised the following comments during ensuing discussion:

- The Provincial Housing Policy does not include "accessible" and this is very important.

- Accessibility features have to be considered as well for affordable housing and perhaps some incentives or education could be offered.
- Will housing be liaising with transit? Affordable housing requires good transportation as well. People could live in Dartmouth or Beechville and have a larger, less expensive house but would not be able to get to work.

Ms. Nehiley explained the issue of transportation is extremely important and it is necessary to link location and mobility with housing. If you have a modest income and you have to spend a great deal on transportation to get to where housing is affordable then you have defeated the purpose of affordable housing. We are looking at a mixed type of housing that will be close to the work places and also looking at ways to make public transit much more affordable. We need to have the stories from people regarding lack of mobility, location near where work locations/services are and perhaps this Committee could bring these stories forth.

- “Accessible” needs to be accessible to all. For example, deaf people need to have a visual indicator they are being “buzzed” admittance into a building. Also, a lighting system for a smoke alarm for deaf people.

Ms. Nehiley explained these issues will be addressed in regards to minimum standards and licensing of rooming houses or other licensed housing as they are not currently in the building code.

- Most buildings use the phone lines to buzz someone in and this is an important aspect for hard of hearing and deaf people as well.
- Environmental sensitivities have to be considered as well in regards to materials used and location. There was a report that had statistics indicating how many Environmentally Sensitive people had been homeless due to their sensitivities.
- Universal Design - encourage building design to be accessible to everyone.

Ms. Charla Williams thanked Ms. Nehiley and Ms. Tota for the research and report they have done and encouraged all Committee members to forward information to them on these issues. Ms. Williams advised Ms. Nehiley and Ms. Tota that a recent report was sent to Regional Council from this Committee recommending 20% of all new units constructed in HRM be accessible units.

Ms. Nehiley explained there is a Federal/Provincial Affordable Housing Framework Agreement but it did not have public consultation. They have announced six units on Creighton Street and a tender in the newspaper calling for proposals for new affordable rental housing up to 200 units. They will also provide up to \$25,000 dollars forgivable loan per unit plus possibly provide rent subsidies for up to ten (10) years if the residents are eligible for Provincial programs. She added the Affordable Housing program is not meant to be a public housing program, it is meant to be low end of market, affordable, modest income. It is not

sure how many companies would be able to meet the conditions of the tender as the companies would have to be able to get their own mortgages up front. The details of the submissions will be confidential and only executive summaries of the accepted proposals will be made public. The Province has the right to change the guidelines as outlined in the tender at any time. The role the Municipality can play is to be supportive of community agencies, provide them with the research they need such as the Report on Homelessness and to look at how HRM's land use policies can make it possible for the private sector to build housing that includes a range of affordability and that it is accessible and inclusive.

The Chair thanked Ms. Nehiley and Ms. Tota for their attendance and informative presentation.

7.1.2 Procedure for Adding an Item to Committee Agenda / Cancellation of Committee Meetings

- A draft copy of the Boards and Committee Guide to Policy and Procedure was before the Committee.

The Legislative Assistant explained the guide was created for information purposes to assist volunteer Committee members with HRM policy and procedure as it relates to agenda preparation and meeting management for Boards and Committees. The Committee was encouraged to review the guide and if they have questions to contact her at 490-6732.

The Committee requested clarification on Added Items and New Business. The Legislative Assistant explained any members who have items they wish added to the agenda should send that information to the Legislative Assistant and to the Chair of the Committee in order for it to be added to the agenda as New Business and for the information to be circulated to the Committee members in their agenda packages. This is to ensure members will have sufficient time to review the information and formulate an opinion/questions on the issue and to do their own research prior to the discussion on the item at the Committee meeting. This enables more efficient, educated discussions at the meetings. Further, added items may be added during approval of the agenda at the time of the meeting but it is preferable to have the items added prior to the packages being distributed. Also, any items added to the agenda must be in adherence to the mandate of this Committee as outlined in the Terms of Reference. If a Committee member wishes to have an item added to the agenda that is not under our mandate, it could be added as an information item but would not be discussed at the meeting unless a member made a motion to bring the information item forward on the agenda for discussion.

The Committee commented that agenda packages do not arrive sometimes until the Friday morning before the Monday meeting and there is not time to form an opinion on the issues before the meeting. The Legislative Assistant explained that all Boards and Committees and Regional Council receive their packages only two to three days prior to the meeting. The

agendas are set one week prior to the meeting date (on the Monday prior to a Monday meeting) and then the package must be sent for copying then mailed out which could take another day or two. For example, the current agenda package before the Committee was sent to the HRM Print Shop on Thursday, April 8 which was sent earlier than normal due to the two holidays that week, normally the package would not have been sent to the Print Shop until the Monday or Tuesday.

Ms. Williams commented this Committee has to get used to doing things the way HRM has prescribed the Committees are to operate. It is appreciated that the Legislative Assistant has been educating us on the procedures. Ms. Williams further commented she agreed with having the agenda items identified two weeks prior to the meeting as this Committee only meets for a short time once per month and it is good to know if you have a full agenda or not as some Committees have full agendas and you have to wait for the next meeting to have your issue addressed. This Committee has to get used to following procedure and think about what issues they would like to see on the next agenda as there are only so many things that can be discussed in a certain period of time. Reviewing the material before the meeting so you can prepare a few brief comments during discussion is good. Further, she advised that the HRM Print Shop has to make Regional Council documents a priority and have been very accommodating in balancing the priorities.

Ms. Coffey added she gave two weeks notice for an agenda item for tonight's meeting (regarding the Urban Design Awards) but it is not on the agenda. The Legislative Assistant advised that Ms. Coffey's e-mail indicated the issue was not an agenda item therefore she copied the information and circulated it at the meeting this evening due to Ms. Coffey's indication that it was not an agenda item. The Legislative Assistant commented that it should be indicated as an Information Item and then it will be circulated. Ms. Williams advised that members should review their agenda packages when they receive them and then contact the Legislative Assistant if their item is not there and it can be added during the approval of the agenda at the meeting which is the same process that Regional Council follows.

7.2 Status Sheet Sub-Committee - brief verbal update

Deferred to next meeting due to time constraints.

8. ADDED ITEMS/NEW BUSINESS

8.1 Added Items

Deferred to next meeting due to time constraints.

8.2 New Business

MOVED BY Mr. Patrick Harrington, seconded by Mr. Warren Reed that due to time limitations, Mr. Reed's items be deferred to the May meeting to allow Mr. Reed adequate time to make his presentation. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting will be on **Monday, May 17, 2004** at 4:00 pm in the HR Training Room, 3rd Floor, Duke Tower.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Chris Newson
Legislative Assistant