

CROSSWALK SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

November 28, 2013

PRESENT: Councillor Barry Dalrymple, Chair
Ms. Janet Barlow, Vice Chair
Deputy Mayor Darren Fisher
Councillor Wayne Mason
Mr. Ben Wedge
Dr. Ashan Habib
Mr. Kyle Miller
Sgt. David Reynolds
Ms. Jany-ellen Klenavic
Ms. Lucille Reid
Ms. Jill McGillicuddy

REGRETS: Mr. Stephen Stone
Mr. Mark MacKenzie

STAFF: Mr. Roddy MacIntyre, Traffic and Right of Way
Mr. Darren Hirtle, Volunteer Services
Mr. Darcy Warren, Legislative Support

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10: 05 a.m. in the Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 24, 2013

MOVED by Ms. Barlow, seconded by Mr. Miller, that minutes of October 24, 2013 be approved as presented. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

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

The Committee agreed to address Item 5.3.2 prior to Item 5.3.1.

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Fisher, seconded by Mr. Wedge that the Order of Business be approved as amended. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES/DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

5. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & PRESENTATIONS

5.1 Correspondence

5.1.1 John Cascadden dated November 28, 2013 entitled “A Low Cost but Effective Pedestrian-Crosswalk Safety Solution”

Mr. Cascadden`s correspondence was received for the record.

5.2 Petitions - None

5.3 Presentations

Item 5.3.2 was addressed at this time.

5.3.2 Ms. Angela Comeau, Principal, Shatford Memorial Elementary School and Ann Gagnon, Parent Representatives re: Schools and Crosswalk Safety

Ms. Angela Comeau, Ms. Ann Gagnon and Ms. Jackie Naerebout, Shatford Memorial Elementary School Travel Planning Committee made a presentation to the Committee on crosswalk issues and possible solutions at their school.

Ms. Gagon informed the Committee of the following crosswalk issues at Shatford Memorial Elementary School:

- Children's low risk awareness
- Overgrown trees blocking drivers' view of the crosswalk
- The road runs east-west, the sun creates blinding light and shadows at various times of the year and during the day
- Crosswalk is located on a rise in the road which is difficult to see
- High volume traffic including: dump trucks, tour buses, tourists and local traffic
- The crosswalk is located at an angled intersection (Shankel Road)
- Outdated signage
- Risk of complete crosswalk removal by the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal
- No crossing guard as it is an outdated crosswalk; volunteer crossing guards are not allowed due to liability issues

Ms. Naerebout suggested the following as possible solutions to address the crosswalk issue at Shatford Memorial Elementary School:

- Reclassify crosswalk zoning as a pedestrian crosswalk, not a school crosswalk
- Improve signage (neon yellow, larger signs)
- Improve infrastructure (lights, etc.)
- Install speed monitor display for drivers
- Paint zebra lines on road

The Committee entered into discussion with Ms. Comeau, Ms. Gagnon and Ms. Nacreous responding to questions.

Ms. Gagnon stated that the children walk to school and that there are six agencies involved with this crosswalk issue. She also noted that the crosswalk is not only used by school children but by the Community as well. Ms. Gagon further noted that the Parents' Association at the school are very involved and that they need clarification of ownership of the crosswalk and HRM's role.

Councillor Dalrymple advised that this issue is unique to urban areas. He noted that the road is maintained by the Province and that work is being done to make improvements. Further, that Regional Council is waiting for a report on the cost of zebra stripes. Councillor Dalrymple commented that more education is needed in schools and that there is a need to look at different standards for rural versus urban versus suburban.

Ms. Barlow commented that the Committee should look at the warrant system and how pedestrian counts are taking place. She noted that there is some wiggle room in the warrant system that can be used in rural areas and that this should be included in the Committee's report.

Deputy Mayor Fisher stated the crosswalk is currently classified as a school crosswalk with no crossing guard, but there is the potential to have it classified as a community

crosswalk. He also stated that Councillors' have the ability to purchase beacons as long as they have permission to install them.

Councillor Matt Whitman, who was present at the meeting, indicated that he purchased and installed speed sensors in Tantallon.

Mr. Collins stated that the road is owned by the Province and asked if the school has considered using flags. Ms. Comeau responded that flags are not endorsed by the Province; therefore the school has not pursued the use of flags.

Ms. McGillicuddy commented that the real equity issue is that children are left on their own to walk to school, especially children from low income families which needs to be addressed. She noted that children could ride the courtesy bus as long as it was not full.

Ms. McGillicuddy further questioned the vision of the Committee in regards to education. She commented that the Halifax Regional School Board would like to be included in the beginning discussions/review of crosswalk education in HRM schools. She asked the Committee to consider whether the curriculum should be a short course or a year-long course. She stated this information will be required in order for the Halifax Regional School Board to have staff in place.

Dr. Habib asked if the 2.4 kilometre walk can be relaxed. Ms. McGillicuddy stated that it comes down to funding and that no capital funding is available to make improvements with bussing and crosswalks.

A copy of the presentation was submitted for the file.

5.3.1 Dr. Ashan Habib re: Dalhousie Collision Study

Dr. Ashab Habib on behalf of Dalhousie Transportation Collaboratory (DalTRAC) presented the Dalhousie Collision Study, providing background information on the study to the Committee. He stated that the origin of the study began with the DalTRAC proposal; Nova Scotia Road Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC); and the Nova Scotia Department Energy. The objective of the study was to indentify the patterns and trends of all reported collisions involving all types of road users in Nova Scotia.

Dr. Habib informed the Committee that collision records from 2007 to 2011, obtained from police records, were used in the study. The dataset used was 74,414 unique records involving approximately 208,700 individuals. He informed the Committee that on average, over 14,000 collisions occur in Nova Scotia annually, averaging 445 pedestrian and bicycle related collisions per year. He noted that there is an average of 77 fatalities per year.

The Committee entered into a discussion with Dr. Habib responding to questions.

Deputy Mayor Fisher requested that a link be sent to all members once the report is published for the Province. Dr. Habib indicated that he would provide this to the Legislative Assistant for circulation to the Committee.

Mr. Wedge questioned if a comparison between all season tires and winter tires was used in the Collision Study. Dr. Habib responded that a comparison was not used in this study.

Ms. Barlow commented that there is a need for better data collection. She questioned if statistics from insurance companies were used in the study. Dr. Habib stated that insurance statistics were not used due to confidentiality concerns. Dr. Habib further noted that the data is now in good shape going forward, and that they are able to look at Halifax Regional Municipality statistics separately. He stated that there is a need to track progress, resource limitations and staff limitations. Dr. Habib stated that Service Nova Scotia has no mandate to record statistics.

Councillor Dalrymple commented that Halifax Regional Police/ Royal Canadian Mounted Police file reports when damages are over \$1,000. He noted that reports are sent to the Registry of Motor Vehicles and that the RCMP does not keep statistics. Sgt. Reynolds clarified that computer files are now kept. The paper work consists of two pages. Collection of data is not easy and difficult to extract data from the accident reports whether it is crosswalk, shoulders of roads, etc.

A copy of the presentation was submitted for the file.

5.3.2 Ms. Angela Comeau, Principal, Shatford Memorial Elementary School and Ann Gagnon, Parent Representatives re: Schools and Crosswalk Safety

This matter was addressed earlier in the meeting. See page 3.

6. REPORTS/DISCUSSION

6.1 Overview of laws and regulations relative to crosswalks/pedestrians, etc. – Sgt. David Reynolds

The following was before the Committee:

- Background information entitled: Common offences involving pedestrians/vehicles and crosswalks
- Question/Answer sheet related to crosswalks
- Halifax Regional Police Pedestrian Safety pamphlet
- Halifax Regional Police Crosswalk Safety pamphlet

Sgt. David Reynolds, Halifax Regional Police presented on overview of the laws and regulations relative to crosswalks and pedestrians. He informed the Committee of the difference between a marked crosswalk and an unmarked crosswalk.

Sgt. Reynolds informed the Committee that Halifax Regional Police (HRP) use Section 125(3) of the *Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act* as a guide when investigating accidents on crosswalks and issuing tickets. Sgt. Reynolds noted that lack of evidence can be an issue for HRP in regard to issuing tickets.

Mr. Collins stated that a crosswalk survey completed on crosswalk.ca showed that 26% of respondents did not know the definition of a crosswalk.

Ms. Klenavic that there seems to be more tickets issued in marked crosswalks than unmarked crosswalks.

Ms. McGillicuddy questioned if the Committee could ask for changes in the way tickets are issued. Councillor Dalrymple clarified that this is part of the Committee's work plan review.

6.2 Discussion re: Crossing Guard Program – Cst. Bryan Naas

Cst. Bryan Naas, Halifax Regional Police gave a verbal update on the Crossing Guard Program in HRM. Cst. Naas informed the Committee that in the 1990's HRM set criteria to be used in the placement of crossing guards.

Cst. Naas stated that crossing guards are used in the morning, lunch time and in the afternoon. He indicated that crossing guards receive yearly training, which focuses on crosswalks near elementary schools. He further noted that crossing guards are monitored by supervisors from Halifax Regional Police.

Ms. Barlow noted that the criterion for crossing guards is thirty cars per minute with a minimum of twenty children crossing. She stated that funding for the Crossing Guard Program comes from Halifax Regional Police and the Halifax Regional School Board. She also noted that if issues arise, parents should contact HRP or their Councillor.

Ms. McGillicuddy stated that if a school requests a crossing guard, the Halifax Regional School Board forwards the request to Halifax Regional Police.

In response to a question raised by Ms. Barlow on whether older children are allowed to act as crossing guards, Cst. Naas advised that is being reviewed. Ms. Barlow requested that this information be forwarded to the Committee. Cst. Naas stated that he would ask Superintendent Auld to forward this information to the Legislative Assistant for distribution to the Committee.

Ms. Barlow questioned if private funds were available and whether it could be used to place crossing guards. Cst. Naas advised that it is Halifax Regional Police's decision where crossing guards are placed regardless of the source of funding.

Ms. Barlow questioned the difference between pedestrian and school crosswalks. Mr. Roddy MacIntyre of HRM Traffic & Right of Way clarified that generally, there is no difference between a typical marked/signed crosswalk and a school crosswalk other than the image displayed on the sign. They are both considered to be official crosswalks and represent the same level of authority as far as traffic regulations go and would be “official” crosswalks 24/7.

Ms. McGillicuddy stated that if a crosswalk is eligible for a crossing guard then the crosswalk should be marked.

In response to a question raised by Ms. McGillicuddy, Cst. Naas responded that requests for crossing guards come from HRP or HRM Councillors’. He stated that if a crosswalk is approved and installed then it becomes a budget item.

Councillor Mason noted that crosswalks installed are based on data collected.

6.3 Work Plan Session – Marilyn Smith, Volunteer Services

The Committee agreed to defer this matter to the next meeting, to be held December 19, 2013.

7. ADDED ITEMS

8. NEXT MEETING DATE – December 19, 2013

The next regular meeting of the Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee will be held on December 19, 2013 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall.

The Committee asked that their December meeting be dedicated to their work plan and that no other agenda matters be scheduled at this time.

8.1 Proposed 2014 Meeting Schedule

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

INFORMATION ITEMS – None