

NORTH WEST TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES

April 10, 2013

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Mr. Michael Cormier, Chair  
Mr. Ian MacLaine  
Mr. Alan Barnhill  
Mr. Phil Cox  
Mr. Stephen J. Scott

OTHERS

PRESENT: Councillor Steve Craig

REGRETS:

Mr. John Merrick  
Councillor Brad Johns

STAFF:

Mr. Dave Reage, Manager, Planning & Scheduling, Metro  
Transit  
Ms. Patricia Hughes, Supervisor, Service Design & Projects,  
Metro Transit  
Ms. Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant  
Ms. Sarah Pellerine, Legislative Support

**Final meeting of North West Transit Advisory Committee  
– minutes administratively approve**

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## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. in the Sackville Councillor's Office, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, 636 Sackville Drive, Lower Sackville.

## **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 13, 2013**

**MOVED by Mr. MacLaine, seconded by Mr. Scott that the minutes of March 13, 2013, be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

## **3. NEW BUSINESS**

### **3.1 Future of the North West Transit Advisory Committee**

Councillor Craig provided an update on the status of the North West Transit Advisory Committee, pursuant to direction from North West Community Council and the Transportation Standing Committee. North West Community Council approved the dissolution of the Committee, and the Transportation Standing Committee asked staff to report on options for community consultation on transit issues, including the formation of a Regional Transit Advisory Committee. Councillor Craig, on behalf of North West Community Council, thanked Committee members for their contributions and years of service. Members were assured that they will be invited to apply if a Regional Transit Advisory Committee is formed.

At the request of the Chair, Councillor Craig and staff indicated that avenues for feedback from residents about transit issues after the Committee is dissolved can be communicated in the following ways:

- Calling the HRM call centre at 311
- Contacting Metro Transit directly
- Contacting their area Councillor
- Attending the public participation portion of their area Community Council.

Mr. Cormier noted that he would like to see better communication between departments and feels that things have been done properly but the ramifications were unforeseen. Namely Councillors and the Committee were not aware of routes and schedules that were to be cut in the Sackville area until after they had happened. Cutting transit in Sackville at night because of ridership averages of 13 passengers per trip instead of the required 15 by Metro Transit to maintain a route has caused many issues for residents in the area, making it very difficult for residents to get home at night.

Mr. Barnhill noted he does not feel Metro Transit has reached its full potential and there is so much more it can accomplish and this is why he has been part of the Committee for so long. He added that he feels HRM has not really looked into Metro Transit and its potential the way they should and that we can do bigger, better things by continually talking with Councillors and Metro Transit on issues.

Mr. Scott noted, he has been part of the Committee since 2006 and has always had an interest in community groups, because their opinions have always been trusted and sought out. He has not always had that feeling, however, from Metro Transit regarding the NWTAC. He also feels that Metro Transit and transit in general should be part of any new development review.

Mr. MacLaine noted when he started on the Committee that a representative from Metro Transit would attend the meeting but over the last couple of years this has stopped. He added that one of his big concerns and projects he was of the opinion that the Lucasville Route should continue along Lucasville to Hammonds Plains, south on Hammonds Plains Road to Mill Cove (Bedford Sobeys) and return along the same route to the Sackville Metro Link Terminal. This would give riders from the Lucasville area an opportunity to shop in Bedford or Sackville or to connect with other Transit routes.

Mr. Cox noted he has been part of the Committee for 21 years and has seen many improvements made to transit along the way, some of which he feels have been brought on by the Committee. He would like to see something replace the Committee as he believes in grass route involvement and feels that to make a new Committee work there must be members on it who take the bus daily. He commented that Metro Transit is a public service and needs to be subsidized to maintain an acceptable level of service.

Mr. Cox indicated that an issue he would like to see carried forward would be extending route 87 into Bedford to create more transit options for Bedford residents. Another issue is to have pedestrian and transit improvements made to Bedford via Duke Street and the Bedford Commons. Sidewalks in the Bedford Commons site do not connect to Sackville/Glendale Avenue. Mr. Cox noted that the new Burnside Connection will increase the traffic onto Glendale and he would like to see a traffic study finally done for the area which includes pedestrians, transit and cyclists.

### **3.2 Metro Transit New Five-Year Strategic Framework**

Mr. Dave Reage, Manager, Planning & Scheduling, and Ms. Patricia Hughes, Supervisor, Service Design & Projects, Metro Transit, provided a presentation to the Committee on the new Metro Transit Five-Year Strategic Framework. The presentation is available online and on file.

In response to questions regarding the communication plan, it was noted that there is not a communication plan in place as of yet, but Metro Transit will be holding public consultation looking for feedback from current, potential and non-riders.

In response to questions regarding transit oriented development, it was noted this would not be part of the new Five-Year plan but more so in the Regional Plan. Staff indicated that a report has been requested on the possibility of having transit studies for development proposals, noting that that the issue of transit oriented development is on the minds of the Councillors.

In response to questions regarding community bus service, it was noted that trying to run a service such as provided in Western Canada would not work with current union agreements here.

It was noted that a successful example of a new Metro Transit model that has worked well is the Metro X service.

The Committee discussed how Metro Transit needs the support from HRM to thrive in the future and Councillors need to look at transit, transportation and development as a whole to make the best decisions. That being said the Committee acknowledged that in the end it comes down to cost and based on this they realize transit cannot be provided for every resident.

Mr. Reage clarified that the Metro Transit New Five-Year Strategic Framework is draft until the upcoming budget is approved by Regional Council.

#### **4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES/DEHERED BUSINESS**

##### **4.1 AVL On-Time Performance**

The Committee reviewed the material provided in the package and decided to mark this item as complete.

##### **4.2 Route 87 Service Update**

The Committee noted the origin of this question was from when the map was released on the 5-year plan and would like to have seen a direct route downtown as opposed to the terminal to terminal route it takes now, or the ability to go from Bedford to the Dartmouth Terminal.

##### **4.3 Route 33 Update**

Staff updated that the lighting issue was addressed on route 33 and it was noted that some stops have been relocated closer to lighting sources to alleviate this problem. Staff noted that they are considering distance from lighting sources when determining new stops. The Committee indicated that the need for somewhere safe to stand while waiting for the bus is also an issue.

##### **4.4 Transit Service for Lucasville Road and Area**

The Committee noted they would like to have this looked at again even though it is not in the current budget. Councillor Craig let the Committee know this is an issue he will look into as it is important to the community.

Mr. Barnhill noted that Park and Ride locations should be incorporated into new developments to have better transit routes and cut down on some traffic. Mr. Reage noted that Metro Transit is involved in new development but they do not have the authority to say what must happen. Mr. Barnhill noted this is another example on how Metro Transit should be more involved.

#### **4.5 Metro X Airport/Fall River Route #320**

Statistics on usage of the new route were provided to the Committee. It was noted by Mr. Reage that it will take time to develop the transit to the Airport, that it generally takes two years to develop a route. There are 5000 people working at the Airport and surrounding area, which should increase ridership.

Mr. Reage noted they are hoping to have automated passenger counters on buses over the next few years.

#### **4.6 Walker Connector Road and Old Sackville Road**

Councillor Craig has talked to the RCMP, Mr. Robar and Municipal and Provincial staff on this issue and it is at the top of his list of things to get done in the community. He assured the Committee he will persevere to have this item rectified.

#### **4.7 Route and Schedule Adjustments.**

The Committee reviewed the material provided in the package and decided to mark this item as complete. It was noted the draft plan is on the website and will remain a draft until Council approves the budget.

**5. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS – None**

**6. REPORTS - None**

**7. ADDED ITEMS - None**

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Sarah Pellerine  
Legislative Support