

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

November 17, 2011

PRESENT: Councillor Jennifer Watts, Chair
Councillor Debbie Hum, Vice Chair
Mr. Lawrence Plug
Mr. David Jackson
Mr. Troy Nauffts
Mr. Walter Regan
Mr. Clive MacGregor
Ms. Elizabeth Pugh
Mr. Scott MacPhee
Mr. Myles McCallum

REGRETS: Councillor David Hendsbee

STAFF: Ms. Jessie Debaie, Assistant Regional Trail Coordinator
Mr. David MacIsaac, TDM Program Supervisor
Ms. Julie Vandervoort, Legislative Support

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. in Room 108, Bloomfield Centre.

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Walter Regan invited Committee members to the Halifax Regional Trails Association Christmas party on December 12th. Ms. Jessie Debaie stated she would send an e-mail reminder to members with the time and location.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 20, 2011

MOVED by Mr. Regan, seconded by Councillor Hum that the minutes of October 20, 2011 be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

The Chair requested that item 7.3.1 be moved up to follow item 4. The order of business was accepted as amended.

7.3.1 Cycling in HRM – Ms. Sarah Craig, I Heart Bikes

Ms. Craig gave a presentation to the Committee and circulated a brochure. She stated that the I Heart Bikes rental business had facilitated more than 1000 bike trips in its first season, the largest age group using the service was over sixty and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. She noted that one consistent recommendation from customers was to allow some cycling in Point Pleasant Park on weekends. She suggested that the current no cycling rule be modified by considering the possibility of some bike-only paths, bicycle speed limits, and signs for blind corners. She added that customers had also expressed concern that bikes were not allowed to be walked through the Public Gardens and she suggested this rule be re-examined.

In response to questions, Ms. Craig clarified that the Waterfront Development Corporation had changed its regulations to allow cycling on the boardwalk (except for a small area owned by the Armour Group near Cow's Ice Cream, where bikes have to be walked) and that there had been no problems or accidents reported. She added that a tandem bicycle was in the budget for the 2012 season, and possibly an adult tricycle and that these items could provide cycling opportunities for customers with visual or mobility impairments.

Committee members expressed support for Ms. Craig's suggestions. The Committee agreed the Chair will write letters to park officials outlining ATAC's support and encouraging them to invite Ms. Craig to make a presentation.

MOVED by Mr. Regan, seconded by Ms. Pugh that the Chair send letters to the Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee and to the corresponding body for the Public Gardens expressing ATAC's support for re-examining the current rules governing bicycles in those parks. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The Chair thanked Ms. Craig for her presentation and the Committee returned to the Order of Business.

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

5.1 Staff Updates

Mr. MacIsaac informed the Committee that 130 new bike racks were now installed in the downtown area and that public consultations were underway on the Sackville-Burnside connector. He noted that there will be three meetings in November (for identified stakeholders) on the north-south corridor project and once this information is gathered, the matter will go to a public meeting in January 2012. He stated that he would have an update on sewer grates soon and would provide this to ATAC. He added that the Main Street business community in Dartmouth had expressed interest in promoting active transportation and that Halifax was one of ten cities taking part in Bike Score (a website that rates bike routes when provided with the cyclist's point of origin and destination.)

The Committee clarified with Mr. MacIsaac that the AT Coordinator position was not currently filled as the Coordinator is on maternity leave. Several members expressed concern about the timing and impact of this staffing decision on AT and the Regional Plan. Members agreed that the Chair should write a letter outlining ATAC's concerns.

MOVED by Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Nauffs that the Chair send a letter to Mr. Butts, CAO, requesting the AT Coordinator position be filled. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - NONE

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

7.1 Correspondence

7.1.1 Bicycle Trailers – Forwarded by Councillor Mosher from a Resident of District 17

The Chair referred the Committee to the comment by resident Mr. Jim Scriven, forwarded to ATAC by Councillor Mosher. Ms. Pugh noted that the review of bicycle regulations was a provincial matter under the *Motor Vehicle Act*. The Chair stated she would respond to this item and refer Mr. Scriven to the correct authority.

Councillor Hum read an e-mail she received from a resident concerning bicycle safety on the Bedford Highway. Mr. MacIsaac asked Councillor Hum to forward the e-mail to him and stated he would respond.

7.2 Petitions - NONE

7.3 Presentation

7.3.1 Cycling in HRM – Ms. Sarah Craig, I Heart Bikes

This item was discussed previously, please see page 3.

8. REPORTS

8.1 Staff

8.1.1 2012 Meeting Schedule – Potential Change from 3rd Thursday to 1st Thursday of the Month

The Committee discussed the schedule with some members expressing a conflict with the first Thursday and a preference for meeting the second Thursday of the month. The Chair stated she would check with the Legislative Assistant's office about adjusting the schedule and she asked members to hold both December 8 and December 15 open.

8.2 Committee Members

8.2.1 Winter Bike Lane Maintenance -- Chair

The Chair explained the protocol and priorities for clearing lanes and encouraged members to call 490-4000 if lanes are not cleared sufficiently.

8.2.2 Work Plan - Chair

Mr. Regan commented that he felt ATAC should take a formal position on the role of AT as part of the Regional Plan. The Chair stated that she was discussing the Regional Plan review process with staff and that she would come back to the Committee with a plan for how ATAC can participate.

8.2.3 Other Reports

Bicycle Nova Scotia

Mr. Plug informed the Committee about a project, working with police officers, to provide free helmets to children who might be ticketed for riding without a helmet. He provided an update on the existing informal (created by volunteers) mountain bike trails in the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove area, stating that some of these trails are at risk from the proposed development and Bicycle Nova Scotia is seeking incorporation of the trails in

the park plans. He also mentioned studies that indicate multiuse trails are the most dangerous for cyclists and agreed to forward the source and link to ATAC members. The Chair requested that this data be discussed further at a future meeting.

Halifax Regional Trails Association (HRTA)

Mr. Regan reported that a recent Trail Camp was a success with good attendance. He circulated copies of the new HRTA ads, noting that the website is getting significantly more hits since the ads began. He also circulated a report on the Sackville Greenway and mentioned that a new bike trail map was being created by volunteers.

Safety and Education Committee

The Chair stated that this Committee is producing a handlebar information flyer for people purchasing bicycles.

Halifax Cycling Coalition (HCC)

Mr. MacGregor noted that the HCC is continuing its participation on the north-south corridor project, working with the business community along the corridor to create a bike-positive environment.

9. ADDED ITEMS

9.1 Trail Access for Visually Impaired Residents

Mr. Nauffts provided information to the Committee on a website design that can be navigated by the visually impaired, forms of tactile signage on trails and staff training for group recreation. He stated that he is doing outreach for potential contacts and partners and is looking for a host non-profit organization in order to apply for a grant to further develop the proposal. Committee members expressed support and suggested that the Ecology Action Centre might be appropriate as a host. Mr. MacPhee offered to meet with Mr. Nauffts to discuss the project further.

The Chair requested that this matter be placed on the December agenda so that ATAC can stay current and continue to explore ways to assist with the initiative.

9.2 Bike Week

The Chair requested that Bike Week be placed on the agenda for the next meeting so that members could discuss how ATAC can best provide support.

10. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - NONE

11. NEXT MEETING DATE – December 8, 2011

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Julie Vandervoort
Legislative Support