

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

June 18, 2012

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

STAFF: Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant, Human Resources
Supt. Cliff Falkenham, Halifax Regional Police
Darren Young, Project Manager, Planning & Infrastructure
Jenny Benson, Legislative Support

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CALL TO ORDER.....	3
2.	APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 14, 2012	3
3.	APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS.....	3
4.	BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES	3
4.1	Planning for Town Hall on Accessibility	5
5.	NEW BUSINESS	3
5.1	Discussion – Metro Transit staff appointment to Committee	5
6.	CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & PRESENTATIONS	5
6.1	Correspondence	5
6.2	Petitions	5
6.3	Presentation.....	6
7.	REPORTS	6
7.1	Update on accessibility assessment of HRM owned/operated buildings ...	6
7.1.1	Staff Update	6
7.1.2	Committee Member Update	6
8.	ADDED ITEMS	8
9.	NEXT MEETING DATE – July 16, 2012.....	8
10.	ADJOURNMENT	8

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:09 p.m. on the 3rd Floor of Duke Tower, 5251 Duke Street, Halifax.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 14, 2012

MOVED by Councillor Jerry Blumenthal, seconded by Mr. Tom Boyd, that the minutes of the May 14, 2012 Accessibility Advisory Committee be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Additions:

Information Item #1 Transit Stop Annunciation report submitted to the Transportation Standing committee on May 24, 2012

The Committee agreed to move this information report to the regular agenda for discussion under Item 5.1.

MOVED by Ms. Mary Newcombe, seconded by Mr. Brian Aird, that the agenda be approved, as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Planning for Town Hall on Accessibility

The Chair reminded the Committee that the Town Hall meeting on Accessibility is scheduled for this Wednesday, June 20, 2012, at 5:30 p.m. at the Bloomfield Centre.

Ms. Pottie shared with the Committee that the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Association was very pleased that sign language interpreters are going to be provided and will therefore be attending.

Councillor Wile shared that approximately sixty individuals are confirmed to attend.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Discussion – Metro Transit staff appointment to Committee

The Transportation Standing Committee Information Report was before the Committee.

The Chair noted she feels it would be beneficial to the Committee to have a representative from Metro Transit sit on the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

There was a brief discussion around how to go about ensuring that a representative from Metro Transit be involved in the Accessibility Committee. It was decided that Mr. Tom Boyd would draft a letter to Metro Transit in this regard. He will share a draft with the Committee at the July meeting.

Ms. Pottie requested clarification around how Metro Transit addresses accessibility issues and the Committee informed her that Metro Transit has its own accessibility committee. The Committee expressed that it would be useful to have a member from this Committee on that one.

The Committee also noted disappointment with regards to the Information Report from the Transportation Standing Committee and its lack of regard for bus stop announcement. This is something that the Committee has been recommending for some time and they were disappointed to hear that there is no money for this initiative or a timeline under which it might be considered.

Ms. Pottie noted that the new Human Rights Commissioner is dedicated to expediting the process around human rights complaints so if an individual were to file a human rights complaint in this regard it could move fairly quickly.

Councillor Blumenthal noted that the authors of the report did not take into account the fact that announcements would not have to be for all passengers, only for those who are visually handicapped. He suggested that the Committee write back to the Transportation Standing Committee in response to this report and the Committee agreed that that would be an appropriate action. Mr. Boyd will be drafting a letter and providing a draft for the Committee's perusal at the July meeting.

Ms. Pottie believes that there should be a ruling made in the meantime allowing for announcements to be made at passengers' requests.

Councillor Wile shared with the Committee that in Ontario they have an automated system that announces the stops without the driver having to worry about it. The issue is that HRM has not mapped out all of the routes and stops at this time, which would have to happen before the automated system can be established. The Councillor also said that automated systems prevent issues that often occur when drivers forget to announce a stop. The Chair talked about a visually impaired friend who experiences this type of issue frequently and has found themselves at the end of the transit line on multiple occasions as a result.

After further discussion on the topic, Mr. Boyd confirmed that the Committee will write a letter to the Transportation Standing Committee.

Mr. Rutt reminded the Committee that a consultant group did a report on accessibility which needs to be shared with the Committee. He believes that the transit issue may be addressed in this report as part of a bigger picture. He also shared his belief that the

disconnect between this Committee and the Metro Transit Accessibility Committee would be assisted by an increased sharing of information.

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & PRESENTATIONS

6.1 Correspondence – None

6.2 Petitions - None

6.3 Presentation - None

7. REPORTS

7.1 Update on accessibility assessment of HRM owned/operated buildings

7.1.1 Staff Update

Mr. Young informed the Committee that the accessible signage at Needham Centre has been completed and that the lift is in the province, they are waiting for a lift and elevator license at this point. There is a delay on the pool lift arriving because of a regulation change in the United States which has created a large back order. Mr. Young will be following up on the washroom and showers.

Councillor Blumenthal shared with the Committee that HRM did not have to utilize the funds that he has reserved for the Needham Centre, allowing him to put it towards outdoor classrooms and other school initiatives in the North End of Halifax.

The door operators are continuing to move forward with seven operators currently being installed in the Sackville Sports Stadium.

7.1.2 Committee Member Update

Meeting with Mr. Barry Manuel

The Chair shared with the Committee that she attended a meeting with Mr. Young, Mr. Boyd, and Mr. Barry Manuel. Mr. Manuel is the individual who represents Emergency Management Office for Halifax and who also spoke at the Committee's April meeting. Mr. Manuel would like to be invited to at least one Accessibility Committee meeting per year to stay in the loop with what this Committee is doing. The meeting attendees exchanged accessibility checklists for buildings which the Chair has asked Mr. Boyd to combine with the Fire checklist to make a master list. Mr. Boyd's draft master checklist is a combination of the Committee's old form and EMOs form, providing a richer model for data collection.

Mr. Manuel requested that Accessibility Committee members examine some of the buildings that he has been unable to get to. The Chair agreed and will be providing the

list of buildings to the Committee at the next meeting. Mr. Rutt noted that not all of these buildings are HRM-owned and would therefore not fall under HRM's mandate. Mr. Young agreed but shared that going through these buildings would still be beneficial because of the combined checklists and common goals. Councillor Wile shared with the Committee that Mr. Manuel is very interested in which buildings have generators, something he brought up in his meeting with Councillors. Mr. Boyd shared that he was also interested in kitchens and which buildings have kitchens that individuals with disabilities could work in.

Meeting with Mr. John Henry re: The Emera Oval

The Chair had another meeting in the past month with Mr. John Henry from the Emera Oval. She was disappointed to find that the Committee's suggestions have not been taken into account. The Chair suggested that the Committee invite the individuals involved in the Oval come back along with the planners that they are hiring and give them a full hour of the Committee's time to discuss remaining issues.

The Chair and Mr. Boyd passed around the plans for Phase II to the Committee. Mr. Boyd expressed his concern with the Committee around certain aspects of the plan being portable, making it difficult for individuals with visual impairment. It is a similar issue to the one expressed in the last meeting around the Argyle plans which have a number of portable elements.

Mr. Boyd suggested that an outdoor gym be installed around the outside of the oval for individuals – disabled or not – to use. He saw a similar setup to the one he is thinking of when he was in Florida and that there is one in Point Pleasant Park. Mr. Aird noted that there is a business called Green Gym that designs innovative equipment such as this. Mr. Aird knows the owner and thinks he would find the Committee to be a very useful resource as he has an interest in designing innovative equipment for individuals with disabilities. Mr. Nauffts suggested that he be invited to a meeting.

Mr. Rutt noted disappointment that the original suggestions of this Committee were not incorporated into the initial planning of the Emera Oval, as the result will be accessibility features being an add-on instead of an integral part of the design.

Mr. Boyd shared with the Committee that the trees on Cogswell St. around where the Oval is located are too cramped and if HRM was to cut down a few of those trees cutaways could be created for accessible parking. It was also suggested that disability parking could be provided at the old pavilion by the childrens' pool where individuals with disabilities would have the assistance of a crosswalk to get to the Oval.

HRM staff working on the Oval will be coming to the Committee meeting following the hiring of the designer for Phase II.

Argyle Streetscape Project

The Chair, Mr. Boyd and Ms. Bryant attended the meeting on the Argyle Streetscape Project, which was previously presented to the Committee. Mr. Boyd shared with the Committee that the Argyle Streetscape Project took a number of the Committee's suggestions into consideration and altered their plans before the public meeting took place. The current plans, however, still include a sloped road which would make it impossible for an individual in a wheelchair to access restaurants and other services. The design will also continue to face a number of challenges that were discussed at the May meeting. The consultants offered to come back to the Committee after their planning was further along, however, it is the Chair's belief that this Committee has already provided them with an exhaustive list of suggestions.

8. ADDED ITEMS – None

9. NEXT MEETING DATE – July 16, 2012

The next meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee will be held on Monday, July 16, 2012 at 4:00 p.m. in "Duke 1" meeting room, 3rd Floor, Duke Tower, 5251 Duke Street, Halifax.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Jenny Benson
Legislative Support

INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Information Item #1 – Information report to the Transportation Standing Committee re: Transit Stop Annunciation dated May 24, 2012.