



**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR ACCESSIBILITY IN HRM
MINUTES
February 23, 2015**

PRESENT: Krista Daley, Vice Chair
Councillor Wayne Mason
Councillor Steve Craig
Patricia Gates
Troy Nauffts
Gerry Post
Meredith Fillmore
Mikiko Terashima

REGRETS: Yvon Clement
Nancy Beaton

STAFF: Supt. Cliff Falkenham, Halifax Regional Police
Darren Young, Project Manager, HRM Planning & Infrastructure
Glen Bannon, Operations Manager, Halifax Transit
Damion Stapledon, Community Recreation Planner
Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant

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.php>

The meeting was called to order at 4:06 p.m., and the Committee adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax. Roll call was taken and introductions were made.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 15, 2014

Ms. Patricia Gates made a correction to her comments on page 8 of the minutes, noting that she was referring to the Canadian Council of the Blind (CCB).

MOVED by Pat Gates, seconded by Councillor Mason, that the minutes of December 15, 2014, be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Troy Nauffts, that the agenda be approved, as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Service Dog Exercise Area location – Parks & Recreation staff

Mr. Jan Skora, Coordinator, Parks & Recreation, presented to the Committee with an option for the service dog exercise area location. A copy of Mr. Skora's presentation is available online and on file.

Mr. Skora noted that he had previously consulted with the Committee on this topic on November 17 and December 15, 2014. He reviewed the initial potential sites shown to the Committee, and recommended by the Committee, which he had looked into further. He noted that these sites had been eliminated as potential locations for a number of reasons.

Mr. Skora reviewed with the Committee a potential site that had been further identified by staff, which should address most concerns noted with previous sites, and fit the criteria put forward by staff and the committee. This site is known as Ardmore Park in Halifax, on the corner of Oxford and Almon Streets. He reviewed the site location and photos, noting that the proposed service dog park would be 90 feet long by 40 feet wide. He noted that the proposed site has many of the elements required including parking, fronting on a main street, nearby bus stop, nearby recreation, shade from trees, visibility, and fencing, which would be further extended. Mr. Skora indicated that the proposed site had been reviewed with the area Councillor, and she is supported of the proposal, subject to community consultation meeting.

Responding to questions from the Committee, Mr. Skora indicated that there are plans for an accessible playground upgrade to the playground onsite, that there will be lighting and also a card reader for users of the service dog exercise area.

Ms. Meredith Fillmore indicated that she lives in the neighbourhood of the proposed site, and believes it will be a good location for the service dog area.

Ms. Patricia Gates noted that during a consultation with the local chapter of the Canadian Council of the Blind, most users were pleased with the proposed location. She indicated that users are looking forward to have a safe area to exercise their service dogs, noting that enclosed area should be kept only to service dogs, for the safety of users and their dogs.

Mr. Darren Young, Corporate Facility Design & Constructon, suggested that funds from the accessibility budget could be used for the card reader, if necessary.

In response to an inquiry about having a second location, Mr. Skora indicated that staff were only able to locate one site at this time that would fit all criteria, and the opportunity to look at a second site may be possible in the future.

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Meredith Fillmore, that the Accessibility Advisory Committee recommend that Halifax and West Community Council approve that “Ardmore Park” at Oxford and Almon Streets in Halifax be used as a location for a service dog exercise area. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Mr. Skora indicated that the next steps would be to hold a community consultation meeting with the area Councillor, and then bring the recommendation forward to Halifax and West Community Council. He indicated he would ensure the Committee is notified of the dates of these meetings.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence

6.1.1 Correspondence from Wendy Macdonald dated Jan. 19/15 re: Accessibility and other concerns with design of new ferry

6.1.2 Correspondence from Jeff MacPherson dated Feb. 6/15 re: concerns with sidewalks, curb cuts and snow removal

Councillor Craig acknowledged the difficult winter conditions recently for all residents, but in particular for those with disabilities. He indicated that he has spoken with the

Director of Halifax Transit to express disappointment with the level of service and quality of snow removal from bus stops this year. Councillor Craig explained that snow removal at transit terminals and bus shelters is handled by Halifax Transit, sidewalks around these by Transportation and Public Works.

The Committee briefly discussed snow clearance of sidewalks and bus stops.

6.2 Petitions – None

6.3 Presentations - None

7. REPORTS/DISCUSSION

**7.1 Accessibility Accommodation of Shuttle Service for Macdonald Bridge
“The Big Lift” - *Alison MacDonald, Halifax Harbour Bridges***

The following was before the Committee:

- A hand out of frequently asked questions regarding “The Big Lift”
- A copy of Ms. MacDonald’s presentation is on file and online.

Ms. Alison MacDonald, Halifax Harbour Bridges Alison gave an overview of “The Big Lift” Macdonald Bridge redecking project, explaining that the project will necessitate the bridge being closed Sunday to Thursday from 7:00 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. The sidewalk and bikeway lanes will remain open outside of these hours until June 29th, when a 24/7/365 shuttle service will be provided for pedestrians and cyclists wishing to cross the bridge. The project is expected to conclude in September 2017. Ms. MacDonald indicated that the shuttle service will accommodate wheelchairs and scooters and will take the MacKay Bridge when the Macdonald Bridge is closed. They have purchased three para-transit buses and trailers for the purpose, which will run on a schedule (yet to be determined). The buses can accommodate four wheelchairs or scooters at once and are equipped with ramps, as opposed to lifts, and have a tie down system with quick release. She clarified that the service will be free.

Ms. MacDonald indicated that the shuttle will run from the former Nova Scotia Liquor Corp. off Wyse Road (at 30 Faulkner Street, Dartmouth) to the Sewage Treatment Plant at the foot of Cornwallis St. and Lower Water St. in Halifax. She indicated that these locations were chosen to allow for the buses to load and disembark passengers safely without interfering with traffic.

Referring to communication methods that have been set up to communicate information about the project, Mr. Nauffts inquired whether assistive technology will be used for the smart phone app. Ms. MacDonald indicated she would have to get back to him with an answer.

At the request of the Vice Chair, Mr. Glen Bannon, Halifax Transit, advised that there will be increased ferry service throughout the project. He also indicated that Halifax

Transit is also offering a shuttle in lieu of transit routes that would cross the Macdonald Bridge, during those hours that the bridge is closed. He clarified that ALS buses would be used for the Halifax Transit shuttle service.

Mr. Nauffts noted concerns with the accessibility of the former NSLC location, noting specifically that there is a sidewalk on one side of Faulkner, but not on the other. He also asked that Ms. MacDonald look into whether the Halifax location has sidewalks. Ms. MacDonald indicated she would look into the sidewalks at both of these locations.

Ms. MacDonald circulated her contact information for anyone wishing to contact her with further questions or comments.

7.2. Accessibility of Halifax Transit Harbour Ferries – Glenn Bannon, Halifax Transit Operations

Mr. Glen Bannon, Operations Manager, Halifax Transit, had to leave earlier in the meeting. This matter will be deferred to the March meeting.

The Vice Chair noted that there was discussion within the community about accessibility concerns with the Christopher Stannix harbor ferry, the newest of the ferry fleet. A tour of the boat had been arranged for the Committee, but had to be cancelled because of the weather. The tour will be rescheduled when snow and ice conditions improve.

The Committee discussed how there are also concerns with the Woodside ferry terminal, including the lack of sidewalks and curb cuts, and asked that it be included in the tour as well

The Committee asked that an update on the automated bus stop annunciations be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

7.3. Update – Accessibility Assessment HRM Owned/Operated Buildings

Mr. Darren Young, Project Manager, Corporate Facility Design and Construction, indicated that staff are planning for the 2015/16 season. He indicated that Accessibility improvements. Did an audit of 34 rec facilities. About 1 million in upgrades.

Responding to questions from the Committee, Mr. Young indicated that any part of the accessibility budget not spent this year will be carried forward.

Ms. Gates advised that Paul O`Regan Auditorium in the new Central Library needs a railing down the stairs, and the toe marking is too light and should be a higher colour contrast. Mr. Young indicated he would look into it.

7.4 Committee Member Updates

7.4.1 Active Transportation Advisory Committee – vacant

- **Appointment of an AAC representative to ATAC**

The following information was before the Committee:

- Terms of Reference for the Active Transportation Advisory Committee
- ATAC Meeting Schedule

The Legislative Assistant indicated that the Active Transportation Advisory Committee requires the annual appointment of a representative from the Accessibility Advisory Committee. This position is currently vacant.

The Committee agreed to hold consideration of this appointment to the next meeting.

7.4.2 Taxi & Limousine Liaison Group – *Pat Gates*

Ms. Gates updated the committee that a consultant with Halifax Global Inc. had been hired to look at how making taxis accessible will affect the taxi industry. She noted that the intention is that when a license is turned in, it would be reissued as an accessible taxi.

Ms. Gates noted that she is currently appointed to the Taxi and Limousine Liaison Group as a citizen member and also as a representative of the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Legislative Assistant indicated she would look into this.

7.4.3 Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee – *Krista Daley*

- **Appointment of an AAC representative to ATAC**

The following information was before the Committee:

- Terms of Reference for the Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee
- CSAC Meeting Schedule
- Invitation to the Crosswalk Safety Information Café

Ms. Daley updated that the Committee is currently working on implementation of a one year work plan. She invited everyone to a Crosswalk Safety Information Café being held on March 4th at Dalhousie University, Engineering Alumni Lounge. She noted that the Café is being held jointly by DalTRAC in partnership with the HRM Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee and it is open to the public, although RSVP is requested.

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Craig, that the Accessibility Advisory Committee reappoint Krista Daley as the Accessibility Advisory Committee representative to the Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee for a one year term. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

8. ADDED ITEMS - None

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING –March 16, 2015

Councillor Craig requested that the March 16th meeting be moved to March 23rd, due to March Break, to which the Committee agreed. Following the meeting, it was determined that due to other meeting conflicts the proposed March 23rd date would not work, and therefore the next meeting date will remain Monday, March 16, 2015 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

10. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR.

The Committee agreed to hold the Election of Chair and Vice Chair at the next meeting, to allow all new members to be present.

Mr. Post commented on the high cost of the access a bus service, and suggested that the Municipality may want to consider outsourcing the service to the taxi industry. He asked that this be added to the next agenda for discussion.

Mr. Post suggested that business units should come to the Committee with their proposals within their business plans to hear what they are proposing in terms of accessibility, such as through the Mayors Initiative for Healthy Communities. Councillor Craig discussed the budget process, noting that business units come to Council through Committee of the Whole to present their individual budget proposals for the coming fiscal year, and noted that there is a public participation portion of each meeting.

Councillor Mason requested that when the Diversity and Inclusion Office is in place, that they be requested to present to the Committee their mandate.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

Jennifer Weagle
Legislative Assistant