

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES  
MINUTES**

**April 16, 2007**

**PRESENT:**

Mr. Alan Farquhar, Chair  
Mr. Gary Russell, Vice-Chair  
Ms. Sanez Gerami  
Ms. Helen McFadyen  
Ms. Rebecca King  
Ms. Mary Newcombe  
Councillor Patrick Murphy  
Councillor Gary Meade

**REGRETS:**

Ms. Helen Cainfaglione  
Mr. Kevin Bulley

**STAFF:**

Mr. Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant  
Superintendent Cliff Falkenham, Halifax Regional Police  
Ms. Chrissy White, Legislative Assistant

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1749 Argyle Street, Halifax.

*Ms. McFayden suggested having a standing item on the agenda for introductions at the beginning of every meeting to inform visually impaired members of who is in attendance.*

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**MOVED by Helen McFayden, seconded by Councillor Meade, that the minutes from March 12, 2007 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

*Ms. McFadyen advised that she would like to receive all documentation in large print.*

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

Additions:

- 8.1 Information Report re: Curb Cut on Argyle Street, Halifax West Region- Ken Reashor.

Move:

- 8.1 Directly after the CNIB presentation.

**MOVED by Ms. Mary Newcombe, seconded by Councillor Murphy, that the Order of Business be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES- None**

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

**6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS**

**6.1 Presentation**

### **6.1.1 Canadian Institute for the Blind**

Mr. Chris Judge, Adaptive Technology Consultant, Canadian Institute for the Blind provided an overview of the mandate and services of the CNIB. He advised:

- The CNIB provides national rehabilitation services for persons with vision loss.
- Senior Citizens make up a large part of CNIB's clientele.
- CNIB provides a low vision assessment service to determine whether a person can use their existing vision with help from magnifying devices.
- CNIB provides independent living services, cooking, clothing coordination and money identification services. They also provide library, technology and career counselling services according to geographic location.
- The main source of funding for the CNIB is fundraising and minor government contributions.
- CNIB has partnered with the Halifax Regional Libraries to introduce voice programs, reading scanners and zoom text.

Mr. Judge demonstrated how a low vision simulator and a automated reading machine works.

In response to questions from Committee Members, Mr. Judge advised:

- The compact disks for the automated reading machine are different then regular Cd's because they house a "daisy format" which provides more storage space and allows the reader to skip through chapters with the click of a button. He further advised that the "Commercially Recorded Talking Books" are compressed in a mp3 format and are available at the library for take out.

Mr. Judge provided his opinions on issues regarding HRM services and their affect on citizens that are visually impaired. The following was noted:

- Not all public buildings in HRM are equipped for people that are visually impaired.
- Bus stops that do not have shelters are very difficult to find.

Committee Members provided comments on Mr. Judges remarks, noting the following:

- Mumford terminal is private property.
- Concern was expressed regarding the lack of education and consultation surrounding services that are designed to aid citizens with disabilities.
- Concern was expressed regarding parking accessibility for the Access- A- Bus at the Halifax Shopping Centre.

Mr. Farquhar joined the meeting at 4:32 p.m. where he assumed the Chair.

**8.1 Information Report re: Curb Cut on Argyle Street, Halifax West Region- Ken Reashor**

- An information report dated March 26, 2007 was circulated to the Committee.

Mr. Ken Reashor, Manager of Traffic and Right of Way Services presented the report.

Mr. Reashor advised that staff is not prepared to provide a curb cut near the entrance to City Hall on Argyle Street due to safety issues. He further advised that traffic volumes on this street do not permit mid- block crossings.

Mr. Russell expressed discontent with the result of the above noted information report. He further advised that the existing curb cut poses safety concerns for persons in non-motorized wheelchairs.

In response to Mr. Russell, Mr. Dave Hubley, Manager of Design and Construction Services advised that staff would research possible options to improve safety around the existing curb cut on Duke Street to ensure a higher level of safety for persons in non-motorized wheel chairs. Mr. Hubley further advised that he would bring information on this issue back to the Committee at a later date.

Councillor Meade suggested that Mr. Rutt research borrowing some wheel chairs to use in a demonstration regarding wheelchair accessibility in HRM. He further advised that Staff and Councillors would be the participants in this demonstration. Mr. Rutt advised that he is hesitant to allow a non-experienced person to control a wheelchair in sloped areas surrounding City Hall. He further advised that the demonstration would have to be well planned, and persons who are experienced wheelchair users would have to be present to assist.

Mr. Reashor advised that staff have worked with CNIB to gather information regarding placement of audible pedestrian signals. Mr. Reashor further advised that he welcomes further feedback from the committee and members of the CNIB.

Mr. Hubley advised that a Provincial/Municipal Task Force regarding crosswalk safety has been created. The mandate of this Task Force will be to explore education and enforcement practices.

The Chair asked the Committee to provide comments on how HRM, with the help of the ACPD could better pedestrian signals and safety. The following comments were noted:

- Councillor Murphy suggested that drivers use their hazard lights when stopped at a crosswalk to inform the cars around them of the need to stop.
- Ms. Gerami advised that education and common sense are the critical elements regarding pedestrian safety.

**MOVED by Mr. Russell, seconded by Councillor Murphy , that a letter to the Minister of Transportation be drafted in the Chair's signature regarding appointment of a member from the Advisory Committee for persons with Disabilities to serve on the Crosswalk Safety Task Force, giving preference to a member with a disability. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. McFadyen and Mr. Russell expressed interest in serving on the Task Force.

## **7.1 REPORTS**

### **7.1 Verbal Update re: Physical Audit of HRM owned properties**

Mr. Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant presented a verbal overview on the above noted.

Mr. Rutt advised that through his research he has noticed issues regarding physical access to HRM facilities and trails. He suggested that HRM Directors allot money in their Capital Budgets on a annual basis to fund renovations to make HRM facilities more accessible. He concluded by suggesting HRM undertake a study/audit to assess accessibility issues in HRM owned and operated facilities.

**MOVED by Councillor Murphy, seconded by Mr. Gary Russell, that the Committee invite Mr. Phil Townsend and Mr. Peter Bigelow to the May meeting of the Advisory Committee for persons with Disabilities to discuss a possible accessibility audit for HRM facilities and trails. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The committee also suggested inviting Mr. Andy Fillmore to come to the May meeting to provide an overview of the Urban Design Project and how it will affect persons with disabilities.

Mr. Russell advised that the Access-A-Bus committee meets the forth Wednesday of every month and invited anyone who would like to attend for the ACPD.

### **7.2 Written Update re: Launch Pad at Spring Garden Road Professional Centre**

In a written update, Mr. Jeff Spares, Senior Design Engineer advised that the launch pad in the Spring Garden Professional Centre will be installed in 2007, provided it is approved by tender.

## **8. ADDED ITEMS**

### **8.1 Information Report re: Curb Cut on Argyle Street, Halifax West Region- Ken Reashor**

Dealt with earlier in the meeting, refer to page 4.

## **8.2 Gas Station Access**

Councillor Meade advised that Wilsons Gas Stations will pump gas for anyone with a disability. He further advised that they give 3 cents off per the litre.

## **8.3 Apartment and Condominium Accessibility**

Mr. Rutt advised that Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities requested that 10 per cent of all apartments and condominiums consist of accessible units for persons with disabilities. He further advised that under the new Building Code, 5 per cent of all apartments and condominiums must be accessible units.

Mr. Russell expressed concern with business on Spring Garden Road taking over sidewalk access to install patio's. He further advised that this causes persons with disabilities difficulty when travelling on Spring Garden Road. He concluded by expressing concern with a railing located outside the Spring Garden Road MacDonalds, and advised that it is causing safety concerns for persons in wheelchairs.

In response to Mr. Russell, Councillor Meade advised that the sidewalks on Spring Garden Road are leased during the summer months for outdoor dining. He further suggested contacting the HRM call centre (490-4000) to inform them of this inconvenience.

Mr. Rutt advised that the restaurants and cafes have to apply for a permit from HRM and pay a fee as well as get approval before the patios can be erected.

Councillor Murphy suggested inviting Mr. Phil Francis, Right- of- Way Services to the May meeting to discuss railings and outdoor dining in the Downtown.

## **9. NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities will be on May 28, 2007 at 4:00 p.m in Halifax Hall, City Hall.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Chrissy White  
Legislative Assistant

