

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES

September 16, 2013

PRESENT: Councillor Jennifer Watts  
Councillor Steve Craig  
Lisa Pottie, Chair  
Theresa Horwill, Vice Chair  
Yvon Clement  
Tom Boyd  
Cynthia Bryant  
Patricia Gates  
Bob Hayter  
Mark MacKenzie

REGRETS: Krista Daley

STAFF: Glen Bannon, Manager of Operations, Metro Transit  
Chris MacIsaac, Manager, Accessible Transit, Metro Transit  
Supt. Cliff Falkenham, Halifax Regional Police  
Laughlin Rutt, HRM Diversity Consultant  
Damian Stapledon, Community Recreation  
Darren Young, Project Manager, HRM Planning & Infrastructure  
Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant  
Lachlan Barber, Legislative Support

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CALL TO ORDER.....	3
2.	APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 15, 2013.....	3
3.	APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS.....	3
4.	BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES/DEFERRED BUSINESS .....	3
	4.1 Draft AAC Strategic Plan – draft #3.....	3
	4.2 Future Presentations – update.....	3
	4.3 Town Hall Meeting – update .....	4
	Planning update:.....	4
	4.4 Metro Transit Service Animal Policy – update .....	6
	4.5 Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission complaint re: service animal refusal of taxi service – update .....	7
5.	CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS .....	7
	5.1 Presentation – First Lake Trail Accessibility – <i>Bob Taylor, Friends of First         Lake</i> .....	7
6.	REPORTS/DISCUSSION.....	8
	6.1 Update on accessibility assessment of HRM owned/operated buildings ...	8
	6.1.1 Staff Update .....	8
	6.1.2 Committee Member Update .....	9
	6.2 Committee Member Updates .....	9
	6.2.1 Active Transportation Advisory Committee – <i>Cindy Bryant</i> .....	9
	6.2.2 Taxi and Limousine Liaison Group – <i>Pat Gates</i> .....	9
	6.2.3 Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee – <i>Tom Boyd</i> .....	10
7.	ADDED ITEMS .....	10
	7.1. Update - Central Library – Councillor Watts.....	10
8.	NEXT MEETING DATES.....	10
9.	ADJOURNMENT .....	11

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 15, 2013**

Councillor Watts noted an amendment to item 5.1. She clarified that it was Chris Davis, Traffic & Right-of-Way Services, who discussed with the Committee at a previous meeting the issue of the enforcement of the sidewalk cafes and sandwich board by-laws.

**MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Mr. Bob Hayter, that the minutes of July 15, 2013 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

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

Addition:

7.1 Update – Central Library – Councillor Watts

**MOVED by Mr. Tom Boyd, seconded by Ms. Cindy Bryant, that the agenda be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

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

**4.1 Draft AAC Strategic Plan – draft #3**

A new draft with revisions reflecting input from committee members is in progress. Krista attended the last meeting of the Strategic Plan sub-committee but was not present to provide an update. Tom Boyd noted that some suggestions have been added.

The Chair indicated that it would be nice to circulate a draft in the coming weeks and have the framework approved by the Committee at the October meeting.

The item was deferred to the next meeting, pending circulation of the revised draft in the interim.

**4.2 Future Presentations – update**

The Chair asked for discussion and updates on upcoming presentations to the Committee. The following presenters are planned in the immediate future:

- A representative from the Mobile Crisis Unit of the Halifax Regional Police Department will visit in October.
- In November, Pat Gates representing the CNIB/CCB, will speak on the difference between partially sighted and blind accessibility issues.

The following suggestions were made for future presentations:

- Councillor Watts suggested Jim Donovan, HRM Manager of Municipal Compliance, who works with permitting and licensing for HRM related to the National Building Code. Ms. Weagle confirmed that Mr. Donovan will be participating in the Town Hall meeting and could be approached about attending a meeting to discuss building code requirements with the Committee.
- Councillor Watts also suggested inviting Ms. Cathy Crouse, Executive Director, Metro Community Housing Association, to the November meeting.
- Ms. Weagle noted that Corporate Communications has confirmed they will attend a future meeting to discuss with the Committee the communications plan outlined in the draft Strategic Plan. The Committee agreed that this should be done after the Strategic Plan is completed and adopted by the Committee, in December or later.
- Cindy Bryant suggested inviting someone from the Disabled Persons Commission.

Pat Gates asked if the purpose of the visits is to have presentations on particular disability issues. The Chair confirmed that the presentations should be on matters related to accessibility and the mandate of the Committee.

Councillor Watts noted that the proposed staff visits could just be oriented towards a conversation rather than a presentation.

The Chair mentioned connections that she and Pat Gates have with provincial level bodies, and noted that connections could be made in cases of issues within provincial jurisdiction.

#### **4.3 Town Hall Meeting – update**

Planning update:

- Ms. Weagle circulated a draft agenda of the Town Hall Meeting to the Committee and shared that the attendance of all staff people on agenda has been confirmed. She also shared that 21 people are registered and there is still lots of time for others to sign up before the RSVP deadline (September 23). She also indicated that the RSVP is not necessary, but will only be used to estimate the amount of food and set up requirements. People can still attend if they haven't signed up in advance. Ms. Weagle also confirmed that two ASL interpreters have been booked for the event.

Intent of the meeting:

- Councillor Watts shared that she has been telling people that this is a good opportunity to provide comments about accessibility and that this will help the committee's work over the next year. She asked for confirmation that this is the intent of the Town Hall. The Chair confirmed that this is accurate.
- Councillor Watts asked if there be an official record of the meeting and comments for the committee to review and then follow up, meaning that there would be a certain level of accountability. Ms. Weagle confirmed that minutes will be taken at the meeting.
- Councillor Craig indicated that he wasn't at the last event but expressed a hope that the information and feedback provided at the meeting will be reviewed by the Committee and that updates may be provided next year. He expressed hope that there would be some level of accountability to the discussions raised at the meeting. Councillor Craig asked for confirmation on the details on the format of the Town Hall.

#### Format of the meeting:

- Ms. Weagle indicated that the staff panel will each have three to five minutes each to speak on issues within their scope of work relating to accessibility. The Chair confirmed that the format will be very focused on Q and A. Councillor Craig asked if people will be able to write down their comments if they don't have a time to speak. The Chair confirmed that there will be opportunities to write comments and to contact staff after the event to follow up.

#### Regarding publicity:

- Theresa Horwill provided an update on poster distribution, noting that posters have been delivered to many locations across HRM. Ms. Weagle advised that posters have also been sent to all HRM libraries and community recreation centres. Mark MacKenzie added that he has put up posters at the Rehab Centre and will put some up at the IWK.
- Yvon Clement asked that the poster in Microsoft Word format without graphics be forwarded to him. Ms. Weagle will follow up on this.
- The Chair and Councillor Craig encouraged members to circulate announcements of the meeting through their social media networks, including Facebook, Twitter, and via email.
- Damian Stapledon said that next year the Town Hall can be advertised in the HRM Recreation catalogue if the details are finalized early enough.

#### Regarding accessibility and logistics:

- Pat Gates asked if Access-A-Bus was advised of the event and Glen Bannon confirmed that this is being planned. Theresa Horwill pointed out that the location of the Sportsplex, next to the bus terminal, will be accessible to many people.
- Councillor Watts said that at last year's meeting there were floating mics and at staff sat at a head table and that this worked well. The Chair confirmed that we need cordless mics again at this year's meeting.

- Councillor Watts pointed out that we should give options for different ways to ask questions, including verbally and written questions. The Chair pointed out that that hasn't been a big issue in the past but it will be handy to have options.
- Darren Young asked about the sound system. Ms. Weagle pointed out that the Sportsplex has a sound system and Damian Stapledon indicated that he will look into the details to see if any additional sound equipment is needed.

Progress since the last Town Hall:

- Glen Bannon asked if there is a record of last year's Town Hall meeting. Ms. Weagle confirmed that the minutes of the meeting are on the website and said that she will send a link to Committee members and the staff panel.
- Cindy Bryant asked if there is any way to measure changes or improvements made since last year. Councillor Craig said that progress since last year will be an important issue and that this may be addressed in staff presentations.
- The Chair said that transit was the most important issue last year so we should be prepared for this again. Tom Boyd pointed out that since Metro Transit fares are going up it would be good to bring new time tables, etc. Glen confirmed he will bring pamphlets.
- Cindy Bryant asked if a survey was done last year. The Chair said that surveys are tricky because they require a lot of follow up. She said that staff contacts and other ways to provide comment will be issued at the meeting. She also indicated that there are many ways to communicate throughout the year with the Committee and staff.

#### **4.4 Metro Transit Service Animal Policy – update**

Glen Bannon confirmed that the policy has been approved. He explained that the intent has been to clarify the policy regarding service animals on Metro Transit and remove any ambiguity. The new policy allows access to Metro Transit buses and ferries for all service animals. It allows drivers or operators to request registration identification for the animal, and to ask for the owner's contact information if none is available. The intent in asking for contact information is to allow Metro Transit an opportunity to follow up and help the person in question register the service animal if needed. All Metro Transit operators will be briefed on the policy and will know what to look for in terms of identification and that they should not refuse access if ID is not available. Mr. Bannon also indicated that the registration process for service animals is free of charge and emphasized that Metro Transit would attempt to help passengers gain access to these services in cases that may arise.

There was discussion among Committee members on whether or not all service dogs are automatically registered. There was also discussion about potential conflict between animals and the fact that some owners may falsely claim that their pet is a service animal.

Councillor Craig asked how requests for contact information would be enforced.

Mr. Bannon confirmed that the policy is that Metro Transit operators will ask for contact information. He explained that upon subsequent requests, a supervisor may be called to explain the importance of service animal registration to the rider. The goal will be to provide information to the rider.

The Chair explained that in the policy the animal must be under control of owner. Mr. Bannon added that if there is concern about behavior of the animal, the driver may refuse service. Pat Gates pointed out that animals in cages are permitted on Metro Transit. Glen Bannon confirmed that this is correct.

The Chair indicated that it is great that the policy has been adopted and the Committee members agreed with this sentiment.

#### **4.5 Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission complaint re: service animal refusal of taxi service – update**

The Chair explained that the updated agreement on the complaint has been circulated to the Committee. The main follow up question relates to driver education. Pat Gates shared with the Committee that the CNIB is planning to hold education sessions for taxi drivers.

Laughlin Rutt raised two points in relation to the agreement:

- That No. 8 states that the AAC can make recommendations to Council, noting that recommendations to Council are actually made to the Transportation Standing Committee.
- He noted that the wording of No. 9 may misconstrue the role of the Committee.

Following discussion by the Committee members, it was agreed that the Clerk's Office will follow up the Legal Department on the point raised by Mr. Rutt and bring results to next meeting.

### **5. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

#### **5.1 Presentation – First Lake Trail Accessibility – *Bob Taylor, Friends of First Lake***

Mr. Bob Taylor presented on the work of the Friends of First Lake Society. He emphasized the group's efforts to create an accessible active transportation trail around First Lake in Lower Sackville. The trail has recently been renamed the Glen Slauenwhite Trail. Mr. Taylor highlighted the work that still needs to be done and asked for the assistance of the Committee members in identifying solutions to some remaining accessibility challenges, including way-finding at intersections along the path and access from transit stops.

The following points were made about the trail during the discussion period following the presentation:

- The trail is 3.2 km long.
- The trail surface is crusher dust with sections that are reclaimed asphalt.
- It is possible to walk on the trail with a cane but there are issues with corners and directions.
- Bicycles are permitted on the trail and it is suitable for tandem bicycling.
- No motorized vehicles are permitted on the trail.
- The life guarded beach is not currently accessible.
- Other trail associations in HRM are interested in the work that has been done at First Lake.

The Committee members offered the following points of information and assistance:

- Mark MacKenzie indicated that he may be able to help the Canoe Club on the lake connect with advice on equipment to enable accessible kayaking and canoeing.
- Tom Boyd suggested that the Committee may be able to help the Friends of First Lake connect with expertise to plan tactile raised pads at the intersections to help with way-finding.
- Councillor Watts shared that Metro Transit is working on Access-A-Bus access to First Lake.
- Councillor Craig congratulated Mr. Taylor on his group's work. He also pointed out access points to the trail that are not accessible and emphasized the need for a "circle of safety."
- Yvon Clement said that the trail could be used as a model, with regard to signage, directions and ramps for other trails.
- The Chair mentioned principles of Universal Design. Councillor Watts added that HRM Trails staff can look into the applicability of Universal Design for trails.
- Damion Stapledon indicated that he is a member of the Nova Scotia Outdoor Network and said that he will check if they have any appropriate resources.
- Damion Stapledon and Cindy Bryant raised the idea of a manual or some form of documentation that would be useful for others, but recognized that this may be beyond the scope of the Association's work.

Laughlin Rutt commented, as a resident of Sackville, that the trail is great and invited Committee members to come and enjoy it.

The Committee congratulated Mr. Taylor on the work of the Friends of First Lake Society and thanked him for his presentation.

## **6. REPORTS/DISCUSSION**

### **6.1 Update on accessibility assessment of HRM owned/operated buildings**

#### **6.1.1 Staff Update**



Darren Young provided the following updates:

- The design changes at the Highfield Park Transit Terminal are being carried out. There is an effort to incorporate some of the features from the Bridge Terminal including tactile pads and directional strips in some areas.
- The Lacewood Transit Terminal is in the early stages of design work.
- The contract with Royal Door is coming to an end. Over \$200,000 has been spent on door operators in the last three years.
- There will be a possible redesign of the front of the Sackville Library coming soon.
- Design on an accessible washroom facility for Chocolate Lake is underway. It will include accessible change stalls and accessible water fountain with water for pets as well. Accessibility to the tennis courts and basketball court is a challenge but a solution may be to change the ramp from Herring Cove Road.
- The Bedford-Hammonds Plains Community Centre recently opened and is fully accessible.

### **6.1.2 Committee Member Update**

Theresa Horwill discussed role of committee members in conducting inspections of buildings.

Yvon Clement asked about the Mumford Transit Terminal public washroom which, he pointed out, has been closed for some time. Darren Young clarified that the washroom is closed due to damage. He explained that the bus terminal structure is not owned by HRM. Since HRM cannot invest in leased facilities, it cannot do any work on this site.

Theresa Horwill indicated that Committee member vacancies are coming up. Renewals for most members are not needed at this time.

## **6.2 Committee Member Updates**

### **6.2.1 Active Transportation Advisory Committee – *Cindy Bryant***

Cindy Bryant reported that there have been no meetings of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee since last meeting. She indicated that a link to the report on the active transportation consultations has been posted on the committee's website.

### **6.2.2 Taxi and Limousine Liaison Group – *Pat Gates***

Tom Boyd attended the last meeting for Pat Gates. He provided an update on three items discussed at this meeting that will go to the Transportation Standing Committee.

- A taxi brochure that will include a passenger and driver code of ethics and prices. It will be available online as well.

- A proposal to allow driver-occupied taxis to park in front of fire hydrants while waiting for fares.
- A proposal to increase the bridge crossing surcharge from 80 cents to \$1.50.

Yvon Clement brought up confusion and lack of communication of the existing fee.

Tom Boyd expressed concern about accessible taxis and whether drivers have proper training for ramps and for straps. Cindy Bryant asked if the training should be included in education for taxi drivers. Tom Boyd explained that accessible taxis are owned by drivers who receive training but others may drive them.

### **6.2.3 Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee – Tom Boyd**

Tom Boyd provided an update on the last meeting, noting that the Committee approved a request to propose to Council, through the Transportation Standing Committee, to endorse a bid to host an international conference on accessible mobility issues to in 2018.

## **7. ADDED ITEMS**

### **7.1. Update - Central Library – Councillor Watts**

Councillor Watts provided an update accessibility issues in relation to the construction of the new Central Library. The Library Board has met with the people working on the library and highlighted the importance of a very careful review of accessibility as part of the process. Councillor Watts mentioned that there is a danger that an assumption will be made that all accessibility matters have already been taken care of, so it will be important to continue to work on this area as construction is completed.

There was discussion among committee members about the lack of planning for Access-A-Bus access. Some expressed concern that this has been an oversight in the planning process.

Councillor Watts indicated that there is a disconnect between the design and planning of the project and the traffic and right of way regulations which the project has little control over. She encouraged discussion of this issue at the Town Hall.

## **8. NEXT MEETING DATES**

- Town Hall Meeting – Monday, September 30, 2013 – 6:30 p.m., Common Room, Dartmouth Sportsplex, 110 Wyse Road, Dartmouth
- Regular Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting – Monday, October 21, 2013, 4:00 p.m., Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle St., Halifax

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:09 p.m.

Lachlan Barber  
Legislative Support

---

**Information Items**

1. Extract of the June 11, 2013 Halifax Regional Council Minutes re: Encroachments, Sidewalk Cafes & Sandwich Board Signs
  2. Correspondence from March of Dimes Canada re: Pennzoil Retrofit Vehicle Initiative
-