

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MINUTES

January 17, 2011

PRESENT: Mr. Tom Boyd, Chair
Ms. Theresa Horwill, Vice Chair
Ms. Mary Newcombe
Mr. Troy Nauffts
Mr. Jack Jones

REGRETS: Councillor Jerry Blumenthal
Councillor Mary Wile
Mr. Gary Russell
Mr. Brian Aird

STAFF: Mr. Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant
Mr. Phil Townsend, Director, Infrastructure and Asset
Management
Mr. Mike MacDonald, Project Manager, Facility Development
– Buildings, Infrastructure and Asset Management
Ms. Krista Tidgwell, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. in the BMO Centre Boardroom, 61 Gary Martin Drive, Bedford, without quorum.

The Chair lead the Committee in roundtable introductions.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – November 15, 2010

Ms. Mary Newcombe noted a correction on page 5 of the minutes; Metro Transit *should not allow* passengers to cross in front of the buses.

Due to a lack of quorum the November 15, 2010 minutes were deferred to the next meeting for approval.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Order of Business was approved, as presented.

Ms. Theresa Horwill requested that thank you letters be sent to former Committee members Gary Russell and Helen McFadyen for their efforts with the Committee.

Ms. Krista Tidgwell, Legislative Assistant, provided a status update to the Committee respecting appointments to the Committee by the Audit & Finance Standing Committee. She advised that with new Standing Committee structure in place, the Legislative Assistants have assumed responsibility for those boards and committees which fall under their assigned Standing Committee. Melody Campbell has been assigned to the Audit & Finance Standing Committee and will be providing support to the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities as of the next regular meeting.

4. BUSINESS ARISING/DEFERRED BUSINESS

4.1 Study on Sidewalk Markings and Pedestrian Safety

The following was before the Committee for review:

- Emails from Tom Boyd, Hanita Koblents, Alan Taylor, Jennifer McGowan and David MacIsaac respecting a study on sidewalk markings and pedestrian safety.
- A booklet entitled: Crosswalk Safety in Halifax Regional Municipality.

Mr. Taso Koutroulakis, Acting Manager, Traffic & Right of Way, Transportation and Public Works, provided an overview of the Crosswalk Safety in Halifax Regional Municipality booklet. He noted that HRM is in the process of producing an updated version of the booklet, which will be available for distribution in the near future.

Mr. Koutroulakis noted that the Traffic Operations Management Standing Committee, of which he is a member, approved a project last year to update HRM's Pedestrian Crossing Control Manual. A consultant was hired to review various traffic control crosswalk safety devices within North America and Europe and whether or not they should be considered within Canada. The study will also review various types of crosswalk markings such as zebra (parallel) markings and whether they should be introduced. A draft of the study is scheduled to be completed by April 2011.

Staff responded to questions raised by the Committee. The following points were noted by staff:

- the National Standard for the length of time a pedestrian has to cross the street is 1.2 meters per second, which is the average walking speed for a pedestrian; however, consideration has been given to decreasing the walking speed to 1.0 meters per second, which increasing the walking time, in areas with higher volumes of seniors or disabled individuals
- a buffer of approximately seven seconds additional time is typically allotted before the Don't Walk signal flashes
- the intent of the Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) is to assist visually impaired persons with starting their crossing
- the APS signal lasts the duration of the Walk signal; concerned with visually impaired persons becoming confused if the APS were to play during the duration of the Don't Walk signal
- the new APS versions have an automatic volume adjustment depending on the level of surrounding noise; APS should only be heard 3.7 metres from the crossing or the nearest building face; staff is aware of some of the APS challenges related to noise levels within certain locations and is reviewing various models/manufactures

Mr. Boyd expressed concern with visually impaired persons misunderstanding one APS for another APS within a nearby location.

- HRM has been installing count down timers in conjunction with their LED lights installation program, which is 93% completed; these timers are typically installed at longer crossing sections to assist pedestrians in adjusting their walking speeds
- there is evidence that zebra crossing are slipperier than the standard two line crossings; HRM has received a large number of complaints from residents, expressing concern with going from asphalt to paint, which is slipperier

4.2 2010 Work Plan Update

(i) Accessibility Checklist for HRM Buildings/Sites

(ii) Tallahassee Community School/Tallahassee Recreation Centre

(email from staff)

The following was before the Committee for review:

- A copy of the Accessibility Checklist for HRM Buildings/Sites
- Extracts of email responses from staff re: Tallahassee Recreation Centre/Tallahassee Community Centre.
- A copy of the Committee's 2011 Work Plan.
- A list of notes taken by the Chair and Vice Chair during their visits to HRM facilities.

The Committee reviewed the Accessibility Checklist for HRM Buildings/Sites.

Ms. Theresa Horwill suggested a question be added to section 1(d) of the Checklist, indicating that there is nothing in place that addresses a sink's handles/taps.

Mr. Phillip Townsend, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management, introduced Mr. Mike MacDonald, Project Manager, Facility Development – Buildings, Infrastructure and Asset Management. He noted that Mr. MacDonald will be attending the Committee's meetings to assist with the work plan and provide information respecting HRM facilities.

Mr. Townsend indicated that once the checklist is developed, he will forward it to Transportation and Public Works staff as a guiding tool during their building inspections; which would then be provided to the Committee for review. He further suggested a header be added to the checklist identifying the HRM building/facility being inspected, as well as the inspection date, to which the Committee agreed. In order to prevent overlapping, Mr. Townsend suggested the Chair and Vice Chair continue to advise staff on which facilities/buildings they have visited to date.

During the ensuing discussion the Committee raised concern with respect to signage issues, as well as the lack of automatic door operators at the BMO Centre in Bedford.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Boyd, Mr. Townsend indicated that the Committee has the ability to provide input/feedback to staff respecting accessibility matters during the construction phase of an HRM building. He noted the importance of having a facility constructed right the first time as opposed to making changes once completed.

Mr. Boyd expressed concern with the front entrance doors of the Bloomfield Centre, commenting that the threshold is wobbling. Mr. Townsend suggested that Mr. Boyd contact the HRM Call Centre to report this concern and forward the reference number to the Legislative Assistant for the Committee's record.

Ms. Mary Newcombe exited the meeting at 5:52 p.m.

- 5. NEW BUSINESS – NONE**
- 6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS – NONE**
- 7. REPORTS – NONE**

8. ADDED ITEMS – NONE

9. NEXT MEETING DATE – February 21, 2011

9.1 2011 Meeting Schedule

A copy of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities 2011 Meeting Schedule was before the Committee for review.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Krista Tidgwell
Legislative Assistant

INFORMATION ITEMS - NONE