

TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE
MINUTES

March 5, 2014

MEMBERS

PRESENT:

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

REGRETS:

Councillor Tim Outhit, Vice-Chair

STAFF:

Mr. Mike Labrecque, Deputy CAO
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 2:03 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 3rd Floor, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 16 & February 5, 2014

The Chair noted that the February 5th minutes are not available.

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee, that the Transportation Standing Committee minutes of January 16, 2014 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Deferral:

5.3.1 New Federal Regulations for Transportation of Dangerous Goods – *Barry Manuel, Coordinator, Emergency Management Office*

Mr. Mike Labrecque, Deputy CAO, indicated that staff have met with CN regarding roles, and a report will be available for the next meeting.

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

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES/STATUS SHEET

Members asked for updates on the following status sheet items:

- #16 – Temporary on Street Parking
- #18 – VON Parking
- #21 – Street Closure Policy

5. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & PRESENTATIONS

5.1 Correspondence - None

5.2 Petitions - None

5.3 Presentations

5.3.1 New Federal Regulations for Transportation of Dangerous Goods – *Barry Manuel, Coordinator, Emergency Management Office*

This item was deferred to the April 2, 2014 meeting, during the approval of the order of business.

5.3.2 Metro Transit Q3 Report – Eddie Robar, Director, Metro Transit

A copy of the staff presentation was before the Committee.

Mr. Eddie Robar, Director, Metro Transit, presented the quarterly report to the Committee. The presentation is available on file and online.

Deputy Mayor Fisher left the meeting at 2:20 p.m.

The Committee discussed the presentation, and Mr. Robar responded to questions from members.

Councillor Dalrymple indicated that he would like to speak with staff about some ideas he has for increasing ridership on the airport/Fall River route.

Councillor Hendsbee pointed out that with the closure of the Macdonald Bridge bike lanes for the bridge re-decking, there will likely be increased bikes on the ferries, and bike parking, etc. should be increased at the ferry terminals and on ferries to accommodate. Mr. Robar indicated that there is not much extra space on the ferries for additional bicycle transportation and HRM will be encouraging people to leave their bikes at the terminals. Staff have a bike repair station ready to install at the Dartmouth ferry terminal, and a set of exterior doors to the terminal are being converted to two sliding glass doors to allow easier access for bikes.

Councillor Hendsbee commented that he would like Route 370 to make more stops along Main Street, Dartmouth. Staff advised that information will be included in the Metro Transit service plan, which will be provided to Council one month before budget approval.

Councillor Watts commended staff for achieving a 21% boarding increase for Route 7 by increasing frequency of service.

Responding to questions from Councillor Watts about Access-A-Bus service, Mr. Robar indicated that the service is experiencing a problems keeping up with demand. He noted that last minute cancellations and no-shows greatly affect service. Mr. Robar indicated that technology upgrades being made to the Transit fleet will assist with making the system more flexible, by giving drivers the ability to update manifests electronically, instead of by paper.

Responding to questions from Councillor Mason, Mr. Robar advised that staff are anticipating an increase in ridership of the Woodside Ferry with the addition of a second ferry. He noted that some of this may be a shift in ridership from other services, and

ridership numbers overall will be measured when the second ferry is implemented, and again when service has settled.

In response to further questions from Councillor Mason, Mr. Robar advised that there are two customer service agents dedicated to transit calls through 3-1-1.

Responding to questions from the Chair, Mr. Robar advised that although staff have the ability to modify routes without first going to Council, they bring all service changes before Council. He noted that with the current service review underway, there will be no recommended changes this year.

Mr. Robar clarified at the request of Councillor Hendsbee that there are bike racks on almost all of the transit fleet, although there are a few older buses that don't have them because they are not equipped for bike racks.

The Committee thanked Mr. Robar for the update.

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – None

7. REPORTS

7.1 STAFF

7.1.1 Commuter Rail Monthly Update *(verbal)*

Mr. Dave Reage, Manager, Planning & Scheduling, Metro Transit, updated that CN has not been cooperative in the matter of the commuter rail study. He indicated that staff have gone ahead and prepared a tentative timeline and the draft RFP for the study, which will be awarded in early June.

A brief discussion followed on the scope of the study.

7.1.2 Parking Strategy Project – Roadmap

A recommendation report dated February 16, 2014 was before the Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Mason, that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend to Regional Council that staff in Planning and Infrastructure be directed to review the 2008 Regional Parking Strategy Functional Plan and to come forward with a roadmap that addresses the implementation considerations in the August 2008, Halifax Regional Municipality, Regional Parking Strategy Functional Plan. Specifically addressing the recommendations of: governance, use of technology for parking payment (such as pay by plate technology) and the management of parking in high-demand residential neighbourhoods.

Councillor Watts commented that the Regional Parking Strategy Functional Plan has been overlooked for some time, and it needs attention. She noted that parking is an important part of sustainable transportation solutions, and is a key player in supporting transportation initiatives.

At the request of Councillor Watts, Ms. Jane Fraser, Director, Planning & Infrastructure, clarified that the project boundary includes the five business districts, plus areas experiencing parking difficulties. She further clarified that staff are learning about implications of the permit parking system, and are taking more time to study the implications and solutions. Ms. Fraser further noted that staff may be able to examine extending parking permits from one month to three months, and that consultation will take place with regard to the roadmap, including with businesses and universities. Councillor Mason inquired how to encourage the expansion of the private parking supply. Ms. Fraser indicated that the intent is to include the private sector in the plan.

At the request of Councillor Walker, Ms. Fraser explained how removing parking meters would allow for extra parking. She explained that when metered parking spaces are laid out, they are measured to the largest vehicles. Removing meters and dedicated spaces would increase the number of parking spaces by 10-14%.

Deputy Mayor Fisher returned at 3:18 p.m.

Councillor Dalrymple suggested offering tax or cost incentives to private landowners of brownfield sites to offer parking. He requested a copy of the Rural Transit and Park and Ride Study referenced in Attachment 1 of the report.

Councillor Hendsbee noted that he is looking forward to the implementation of the functional plan, and believes it will lead to the expansion of the Metro X and Metro Link services.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7.1.3 Ideal Carsharing City

An Information Report dated January 29, 2014 was before the Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Mason, that the Transportation Standing Committee request a report on the possible implementation of a variation of the Smart Trip Epass program that will allow for the provision of annual transit passes to members of local car share organizations.

Councillor Hendsbee noted that he hopes the report will look at car share parking spaces at Metro Link parking lots.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7.2 ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

7.2.1 Update from Councillor Watts (verbal)

Councillor Watts provided a brief update on the activities of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, noting that the Committee recently reviewed proposed changes to the temporary sign by law and are holding continued discussions on accessible taxi services in HRM.

7.3 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

7.3.1 Update from Councillor Mason (verbal)

Councillor Mason provided a brief update on the activities of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee, noting that the Committee recently elected a new Chair and Vice Chair from within its citizen members, and is reviewing its Terms of Reference. He noted that the Active Transportation Functional Plan will be coming back to the Committee for review soon.

7.4 CROSSWALK SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

7.4.1 Update from Councillor Dalrymple (verbal)

Councillor Dalrymple thanked members of Council for approving the Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee work plan at Council the day before.

8. MOTIONS - None

9. ADDED ITEMS - None

10. NOTICES OF MOTION - None

11. IN CAMERA

11.1 Approval of In Camera Minutes – November 13, 2013

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Mason, that the minutes of the November 13, 2013 in camera session of the Transportation Standing Committee meeting be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

12. NEXT MEETING – April 2, 2014

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 2, at 1:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 3rd Floor, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Jennifer Weagle
Legislative Assistant

INFORMATION ITEMS – None
