

TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE
MINUTES

December 4, 2013

MEMBERS

PRESENT:

Councillor Reg Rankin, Chair
Deputy Mayor Darren Fisher
Councillor Jennifer Watts
Councillor Barry Dalrymple
Councillor David Hendsbee
Councillor Waye Mason
Councillor Russell Walker

REGRETS:

Councillor Tim Outhit, Vice Chair

STAFF:

Ms. Jane Fraser, Director, Planning & Infrastructure
Ms. Kirby Grant, Senior Solicitor
Ms. Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 3rd Floor, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 13, 2013

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Fisher, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee, that the Transportation Standing Committee minutes of November 13, 2013, be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

A memorandum from Councillor Dalrymple dated November 28, 2013 with regard to agenda item 7.4.1 re: “Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee Update” was circulated to the Committee.

Addition:

7.1.2 Councillor Watts - Low Income Transit Passes – Information Report

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Mason, that the order of business be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

A Discussion was held with regard to the Transportation Standing Committee status sheet. The following updates were put forward:

- SmartTrip E-Pass Fare Medium and SmartTrip Membership Fee Structure can be marked as complete.
- Acquisition of Hines Road and Caldwell Road, Eastern Passage can be marked as complete.

Councillor Watts inquired as to the status of the Local Bikeway Model. Mr. David McCusker, Regional Transportation Manager, indicated that a report should be coming forward for the February 2014 meeting.

Councillor Mason noted that the intent for the October 2, 2013 item “Zebra Stripes at Uncontrolled Marked Crosswalks” was to bring it forward for inclusion in this upcoming budget. He also inquired as to a target date for the Street Closure Policy report. Councillor Mason further suggested that the Commuter Rail Monthly Update be moved to a quarterly report, similar to the quarterly reports provided for the Metro Transit 5 year service plan.

The Committee agreed to remove items from the status sheet by motion of the Committee. The Committee also requested that staff look into formalizing all standing committee status sheets, similar to the status sheet process for Community Council.

4. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & PRESENTATIONS

4.1 Correspondence

4.1.1 Bicycle Nova Scotia Response to HRM on Paved Shoulders

Correspondence from Bicycle Nova Scotia was before the Committee.

Councillor Hendsbee thanked Bicycle Nova Scotia for the response and suggested that this information be filed for future consideration.

4.2 Petitions

4.2.1 Councillor Walker

Councillor Walker submitted a petition signed by 169 taxi drivers, in support of reinstating the HRM Taxi and Limousine Committee.

4.3 Presentations - None

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

5.1 Monthly Update – Commuter Rail Plan

Ms. Patricia Hughes, Supervisor, Service Design & Projects, Metro Transit, advised that there has been no response from CN to date, although CN has indicated that there is a draft prepared. She will forward the response to the Committee as soon as it is received. Ms. Hughes indicated that staff are working on the RFP for the Commuter Rail study, and hope to release it in January. She clarified that moving forward with the study is not dependent on CN's participation.

Councillor Hendsbee requested a copy of the letter sent to CN, and suggested that a next step could be writing to the Minister responsible for Via Rail.

5.2 Taxi Medallion Proposal and Taxi Owner Licenses

A memorandum from the Legislative Assistant dated November 22, 2013 was before the Committee.

This matter was before the Committee to clarify a motion made at the November 2013 Transportation Standing Committee meeting.

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Watts, that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council direct staff

to request the enabling legislation from the province for the transferability of taxi owner licenses. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – None

7. REPORTS

7.1 STAFF

7.1.1 Transit Engagement Models

An Information Report dated October 24, 2013 was before the Committee. This item was added to this agenda for discussion during the November 13, 2013 meeting.

The Committee discussed the role of the former North West Transit Advisory Committee, and the engagement role that other current HRM Committees play, such as the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The possibility of an ad hoc committee for the Metro Transit Five Year Service Review was discussed,

Councillor Mason indicated on behalf of Councillor Craig, who was unable to attend this meeting due to illness, that he is in favour of forming a regional transit advisory committee.

The Committee discussed having a public participation portion at the end of standing committee meetings, as an opportunity for feedback from the public. They discussed how residents can provide comments to Metro Transit.

MOVED by Councillor Dalrymple, seconded by Councillor Fisher, that this item be deferred to the next Transportation Standing Committee meeting. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7.1.2 Councillor Watts - Low Income Transit Passes *(information report dated November 12, 2013)*

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Mason, that the Transportation Standing Committee recommends that Regional Council consider the implementation of a low income bus pass pilot program in the 2014/15 budget, as outlined in the November 12, 2013 staff report, for a period of 6 months beginning in May 2014, and that the pilot program consists of a maximum of 500 monthly transit passes being offered at a 50% discount to low income residents.

Councillor Rankin excused himself from the meeting at 2:53 p.m., at which time Deputy Mayor Fisher took the Chair.

The Committee discussed the motion, with the following comments noted:

- This initiative might serve to encourage Metro Transit ridership, with positive environmental and traffic implications.
- The program would be intended to assist residents who were not able to afford a car or the full cost of a monthly transit pass.
- As social services are not within the mandate of HRM, it was suggested that HRM strike up a working relationship with the Department of Community Services to determine those that require assistance with transportation.
- Questions and suggestions were raised as to how the program would be administered.

Staff clarified the following at the request of the Committee:

- The cost of the proposed program would be approximately \$20,000 per month (\$120,000 for a six month pilot project, \$240,000 on an annualized basis).
- The discount would be 50% of the monthly price of a transit pass.
- It was anticipated that the program would be administered by Metro Transit.
- Applicants to the program would be required to complete an application form.
- Staff would include questions on the application form with regard to past transit use, to have better data after the pilot phase, and to determine financial implications of the implementation of the program.
- The Department of Community Services already provides some funding for transportation assistance. This provincial assistance captures a portion of low income residents but not those low income residents who work full time.

The Committee discussed the proper direction for this motion to follow, and it was noted that it should be brought forward with the Metro Transit budget discussion at the upcoming Committee of the Whole meeting.

Mayor Savage joined the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7.2 ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

7.2.1 Updated from Councillor Watts (verbal)

Councillor Watts updated on recent activities of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, noting that the Committee appreciated having Metro Transit staff attend a meeting to review details of the Lacewood Transit Terminal and ask for feedback. Councillor Watts advised that Metro Community Housing Association presented to the Committee on housing needs for those with mental health issues and two HRM recreation staff are in Ottawa assessing their accessibility plan.

7.3 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

7.3.1 Update from Councillor Watts (verbal)

Councillor Watts updated on recent activities of the Active Transportation, noting that DalTrack presented to the Committee on a collision report, which would be of interest to this Committee. She noted that the Committee received a request to look at Point Pleasant Park restricts to cyclists. Councillor Watts indicated that the Committee has had a discussion on the roll out of bike lanes on Windsor/Vernon/Seymour Streets, and lessons learned for the next installation, noting that staff have been meeting on a communication strategy regarding bike lanes.

7.4 CROSSWALK SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

7.4.1 Update from Councillor Dalrymple

A memorandum from Councillor Dalrymple dated November 28, 2013 was circulated to the Committee.

Councillor Dalrymple updated that the Committee are working toward their report to Council, which will be brought forward to this Committee in February for recommendation to Regional Council.

Councillor Dalrymple commented on the passion and enthusiasm shown by Committee members, and the great presentations provided to the Committee

Mayor Savage commented that on statistics from the police on what they have charged people with regarding motor vehicle/pedestrian incidents, and the difficulty in getting information on incidents to compile data. He inquired whether the report will address this issue. Councillor Dalrymple indicated that for the data compiled in the collision study done by DalTrack, data was pulled from police reports manually, report by report. He suggested that the Committee will likely have a recommendation regarding a better system for the collection of data.

The Committee asked that Councillor Dalrymple's memorandum be linked to the online agenda.

8. MOTIONS

8.1 Councillor Walker

Notice of Motion was provided at the November 13, 2013 meeting.

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Watts, that the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report on reinstating the taxi committee, including the pros and cons of reinstatement, terms of reference & membership.

Councillor Walker commented that he is hearing from the industry that their concerns are not being heard.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

8.2 Councillor Mason

Notice of Motion was provided at the November 13, 2013 meeting.

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Watts, that the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report on the possible restriction of on street parking on low volume nights to facilitate street cleaning in the downtown (DH1) zone.

Councillor Mason noted that this request comes from requests from Business Commissions and business owners for cleaner streets, and comments from Municipal Operations staff that streets can't be cleaned with cars on them.

At the request of Councillor Hendsbee, Councillor Mason indicated that policy for street cleaning currently only exists for residential streets. He further clarified that downtown Business Commissions are responsible for their own sidewalk cleaning in the summer and garbage removal.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

9. ADDED ITEMS - None

10. NOTICES OF MOTION - None

11. IN CAMERA - None

12. NEXT MEETING

12.1 Approval of the 2014 Meeting Schedule

A proposed schedule of meeting dates for 2014 was before the Committee.

The Committee discussed the proposed meeting schedule, suggesting that no meetings be scheduled during the Council summer breaks.

The Committee discussed the possibility of meeting the 3rd Thursday of each month in the afternoon and requested that the Legislative Assistant prepare a revised proposed meeting schedule for review at the next meeting.

The Committee agreed that the next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 8, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 3rd Floor, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:47 p.m.

Jennifer Weagle
Legislative Assistant

INFORMATION ITEMS

- 1. Low Income Transit Passes** (*Information report dated November 12, 2013*)