

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

June 20, 2011

PRESENT: Theresa Horwill, Chair
Tom Boyd, Vice Chair
Troy Nauffts
Mary Newcombe
Brian Aird
Jack Jones
Cynthia Bryant
Councillor Mary Wile
Councillor Jerry Blumenthal

ABSENT: David MacLean

STAFF: Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant, Human Resources
Supt. Cliff Falkenham, Halifax Regional Police
Darren Young, Project Manager, HRM Infrastructure & Asset
Management
Mr. Phil Townsend, Director, IAM (Regrets)
Ms. Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00p.m. in the meeting room on the 3rd Floor of Duke Tower, 5251 Duke Street, Halifax.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 16, 2011

MOVED by Tom Boyd, seconded by Cindy Bryant, that the minutes of May 16, 2011 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Additions:

8.1 Farmer's Market - Troy

The agenda was agreed upon as amended.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

The Committee discussed Ms. Bryant's need for a hearing device that is compatible with hearing aids. It was noted that a "pocket talker", available through the Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, is not compatible with hearing aids

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Service Dog Park

Later in the meeting, after obtaining an update from staff by phone, Mr. Young advised that the proposed condo development on the site of the Service Dog Park on Rainnie Drive is in the very early stages, and Planning and Development Services have been flagged with this issue.

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence

6.1.1 Letter from Councillor Harvey to Director of Housing Services

The Committee discussed the issue of Mr. Hirtle's difficulties with obtaining appropriate housing from the Province. Although the Committee was sympathetic to Mr. Hirtle's situation, they agreed that since housing does not fall under the jurisdiction of the Municipality, there wasn't anything that the Committee could do. The Committee asked that the Legislative Assistant pass this on to Councillor Harvey.

6.2 Petitions - None

6.3 Presentation - None

7. REPORTS

7.1 Update on accessibility assessment of HRM owned buildings

An updated Accessibility Assessment of HRM Owned Buildings document was before the Committee.

An Economy Glass quote for the Centennial Arena dated June 9, 2011 was distributed to the Committee.

Mr. Young provided an update of accessibility repairs and installs completed since the last meeting.

Brian Aird arrived at 4:10 p.m.

The Committee discussed the Economy Glass quote for sliding doors for the Centennial Arena. Mr. Boyd noted that the manager of another facility had advised them of difficulties with sliding doors derailing frequently. Mr. Young advised he would look into this.

The Committee also discussed needed accessibility improvements to the Centennial Arena washrooms.

MOVED by Tom Boyd, seconded by Mary Newcombe, that the Accessibility Advisory Committee recommend staff approve the quotation dated June 9, 2011 from Economy Glass for sliding doors for Centennial Arena, along with any other items on accessibility assessment list for this facility which haven't yet been completed. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The Chair asked that Mr. Young obtain updated figures on the accessibility funds spent and remaining to date for the next meeting.

The Committee and staff reviewed the proposed priority sites, as compiled by the Chair and the Vice Chair, as follows:

1. Cole Harbor Place
2. Dartmouth Sportsplex
3. Sackville Sports Stadium
4. Bloomfield Centre
5. North Woodside Community Centre
6. Chocolate Lake Recreation Centre

7. Musquodoboit Community Centre
8. Captain William Spy Recreation Centre
9. Halifax Forum/Civic Centre
10. Alderney Landing

The Chair and Vice-Chair advised that they chose the busiest centres that need the most work for the priority list.

The Committee discussed the Needham Centre, and the many improvements that are required at the facility, such as washroom and pool accessibility, the need for a pool lift and an elevator. It was noted that Community Development had already completed an assessment of the facility.

MOVED by Troy Nauffts, seconded by Brian Aird, that the Accessibility Advisory Committee request staff obtain a quotation on accessibility repairs at Needham Community Centre. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The Committee also discussed the North Woodside Community Centre, noting that there are major accessibility issues with the facility, such as a lack of accessible washroom facilities in the downstairs gymnasium and the front doors are not accessible. The Committee asked that Mr. Young make a site visit to this location.

Mr. Young reviewed a summary chart of accessibility items from the 10 proposed priority sites. He noted that there are over 40 accessible door openers required for these ten facilities alone. The most cost effective way to purchase these door openers, and openers required for other facilities would be to tender for 100 door openers, to be supplied and installed over the next three years.

MOVED by Tom Boyd, seconded by Cindy Bryant, that the Accessibility Advisory Committee recommend that staff tender for 100 accessible door openers for installation over the next 3 years, giving priority to the 10 priority facilities listed below:

1. Cole Harbor Place
2. Dartmouth Sportsplex
3. Sackville Sports Stadium
4. Bloomfield Centre
5. North Woodside Community Centre
6. Chocolate Lake Recreation Centre
7. Musquodoboit Community Centre
8. Captain William Spy Recreation Centre
9. Halifax Forum/Civic Centre
10. Alderney Landing

The Committee discussed the use of tactile signage at facilities. Staff noted that HRM has a standing order with a sign company for the order of tactile signage.

The Committee discussed the following ideas:

- The development of a document that could be provided to contractors, architects, engineers, etc. that would offer accessibility standards as compiled by the Committee for their use in HRM facilities.
- Making such a recommendation to the Transportation Standing Committee that HRM adopt better accessibility standards for HRM owned/operated buildings.

MOVED by Brian Aird, seconded by Mary Newcombe, that staff develop a best practices specification list for accessibility needs to accompany the existing HRM tender specifications.

The Committee and staff discussed the motion, noting that it could be in a checklist form and would enhance what is now required for the tendering process of HRM buildings. The Committee agreed to defer the motion on the floor to the next meeting, and asked that staff bring back what is now required in the tendering process for the Committee to review and add to.

The Vice-Chair noted disappointment that the Canada Games Centre, which is a new facility had so many accessibility issues.

The Committee and staff discussed the St. Mary's Boat Club, which has requested an accessibility assessment. The operators want to look at accessibility to the lower level of the boat house. The Committee discussed the installation of a lift, or switch backs, and issues with access from the parking lot to the facility. This facility will be added to the list of locations for assessment, sometime before the fall.

The Committee and staff discussed Acadia Centre (aka "Acadia School") in Sackville, which houses a public library and HRM offices. It was noted that there is an issue with an undersized switch back pad on the ramp, which is not code compliant and requires a larger landing, especially for motorized wheelchair users.

Members agreed to undertake an accessibility assessment of Acadia Centre next.

7.2 Update on accessibility funds committed to date

Information on this item was not available at this meeting.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Farmer's Market - Troy

Troy noted that he noticed that tracks are required on the top step at the new Sea Port Farmer's Market. Laughlin Rutt noted he would forward the appropriate contact info for the Farmer's Market to Troy for him to make the suggestion that tracks be installed.

Councillor Wile advised that there is a Universal Accessibility symbol on the HRM website home page, which links to such accessibility services as a locator for on street accessible parking spots in HRM, and links to other webpages and accessibility information.

Troy noted that his screen reader can't access the side bars on the HRM website. He also noted that the "browse aloud" button should be at the top of the website, not at the bottom. He noted that he had previously offered to the HRM webmaster to test out the pages with his screen reader to make them more accessible. He will get in contact with her again.

The Committee discussed the information items distributed:

1. List of Committee members / contact information

An updated list of Committee members and their contact information was distributed for the internal use of the Committee only.

2. Metro Transit Universal Accessibility Plan Presentation (May 2011)

The Chair noted concerns with the Metro Transit accessibility grades given in this presentation by the Consultant. The Committee discussed the lack of accessible transit stops in rural areas, and it was noted that this service is focused on higher density areas. There are less sidewalks and pads on rural roads.

Discussion turned to the Halifax Forum, and the Committee asked that Mr. Young check on the status of the outer door removal at the washrooms, to make them more accessible.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE – July 18, 2011

The Committee agreed to meet in July, and cancel the August meeting.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Jennifer Weagle
Legislative Assistant