

NORTH WEST TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
April 11, 2007

PRESENT: Mr. Phil Cox, Chair,
Mr. William Chaffey, Vice-Chair
Mr. Ron McKinnon
Mr. John Merrick
Mr. Gunther Seyffarth
Ms. Angela Miller
Councillor Brad Johns

ABSENT: Mr. Steve Scott
Mr. Terry Churney

STAFF: Mr. Dave Reage, Project Manager, Metro Transit
Mr. Paul McDaniels, Manager, Metro Transit
Mr. Eddy Robar, Scheduling Coordinator, Metro Transit
Ms. Christina Sears, Legislative Assistant

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Call to Order	3
2.	Approval of Order of Business - Additions/Deletions	3
3.	Approval of Minutes - March 14, 2007 and November 9, 2005	3
4.	Business Arising Out of the Minutes	3
	4.1. Status Sheet Items	3
	4.1.1 Service Through Bedford	3
	4.1.2 Status of 2006 Ridership Counts	3
	4.1.3 Passenger Complaints	3
	4.1.4 Parking at Sackville Bus Terminal	4
5.	Consideration of Deferred Business	4
6.	Reports (Oral)	
7.	Correspondence	4
8.	Added Items	
	8.1 Community/ Neighbourhood Buses - Mr. Paul McDaniels	4
9.	Next Meeting Date - Wednesday, May 9, 2007	5
10.	Adjournment	5

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm in Boardroom #1, Sackville Planning Office, 1st Floor, 636 Sackville Drive, Lower Sackville.

The Chair welcomed Mr. McDaniels and Mr. Reage. Mr. McDaniels and Mr. Reage provided the Committee with their background information.

Ron McKinnon arrived at 7:06 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF ORDER OF BUSINESS AND ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Additions:

8.1 Community/ Neighbourhood Buses - Mr. Paul McDaniels

The Committee accepted the agenda as amended.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - March 14, 2007

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - November 9, 2005

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Status Sheet Items

4.1.1 Service Through Bedford

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

4.1.2 Status of 2006 Ridership Counts

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

4.1.3 Passenger Complaints

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

4.1.4 Parking at Sackville Bus Terminal

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

6. REPORTS (Oral)

7. CORRESPONDENCE - None

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Community/ Neighbourhood Buses - Mr. Paul McDaniels

Mr. Paul McDaniels engaged the Committee and noted the following:

- The Community Shuttle started as a pilot in Surrey, British Columbia. The program was very successful and there are now one hundred and forty shuttles throughout the city;
- The system will work if it is planned and implemented in the right areas. It is a great concept for the right application. Councillor Brad Johns suggested Sackville as a location for the pilot program;
- Neighbourhood Buses are not the conventional size buses. They are smaller in size comparable to an access-a- bus. They have one access spot, and hold approximately twenty-four passengers. They have smaller engines, and are more fuel efficient. The smaller buses operate with an approximate thirty to thirty-three percent operating cost;
- The smaller buses are designed to operate as a feeder service with lower ridership. They are not intrusive, and can travel on smaller community roads;
- Flexibility in service delivery will experience a great increase in ridership;
- A network system for linking buses will be implemented. The looping system is currently missing, all communities will be linked with the neighbourhood bus;
- He feels more parking lots are not the answer and suggested the use of smaller buses to transfer the rider to the larger buses, using neighbourhood buses during peak hours to get riders to their main terminals;
- There are lower costs associated with running the smaller 'throw away' buses (approximately one hundred and forty thousand dollars);
- 'Throw away' buses will run for up to seven years, whereas the conventional buses retire at about twenty years;

Discussion ensued amongst Committee members.

Mr. Eddy Robar advised the Committee of the future GPS systems for the conventional buses. This system will maintain the distance spacing between the buses and allows for headway control.

Councillor Brad Johns advised that funding would not be available in this years budget to begin this project. He noted there is approximately six million dollars in reserve for the Fast Ferry Pilot. He cost compared the two pilots and it was determined that the anticipated cost to launch this project would be approximately two million dollars. The Committee agreed the neighbourhood buses would be a more cost effective use of funds.

Discussion ensued and in response to questions, concerns and issues Mr. McDaniels advised the following:

- It would cost approximately 1.27 million dollars to obtain twelve buses. This is primarily operating and equipment costs;
- He has brought with him to Halifax policies and procedures, they will need to be amended to apply to HRM;
- When amalgamation occurred, Metro Transit had a board of directors. Metro Transit currently has two administrative position for the entire company;
- HRM has just achieved the same level of service as in 1988. There has been an incremental one million dollar increase per year;
- Neighbourhood buses has to be coupled with getting people downtown faster. Transferring riders to the larger terminal and having them wait is not the answer;
- Neighbourhood buses would be a great alternative to the Fast Ferry Pilot at a significant reduction in associated costs;
- Transit is an essential social service challenging all philosophies and recommendations.

The Committee requested statistics for the sales of Metro Transit Passes. Mr. Eddy Robar advised he would look into it and have a response for the Committee at the next meeting.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE - Wednesday, May 9, 2007

8. ADJOURNMENT - The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 pm.

Christina Sears
Legislative Assistant