



**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR ACCESSIBILITY IN HRM
MINUTES
September 15, 2014**

PRESENT: Lisa Pottie, Chair
Krista Daley, Vice Chair
Councillor Jennifer Watts
Councillor Steve Craig
Patricia Gates
Mark MacKenzie
Troy Nauffts

REGRETS: Yvon Clement
Bob Hayter

STAFF: Supt. Cliff Falkenham, Halifax Regional Police
Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant, HRM Human Resources
Darren Young, Project Manager, HRM Planning & Infrastructure
Ahmed Kidwai, Manager, Accessible Transit
Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant
Jenny Benson, Legislative Support

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to the Committee are available online: <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/access/index.html>

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m., and the Committee adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax. Roll call was taken.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 16, 2014 and July 21, 2014

MOVED by Councillor Steve Craig, seconded by Ms. Krista Daley, that the minutes of June 16, 2014 and July 21, 2014, be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The Committee an update on the motion from item 7.1 from the July 21, 2014 meeting. The Legislative Assistant indicated she would look into this.

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

Additions:

- 8.1 Nova Scotia Building Advisory Committee Ad Hoc Committee on Accessibility
- 8.2 Update on Service Animal Park
- 8.3 Invitation to Tour the Central Library

MOVED by Krista Daley, seconded by Patricia Gates, that the agenda be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - NONE

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence - None

6.2 Petitions – None

6.3 Presentations - None

7. REPORTS

7.1. Update – Amendments to By-law T-1001 and Administrative Order No. 39 Respecting the Regulations of Taxis and Limousines – Kevin Hindle, Municipal Compliance

Mr. Kevin Hindle, Municipal Compliance, updated the Committee on the status of amendments to By-law T-1001 and Administrative Order No. 39 Respecting the Regulations of Taxis and Limousines, noting the following:

- A proposed Taxi Cab Operator Code of Ethics is included in the report.
- Council is being asked to consider a rate increase for the bridge and also discuss the possible use of the area in front of certain fire hydrants for taxis.
- Under the report recommendations all new taxi licenses would be issued to accessible taxis only. In addition, the taxi industry will not re-offer current licenses to allow more accessible taxis to get on the road. Accessible taxis will have to have their rooflight mounted at all times to make them more visible, have universal accessibility signs on four sides of the vehicle and adhere to new restraint system guidelines that will include a seat belt cutter.
- E-cigarettes will not be allowed in taxis.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Hindle clarified that accessible vehicles are much more cost effective now and that accessible licenses are not restricted by number or by zone in the by-law making them more readily available. He also confirmed that Access-A-Bus and the individuals working on the accessible taxi initiatives have been communicating.

The Committee requested that the reports to be considered by Council be circulated to Committee members.

7.2. Sidewalk Café By-law – Government Relations & External Affairs/Municipal Compliance/Transportation & Public Works staff

Mr. Jim Donovan, Municipal Compliance, provided an update to the Committee regarding the Sidewalk Café By-Law that will be going to Council, including the following:

- It is being proposed that CSA Standard B651 Guidelines be used to establish the amount of exterior space required around buildings. This is best practice in the country, used by the Government of Canada and is not in conflict with the Temporary Sign By-Law. Under the new By-Law, Municipal Compliance would be responsible for enforcing this By-Law and inspection will be required prior to use.
- In terms of timeline, staff are hoping to receive Notice of Motion shortly and be able to set up all of the background systems over the winter to be operational for the next café season.

Mr. Chris Davis informed the Committee that there are just over 50 sidewalk café permits issued this year and the year before, with the number growing slowly. The By-Law will impact sidewalk cafes that are in the street, not on private property.

When asked about the business community's response to the recommendations, Mr. Donovan shared that there are mixed feelings because some businesses will see their fees go up and others will see their fees reduced significantly.

7.3. Lacewood Transit Terminal Design – Darren Young, Facility Development

Mr. Darren Young informed the Committee that the Lacewood Transit Terminal has been awarded with a target of spring 2015 construction. He is currently examining options around tactile signage and sliding doors. Facility Development is also considering colouring the actual concrete red for the 4-6" switch between curb and road to assist with depth perception.

Mr. Kidwai shared that in York Region (YRT) they have used red concrete and find it to be effective. Toronto (TTC) uses blue concrete and faces challenges with it, particularly in the winter. Mr. Young agreed to cc Mr. Kidwai on emails to Metro Transit.

7.4. Wheelmap.org – Laughlin Rutt, Human Resources

The following information was before the Committee:

- Information regarding Wheelmap.org

Mr. Laughlin Rutt informed the Committee that he is sharing this as an information piece. He explained that Wheelmap.org is an open and free online map for wheelchair accessible places. It empowers users to share and access information on the wheelchair accessibility of various places. Anyone can participate in rating places as Accessible, Limited Accessible, or Not Accessible because the website uses open source data. The website is global and it is available as a free app for iPhone and Android.

Mr. Rutt emphasized that all municipal buildings, recreation facilities, trails, bus stops, and street parking could be posted onto the site.

Committee members saw this as a useful tool that needs to be populated, a number of members mentioned that they would be promoting the population of the site through their networks.

MOVED by Councillor Craig, seconded by Ms. Patricia Gates that the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report on the possibility of the municipality utilizing wheelchairmap.org or a similar online resource to increase accessibility in Halifax. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

There was discussion around the fact that Halifax already has a lot of this information but it is not in a usable format.

Councillor Watts clarified that this would be information sharing, not taking ownership. Halifax would be able to say that they are participating in Wheelmap.org. Councillor Craig noted that the global nature of the site means that tourists coming to Halifax would be able to view the site and be more informed about the city's accessibility.

In response to questions regarding construction, Mr. Rutt confirmed that temporary barriers can be put up on the website and then removed once the construction is complete.

7.5. Planning for Fall Town Hall Meeting on Accessibility

The Committee discussed the upcoming Town Hall Meeting on Accessibility, being hosted by the Accessibility Advisory Committee, which is scheduled for October 29th at the Bedford Hammonds Plains Community Centre in the Cafetorium. The Committee agreed that the meeting should take place at 6:30 p.m. and that additional buses should be requested to run that evening.

The Committee discussed the need to publicize. A number of members stated that they would be promoting the event through their networks and Ms. Weagle shared that she will be inviting individuals and organizations that attended last year.

It was agreed that each presenting staff member should compile a report on accomplishments over the last year. The Committee requested that these reports be available for the next Committee meeting, in advance of the Town Hall.

The Committee requested that the Mayor be invited to discuss accessibility initiatives. They also asked that volunteers be present to function as guides and that sign language be organized again this year.

Councillor Watts asked that local Councillors and community groups be informed of the event to promote it, Councillor Craig committed to mention it at the next Community Council Meeting.

7.7. Update – Accessibility Assessment HRM Owned/Operated Buildings

Mr. Young updated that an audit of the 34 community centres has been completed and there is approximately \$1 Million of work on the list. Funding that has already been approved will be used to start on the list and the Accessibility Committee's ask in next year's budget will be increased to accommodate the amount of work.

Mr. Young shared with Committee members that the Acadia Recreation Club will be completed early spring once a landscape architect has been hired.

7.8 Committee Member Updates

7.8.1 Active Transportation Advisory Committee – Bob Hayter

- Deferred to next meeting.

7.8.2 Taxi & Limousine Liaison Group – Pat Gates

- Update given by Mr. Hindle earlier in the meeting.

7.8.3 Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee – Krista Daley

- Ms. Krista Daley shared that this Committee did not meet over the summer, meeting later this week to plan for Crosswalk Safety Day.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Minsiter’s Advisory Panel on the Accessibility Act for the Province of Nova Scotia

The Chair provided the Committee with an overview of the process and timeline related to the Minister’s Advisory Panel on the Accessibility Act. A Minister’s Advisory Panel is participating in various sub-committees. A discussion paper will be submitted in mid-October to the Minister of Community Services. A report will go to a public consultation phase both in person and online. The feedback from the consultation will shape a recommendation that will go to the Minister, February 2015. It is estimated that it will take a year to draft the legislation, with the goal that an Accessibility Act will be introduced in spring, 2016.

8.2 Update on Service Animal Park

Mr. Darren Young reported that the Service Dog Park is included in next year’s capital budget. They are hoping to get the work done early spring, a location is currently being identified.

8.3 Invitation to Tour Central Library

An email from Heather MacKenzie inviting the Committee on a tour of the new Central Library was before the Committee.

The Committee agreed on September 24th or 25th in the afternoon, after 4:00p.m.

The Legislative Assistant will confirm details and circulate to the Committee.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday, October 20, 2014, 4:00 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, October 20, 2014, at 4:00 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

Committee members requested that a microphone and speakers be available at Committee meetings so that non-Committee members can hear the proceedings more clearly.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Jenny Benson
Legislative Support

INFORMATION ITEMS:

1. Information on Communication Access Now