

NORTH WEST TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

OCTOBER 13, 2010

PRESENT: Mr. John Merrick, Chair
Mr. William Chaffey
Mr. Michael Cormier
Mr. Phil Cox
Ms. Christina Parker
Deputy Mayor Brad Johns
Mr. Alan Barnhill

REGRETS: Mr. Stephen J. Scott, Vice-Chair
Mr. Terry Churney
Mr. Ian MacLaine
Mr. Gunther Seyffarth

STAFF: Ms. Amy Power, Supervisor, Scheduling & Service Planning, Metro
Transit
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. John Merrick, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. in the Board Room of the Ragged Lake Transit Facility, 80 Long Lake Drive, Ragged Lake Business Park.

2. TOUR OF THE RAGGED LAKE TRANSIT FACILITY

Ms. Amy Power, Supervisor, Scheduling and Service Planning, Metro Transit, gave a guided tour of the new Ragged Lake Transit Facility prior to the meeting being called to order.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – September 8, 2010

Correction: Mr. Phil Cox and Mr. Eddie Robar were not in attendance at the September 8, 2010 meeting.

MOVED by Mr. Michael Cormier, seconded by Ms. Christina Parker that the minutes of September 8, 2010, as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. APPROVAL OF ORDER OF BUSINESS AND ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

- Additions:
- 9.1 Resignation of Mr. Terry Churney
 - 9.2 Committees of Council Review Update – *Deputy Mayor Johns*
 - 9.3 Status of Dartmouth Bridge Terminal – *Mr. Cormier*
 - 9.4 Overview - Role of the North West Transit Advisory Committee – *Mr. John Merrick*
 - 9.5 Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board Public Hearing re: Proposed Halifax Harbour Bridges Toll Increase – *Deputy Mayor Johns*

The Committee agreed to deal with Item 9.4 prior to Item 5.

The agenda, as amended, was approved.

The Committee dealt with Item 9.4 at this time.

9.4 Overview – Role of the North West Transit Advisory Committee

Mr. Merrick, Chair, reviewed the mandate of the North West Transit Advisory Committee (NWTAC) and advised that they would like to have more two-way communication between Metro Transit and the Committee as the Committee can make contributions to transit. He explained that he would like to see Metro Transit bring issues to the Committee for their consideration and possible resolution.

The Legislative Assistant advised that a motion from the Committee would be required requesting that the North West Community Council amend their Terms of Reference to

include this change as the role of the NWTAC is that of an advisory board to the North West Community Council; Metro Transit staff does not report to the Committee.

Deputy Mayor Johns suggested that further discussion on this matter be held until Item 9.2 was addressed as he would provide an update on the Committee of Council review and the potential change in the North West Transit Advisory Committee's role.

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

The Committee agreed to revise the agenda and follow the topics as outlined on the response sheet from Metro Transit as follows:

5.1 Lucasville Road Transit Service

Ms. Power advised that a survey would be available online from October 18th to November 5th in regard to transit service for the Lucasville Road area. The online survey will be advertised in the local community newspapers. A contact at Metro Transit will be arranged for those persons without access to the internet.

Deputy Mayor Johns requested that he receive a copy of the information to be distributed to the public on October 18th for his District 19 Newsletter.

5.2 Beaver Bank Community Transit

Ms. Power advised that a motion was passed at the September 14th Regional Council session requesting a meeting with Metro Transit staff and three Councillors whose districts have community transit service as well as Councillor Blumenthal in regard to service reductions for the Route 3. She advised that this is a budget item and the service reductions have been approved due to the routes not meeting service standards. Staff are preparing a report for the November 9th Regional Council session that will include a number of options.

In response to questions by Members of the Committee, Ms. Powers advised that:

- the Community Transit service is no longer area rated as there is now an approved Transit Tax
- although the community transit service currently does not meet service standards, peak hour trips are being maintained
- there were concerns with the former community buses as they did not have the vehicle maintenance that Metro Transit could provide nor a surplus bus in case the Community Transit bus broke down.

Mr. Merrick requested that the matter be added to the November 10th agenda with an update following the November 9th Council session.

5.3 Commuter Rail / High Speed Ferry

Ms. Powers advised that a report was expected to be before Regional Council on November 16th in regard to the High Speed Ferry / Commuter Rail matter.

5.4 HRM Corporate Call Centre

Staff advised that a monthly Crystal report was prepared for Councillors by the HRM Corporate Call Centre. The report outlines issues per district from the calls received, however; the information can only be divided by district if a civic address is provided. Without a civic address, the information is included in a “transit” category and forwarded to appropriate staff.

Deputy Mayor Johns explained that there is an online complaint form that residents may complete in regard to transit service that is automatically forwarded to the area Councillor. He advised that he receives almost no calls or complaints in regard to transit service.

In response to a request by Mr. Merrick that Deputy Mayor Johns forward any complaints or transit related issues he receives to the North West Transit Advisory Committee, Deputy Mayor Johns advised that he, and the other members of the North West Community Council, do forward issues to the NWTAC.

Ms. Power advised that Metro Transit has hired a Service Advisor who will, in future, generate reports in regard to transit issues raised.

5.5 Two-Way Communication Between Metro Transit and the North West Transit Advisory Committee

This matter was covered under Item 9.4. See page 3.

5.6 Status of Damascus Road Bus Shelter

Ms. Power advised that the Damascus Road site does not meet service standards for a bus shelter at this time. A response from Wal-mart has not been received in regard to cost sharing the bus shelter. Ms. Power explained that bus shelter installations are done by priority and the current contract only permits forty-five (45) bus shelters over a fifteen (15) year period. This is only year three of the current contract. She noted that Route 88 would have reduced service as of November due to low ridership; it will operate from Cobequid to the Bedford Commons until 10:00 p.m. with two (2) hour off peak service and ½ hour peak hour service. The last run leaving Bedford Common will be 10:55 p.m. in order to accommodate the Employees who travel by transit.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Power advised that there was no funding to provide an increase in service to re-route the #88 to all the malls; also, the distance would have been too great as most commuters would not want to travel the full

loop if they were just going to the Wal-mart. She noted that more service could be provided if the demand increased in Bedford Common once more development occurs in the area. The Route 82 will also have some schedule changes but will run seven (7) days per week.

Mr. Merrick commented that it was difficult to do a survey on what people may do but there may have been enough riders if the Route 88 were to travel to all the malls. It would be difficult to determine that ridership unless the service was offered.

5.7 Left Turn Signal for Cobequid Terminal

MOVED by Mr. Alan Barnhill, seconded by Ms. Christina Parker that the North West Transit Advisory Committee recommend that the North West Community Council request that the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal implement the following upgrades to the Cobequid Road Metro Transit Terminal as follows:

- 1. Install a left turn signal for vehicles exiting the Cobequid Terminal and heading left onto the Cobequid Road.**
- 2. Widen the corner for right hand turns when exiting the Cobequid Terminal as, currently, a hard right turn is required and is difficult to maneuver.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5.8 Widening of Walker Connector Road Intersection

In response to concerns raised by the Committee at their September meeting, staff advised that improvements to the Walker Connector Road, Old Sackville Road and Beaver Bank Connector Road area have been under review for a few years. Through traffic modeling software, scenarios such as an all-way stop or traffic signals were proven to be very detrimental to traffic as each scenario caused traffic to back up on the Beaver Bank Connector Road. An additional lane was added to the Old Sackville Road a few years ago that extended the existing left turn lane. The intersection operates at a high level of service during the remainder of the day, although there is still some delay during peak hours.

The need for a pedestrian crossing at this location has also been reviewed numerous times. The most recent study concluded that there are now enough pedestrians crossing to warrant a marked crosswalk. A work order has already been issued to install a marked crosswalk on the upper side of the Old Sackville Road. The work should be completed by the end of October.

MOVED by Ms. Christina Parker, seconded by Mr. Michael Cormier that the North West Transit Advisory Committee recommend that the North West Community Council contact the provincial Department of Transportation and infrastructure

Renewal in regard to roadway improvements to the Sackville Metro Link Terminal as follows:

- 1. Install a marked crosswalk from the Sackville Metro Link Terminal across the Old Sackville Road to the Walker Connector Road as the most recent traffic study concluded that there are now enough pedestrians crossing to warrant a marked crosswalk.**
- 2. Incorporate a left turn signal from the Beaver Bank Connector Road to the Old Sackville Road.**
- 3. Improve the corner of Walker Connector Road by widening the corner as buses have difficulty maneuvering that section of road and often must stop and wait for traffic to pass.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Ensuring pedestrian safety and vehicular efficiency is the desired outcome, therefore; the North West Transit Advisory Committee strongly recommend that the North West Community Council encourage the provincial authority to take immediate action to upgrade the safety and efficiency of these roadways.

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

6.1 Proposed North West Transit Advisory Committee 2010/11 Workplan

Deputy Mayor Johns suggested that the North West Transit Advisory Committee present their annual report to the North West Community Council during their Annual General Meeting in the Spring of 2011.

The Legislative Assistant will draft the Annual Report for the Committee's review in the Spring of 2011.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS - NONE

8. REPORTS

8.1 Committee Members

8.1.1 Bedford Visioning

Mr. Merrick advised that he had no update at this time.

9. ADDED ITEMS

9.1 Resignation of Mr. Terry Churney

The Legislative Assistant advised that Mr. Churney had submitted his resignation from

the Committee due to ill health. She noted that as per procedure, the North West Community Council has been notified of the resignation and resulting vacancy.

MOVED by Ms. Christina Parker, seconded by Mr. Michael Cormier that the North West Transit Advisory Committee acknowledge Mr. Churney's valued contributions during his term of service on the Committee from 2006 to 2010, and; reluctantly, accept his resignation. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

9.2 Committee of Council Review Update

Deputy Mayor Johns advised that Halifax Regional Council approved, on Tuesday, October 12th, the proposed Committee of Council reform to commence the new structure of six (6) Standing Committees of Council as follows: Administrative Committee; Appeals Committee; Environment and Sustainability Committee; Finance and Audit Committee; Community Planning and Economic Development Committee and a Transportation Committee. The Standing Committees could have advisory committees, however; it is uncertain if Municipal Clerk's Office support would be provided for those advisory committees. Membership on the North West Transit Advisory Committee will remain status quo until further notice.

9.3 Status of Metro Transit Dartmouth Bridge Terminal

Deputy Mayor Johns advised that the bids have been received and were over the Council approved budget by \$400,000. A review will be done of the proposed plan to see what can be revised to keep the project in line with the approved budget.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Power advised that the site preparation work caused the cost increase for the project due to the slope of the property and the potential pyritic slate on site. All route changes may be delayed, however; the changes will also depend on the budget.

The Committee noted that security in the area was a priority and requested an update on what security measures were in place now and what measures were planned in the interim until the completion of the new terminal. Washroom facilities for the operators was also a priority noted by the Committee members.

9.4 Overview of Role of North West Transit Advisory Committee

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting; see page 3 and Item 9.2 on page 8.

9.5 Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board Public Hearing re: Halifax Harbour Bridges Proposed Toll Increase

Deputy Mayor Johns advised that the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board was interested in receiving public comment in regard to the upcoming matter of the Halifax Harbour Bridges proposed Toll Increase.

The Committee commented that Metro Transit buses should not be charged the toll to cross the bridge as they are assisting the Bridge Commission by reducing traffic on the bridges.

MOVED by Mr. Michael Cormier, seconded by Mr. Phil Cox that the North West Transit Advisory Committee recommend that the North West Community Council write to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board advising that they support the proposed Halifax Harbour Bridges Toll Increase if that increase was used to offset the tolls for Metro Transit buses. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE – November 10, 2010

The November meeting will be held in the Acadia Room 1, 1st Floor Sackville Library, 636 Sackville Drive, Lr. Sackville.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Chris Newson
Legislative Assistant