

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES
FEBRUARY 21, 2000
MINUTES

PRESENT: Mr. Darrell Robar, Chair
Ms. Margaret Hiltz
Mr. Donald Mullins
Ms. Peggy Brown
Ms. Cynthia Street
Mr. Ron Alley
Mr. Bob Venus
Councillor Jerry Blumenthal

Ms. Sally Campbell
Mr. Lawrence Lovett
Ms. Anne Langille
Ms. Jane Cale
Ms. Donald J. MacDonald
Ms. Maureen Reynolds
Ms. Barbara LeGay
Mr. Paul Connors

STAFF: Mr. Roel Vis, Schedule Planner, Metro Transit
Ms. Charla Williams, Employment Equity Coordinator
Mr. Dave McCusker, Manager, Traffic and Transportation Services
Ms. Julia Horncastle, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

The following items were added to the agenda:

- 4.6 Newsletter
- 4.7 Attachments to Agenda

It was agreed to move item 3.8, Accessible Parking Zones - Policy Change, up on the agenda.

It was agreed to move item 4.1 up after item 3.1.

3.8 Accessible Parking Zones - Policy Change

Mr. Dave McCusker advised he was in attendance to receive feedback and direction from the committee. He stated that, at the present time, HRM is looking at the issue of accessible parking in the downtown areas and the business districts in terms of designating spaces as accessible parking. He advised staff has received input as to the lack of spaces in certain areas and the need for ramps up to the sidewalk to accommodate wheelchairs. He advised staff has looked at the issue of constructing ramps and accessible spaces where there would otherwise just be a curb noting, there is funding available this year to construct some of these on a limited basis. He stated staff would like to make sure that they are placed where they are most needed and required in terms of being functional.

Reference was made to the Spring Garden, Barrington Street corridor and it was suggested the spaces in these locations be increased. In response, Mr. McCusker advised there are only a certain number of spaces provided in certain areas in order to maintain traffic flow as well as site triangles to driveways and crosswalks. He stated staff will look at opportunities for putting spaces where there are none presently. He said it is a matter of determining whether a space is an accessible or regular space.

Mr. Robar clarified that the issue with accessible parking spaces is that with parking downtown you are setting the wheelchair up on a curb which puts the wheelchair up above the person. What the committee is trying to do is get curb cuts to bring the wheelchair down to the level of the car which will make it easier to get in and out of the car. He noted one way streets are also being looked at as some people get out of their vehicles on the drivers side and into the wheelchair while others get out from the passenger side.

It was noted that in some instances the clearance is too high and vehicles cannot access parking.

It was suggested that perhaps a survey of accessible users be undertaken, either through Motor Vehicles or utility bills to ascertain where the need is.

It was suggested that perhaps a by-law or policy could be developed with regards to regulating the use of accessible parking areas.

Reference was made to the downtown cafes and it was noted there is not enough room for people who are disabled to go around these outdoor cafes without having to walk on the street. There was also concern that a temporary sidewalk café this year may become a permanent one next year.

Mr. McCusker advised staff will investigate avenues for getting input to help establish a plan. He advised the department will draft up a plan showing some locations and the treatment that will go along with them and maybe get general comments back from a specific plan with the aim to having some things built this coming summer.

Construction signage was discussed and a query was raised as to whether or not there was some form of audible signal that could be placed on the signage to warn blind individuals. It was noted that the ribbons are more of a hazard than signs.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 15, 1999

It was noted that under Access-A-Bus it should have been 11 meetings per year instead of 13.

The minutes, as amended, were adopted.

4.7 ATTACHMENTS

Ms. Barbara LeGay advised that each month the agenda is sent via e-mail with a notation that attachments are to follow. She requested that these attachments be provided in electronic form either via e-mail or on a disk. She suggested that reports, especially those generated by HRM staff, be provided in electronic format.

MOVED by Barbara LeGay and Peggy Brown that all reports/materials circulated to HRM committees be available in electronic format (e-mail or disk).

Mr. Vis advised the agenda and minutes of the Access-A-Bus committee will be provided on disk.

Ms. Williams noted the request would be that the reports be provided electronically for this committee at all times but other committees upon request.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3.1 TERMS OF REFERENCE

MOVED by Peggy Brown and Paul Connors that the Terms of Reference be adopted and forwarded to Regional Council for approval on March 21, 2000. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4.1 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

MOVED by Peggy Brown and Paul Connors that the election of Chair and Vice-Chair be deferred to the June meeting. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3.7 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED PERSONS - PANEL PRESENTATION - REPORT MS. WILLIAMS

Ms. Charla Williams thanked those members of the committee who had participated. She advised there had been a panel chaired by Mr. Robar noting, discussion had been on a variety of accessibility issues with the view to providing information to staff who were in attendance. She advised visible disabilities as well as chemical sensitivity was discussed. She advised it was well attended by members of HRM staff.

4.6 NEWSLETTER

Ms. Williams referenced the HRDC newsletter and advised she will request them in electronic format. She advised the HRDC has started an initiative to try and do a newsletter to keep organizations updated. She advised she will get an electronic copy and send it to Barb for circulation to the visually impaired members. She advised the Municipality has adopted the implementation strategy for the Community and Race Relations Committee.

Mr. Vis advised that Councillor Blumenthal suggested the committee consider inviting Mr. Howard Green, Regional Director of the HRDC to attend a meeting to provide and overview.

She referenced the HRM2020 Initiative and suggested the Committee consider submitting a workbook.

3.2 ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ISSUES AS PER TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mr. Roel Vis advised that a report had gone forward to Regional Council. He advised that under the old terms of reference accessible transportation was part of this committee while the Access-A-Bus Advisory Committee dealt with access-a-bus issues. It was felt that all transportation issues dealing with accessible public transportation, including cabs, be dealt with by one committee.

3.3 WORKPLAN

It was suggested that members provide issues and ideas at the next meeting for the development of a workplan for this committee.

3.4 REPORT TO COUNCIL FOR FUNDS TO PROVIDE HRM MATERIALS IN ALTERNATIVE FORMAT AND COUNCIL EXTRACT

Councillor Blumenthal advised that Council had approved the purchase of a Braille printer. It was agreed that the AMC would investigate and provide an update at the next meeting.

3.5 ACCOMMODATIONS GUIDELINES WORKING GROUP

The committee was advised the report would be available at the next meeting.

3.6 CONCERN RE COURTESY SEATS ON LOW FLOOR BUSES

Mr. Roel Vis advised he had investigated the issue of signage on low floor buses and advised the signage is there but it is not enforceable in that the bus driver cannot make someone move and give up a seat.

3.9 TAXI BY-LAW

Mr. Vis advised the Taxi By-law had been adopted by HRM Council. He advised the comments raised by the committee were incorporated in the by-law, as much as possible.

3.10 WEBSITE

Mr. Robar advised the new website is up and running. He referenced the list where it has the name and then the business/group/organization they represent and queried whether this was necessary because their bio's are on the website and there may not be a need to have the list as well as the bio's. He suggested leaving the table of HRM support staff as it is. He suggested new committee members provide a bio. There is a need to

determine who the recreation contact is.

Ms. Brown advised she had been requested by Team Work Cooperatives which is a disabled employment program to check whether they could be a link on this committees website.

Mr. Robar advised he had requested an updated list of members for the next meeting.

4.2 FREEDOM AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY (FOIPOP) CORRESPONDENCE

A number of letters be circulated for signature.

4.3 SERVICES FOR DISABLED GUESTS

Deferred to the next meeting. Mr. Venus was advised to get feedback on questions and provide an update at the next meeting. Ms. Reynolds requested Mr. Venus ascertain whether one washroom could be available to chemically sensitive individuals.

4.4 CORRESPONDENCE FROM CANADIAN PARAPLEGIC ASSOCIATION RE: SIDEWALK CAFES

Deferred to the next meeting.

4.5 CANADIAN DISABILITY NEWS WEB SITE AND BULLETIN

Deferred to the next meeting.

5.0 ACCESS-A-BUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

The minutes of November 1, 1999, December 8, 1999 and January 19, 2000 were circulated for information. The agenda for December was also circulated.

6.0 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 20, 2000.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Julia Horncastle
Assistant Municipal Clerk

(march22/2000)