



**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR ACCESSIBILITY IN HRM
MINUTES
June 15, 2015**

PRESENT: Mayor Mike Savage (ex-officio)
Patricia Gates, Chair
Councillor Steve Craig
Yvon Clement
Troy Nauffts
Gerry Post
Meredith Fillmore
Nancy Beaton
Mikiko Terashima

REGRETS: Krista Daley, Vice Chair
Councillor Wayne Mason

STAFF: Supt. Cliff Falkenham, Halifax Regional Police
Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant, HRM Human Resources
Darren Young, Project Manager, HRM Planning & Infrastructure
Taso Koutroulakis, Manager, Traffic & Right of Way Services
Darrin Natolino, Superintendent, Winter Operations
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/AACagenda150615.php>

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 – May 20, 2015

MOVED by Ms. Meredith Fillmore, seconded by Mr. Yvon Clement, that the minutes of May 15, 2015, be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Mr. Nauffts asked the Committee if they would be interested in collecting pop can tabs and donating them to a charity that makes wheelchairs. At the request of the Committee, the Legislative Assistant agreed to find out what City Hall does with the proceeds of its recycling.

Additions:

- 8.1 Site Visit for New Lacewood Terminal
- 8.2 Site Visit for Stannix Terminal and Woodside Terminal

MOVED by Ms. Meredith Fillmore, seconded by Mr. Troy Nauffts, 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 Presentation - None

7. REPORTS/DISCUSSION

7.1. Maintaining Accessibility in Winter Conditions – Committee input for Winter Operations Review – *Grant Thornton LLP*

Mr. Taso Koutroulakis, Manager, Traffic & Right of Way Services, introduced Mr. Chris Hill and Mr. Michael Flemming from Grant Thornton, the consultant retained by the Municipality to conduct a review of 2014/15 winter operations. He explained that they were attending the meeting to receive feedback from the Committee around winter operations. Mr. Hill informed the Committee that they have interviewed 30 individuals to date including Public Works, Police, Fire, Halifax Regional School Board and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. He also noted that they will be talking to NSGEU staff as well.

Ms. Nancy Beaton arrived at the meeting at 4:20 p.m.

Committee members raised a number of issues that they requested be considered as part of the review:

- The Committee requested that communication be improved between the Municipality and residents around snow removal timelines. Challenges around timelines for snow removal in areas outside of the downtown core were discussed.
- Committee members requested that the 3-1-1 Call Centre recording requesting that residents call another time if their call is not urgent or an emergency be reconsidered for the next season.
- That the service standards for bus stops be revised to match the standards of the roads that they are located on (e.g. Class 1 Route is cleared within 12 hours so the bus stops located on that route should also be cleared within 12 hours). Also that staff responsible for clearing bus shelters communicate better with contractors responsible for clearing the inside of bus shelters to make the process more efficient.
- The Committee discussed frustrations around snow removal standards. They noted problems such as the crosswalk buttons not being cleared to allow for safe crossing of streets.
- Committee members discussed various snow clearing processes that different municipalities use.
- Councillor Craig asked about standards surrounding the clearing of cul-de-sacs, the level of expertise possessed by snow clearers, and whether or not the report could include training for snow clearing staff.
- It was asked that the standards in the report be designed to put safety first and make the needs of individuals with disabilities a priority.

Mayor Savage joined the meeting at 4:50 p.m.

Mayor Savage emphasized the Municipality's focus on meeting the needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities. He also shared that the Municipality is interested in working with community partners to adopt areas to keep clear.

Ms. Weagle asked the Committee, at the request of the Office of the Mayor, whether they would be willing to pass a motion to waive the rules of order to allow observers of this meeting to speak.

MOVED by Mr. Gerry Post Seconded by Mayor Savage that the Committee waive the rules of order to allow observers to address the Committee at this meeting. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Ms. Amy Spurway described all of the work that her and her husband did throughout the winter to keep the sidewalks between their house and their daughters' school clear. She expressed frustration around calling 3-1-1 and having a bobcat come at the end of the school day instead of in the morning when children need to get to school. She also discussed how the bobcats and crusher dust are problematic. She urged staff and the consultants to consult a variety of citizens from different areas in Halifax. Ms. Spurway submitted her comments in writing for the file and the consultants.

Mr. Paul Vinneau discussed a number of incidents and frustrating situations that individuals with disabilities experienced this winter. He requested that curb cuts, corners and sidewalk entrances be a priority for snow clearing in Halifax. He expressed a number of frustrations with 3-1-1 and their untimely responses to his calls. Mr. Vinneau informed the Committee that he would be organizing a number of individuals in his neighbourhood to work together next winter to clear the ice and snow more efficiently. He also suggested that Grant Thornton consider the municipality consulting an end-user to assess whether or not an area has been cleared to the point where it is accessible.

Mayor Savage asked that the report focus on the fact that we need to do better and there is room for improvement. He suggested asked that the voices of citizens be included in the report and provide them with opportunities to partner with the municipality.

Coucillor Craig requested that snow being dumped in the harbour be re-visited, that the environmental impacts be examined from a scientific standpoint. He also requested that the snow removal operators clear the sidewalks down to the pavement and the catch basins every time so that the job is easier ongoing and good practices will be promoted.

Mr. Post requested that the location of the catch basins be available for citizens who would like to clear them.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Young shared that staff are currently focusing on curb cut designs and standardizing curb cuts to make them easy to clear of snow and accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Mr. Clement shared the importance of snow bank removal. Being visually impaired, large snow banks make it so that he cannot hear the traffic and drivers cannot see him. They make things very unsafe.

Mr. Darren Natalino, Superintendent, Winter Operations, advised that the Departments of Fisheries and Oceans prohibits the dumping of deleterious substances. The snow that is hauled away from the streets contains litter and other substances, noting that it is not white, fluffy snow that is safe to dump in the harbour.

Supt Falkenham stated to the Committee that if you are in an emergency situation to please call 9-1-1 and they will find a way to get to you, no matter the conditions.

7.2. Update – Accessibility Assessment HRM Owned/Operated Buildings

Mr. Young informed the Committee that the Lacewood Terminal is close to being substantially complete and may be operational in August. There are 2 other buildings being worked on, the Bi-Centennial Theatre in Musquidoboit Valley and construction is starting on the new Oval Building.

Ms. Beaton asked whether or not the aging population, including seating, was being taken into consideration with these construction projects. Mr. Young committed to looking into whether or not the CSA Standard addresses these needs.

7.3 Committee Member Updates

7.3.1 Active Transportation Advisory Committee – *Councillor Mason*

No update available.

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

Mr. Clement expressed an interest, for consideration at next month's meeting.

7.3.2 Taxi & Limousine Liaison Group – *Pat Gates*

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

Ms. Gates, who is a citizen member of the TLLG, indicated she was unable to attend the last meeting.

As no interested members came forward, the appointment of an AAC representative to the TLLG was deferred to next month.

7.4.3 Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee – *Krista Daley*

No update available.

7.4.4 Discussion – “Low Hanging Fruit”/Easily Achievable Fixes

Mr. Post requested that City Hall have a curb cut on the side of the building to allow individuals to be dropped off at the accessible entrance to City Hall.

Mr. Rutt shared with the Committee that there have been discussions around installing a curb cut and crosswalk by the accessible door, which has not been approved by the Traffic Authority because it does not fit crosswalk standards and because of the existing crosswalk close by.

Mr. Rutt suggested that Mr. Taso Koutroulakis, Traffic Authority, come to a future meeting to discuss this issue.

Mr. Post stated that the Public Gardens is very accessible but they had a lot of damage to their paths this winter and the material that used to fill the sides is very difficult to move over in a wheelchair. He asked that this be corrected so that wheelchairs would not sink into the paths. Ms. Weagle offered to email someone at the Public Gardens.

Mr. Yvon Clement informed the Committee that he was at the public information meeting at the Forum around the Service Dog Park. It was suggested that individuals with service dogs will have a swipe card that will allow them to access the park. Mr. Clement believes that they were informed that the fence will be 4 ft high but he believes the fence should be at least 5 ft. or 6 ft high. The Chair noted that she also attended this meeting.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Site Visit for New Lacewood Transit Terminal

Mr. Young invited the Committee to visit the site of the new Lacewood Transit Terminal on a date the week of July 6th. Ms. Weagle offered to arrange the visit by email.

8.2 Site Visit for Stannix Ferry and Woodside Ferry Terminal

Ms. Weagle offered to also arrange by email a site visit to the Stannix Ferry and the Woodside Ferry Terminal for the Committee, as requested by the Committee.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday, July 20, 2015, 4:00-6:00 p.m., Halifax Hall, main floor, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Jenny Benson
Legislative Support