

**HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

4:00 p.m.
Training Room
3rd Floor Duke Tower
March 20, 2000

PRESENT: Mr. Darrell Robar, Chair
Ms. Margaret Hiltz
Mr. Donald Mullins
Ms. Peggy Brown
Ms. Cynthia Street
Mr. Ron Alley
Mr. Bob Venus
Councillor Blumenthal
Ms. Betty MacDonald
Ms. Anne Langille
Ms. Jane Cale
Mr. Maureen Reynolds
Mr. Paul Connors

ALSO PRESENT: Ms. Charla Williams, Diversity Coordinator
Ms. Elsie Charlotte, Coordinator, N.S. League for Equal
Opportunities
Lynne Le Boutillier, Assistant Municipal Clerk

REGRETS: Ms. Barb LeGay, Mr. Donald MacDonald and Mr. Roel Vis

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1.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The following items were added to the agenda:

- 4.4 - Update on Crosswalks
- 4.5 - Identification of speakers and district they represent at Council
- 4.6 - Access-a-Bus concerns
- 4.7 - Access-a-Bus Annual General Meeting
- 4.8 - Pedways

2.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was noted that Betty MacDonald's name should be removed from the attendance list of the February 21, 2000 minutes. The minutes, as amended, were adopted on motion of Bob Venus and Peggy Brown.

3.0 BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

3.1 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The report on the Committee's terms of reference is going to Regional Council Tuesday, March 21, 2000.

3.2 WORK PLAN AND MISSION STATEMENT

It was recalled that work had once been commenced towards a Mission Statement with the aid of Kim Hominchuk.

Jane Cale referred to the Mission Statement of the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee. She noted that a similar statement is contained in the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities' Terms of Reference, but not identified as a Mission Statement. It was suggested that if a working group is to be formed to develop the Work Plan, they also address the Mission Statement. She felt the Mission Statement will come out of the Work Plan. It was agreed that these two items would tie in together.

The Chair recalled that the members had been asked to submit ideas for a Work Plan. Cynthia Street had provided him with a copy of hers which consisted of an Introduction and Activities.

Additional ideas are to be submitted to the Chair or through Lynne Le Boutillier.

A working group consisting of Jane Cale, Charla Williams, Cynthia Street and Darrell Robar was established for this purpose. The meeting will be arranged via e-mail.

3.3 BRILLE PRINTER

The Clerk referred to an e-mail from Geri Kaiser regarding the status of the process to acquire a braille printer. It was recalled by Councillor Blumenthal that a motion was adopted at Council to purchase this equipment.

It is anticipated that Regional Council will pass the budget at their March 21st meeting. With the inclusion of this item in the budget, staff will make a recommendation to Council on how to proceed. They would like to meet with the Committee to discuss.

It was agreed that staff be invited to the April meeting for this purpose. Time for this item to be limited to 20 minutes.

3.4 ACCOMMODATIONS GUIDELINES WORKING GROUP

With the resignation of Larry Lovett, Peggy Brown requested a new member(s) be appointed to the Working Group, which currently only consists of herself and Marg Hiltz.

Concern was expressed regarding the circumstances surrounding Mr. Lovett's resignation. The members were assured that Mr. Lovett felt he was under too much pressure at this point in time but would consider rejoining the Committee in a couple of years.

Don Mullins, Maureen Reynolds and Anne Langille were appointed to the Working Group, but it was later identified by Ms. Langille that she did not have the time to take on this commitment.

3.5 HRDC

The Committee discussed whether an invitation should be extended to an HRDC representative to attend an upcoming meeting. The HRDC's newsletter had been discussed at the February meeting. A question was raised as to whether their newsletter was available in braille. It was felt that Mr. Howard Green, Regional Director should be invited to the April meeting. The purpose being to discuss their newsletter, not the HRDC in general. The time allowed would be limited to 20 minutes. It was proposed by Mr. Connor that HRDC may wish to partner with the Municipality on the acquisition and running of the braille printer, particularly if they don't have an

alternative format set up for their newsletter.

Mr. Venus was pleased to report that it is apparently HRDC's intention to reinstate the Accessibility portion of their budget, cut last fall.

3.6 MEMBERSHIP LIST

The Committee's membership list was circulated to those present. Several changes are required. The revised list will be circulated with next month's agenda package.

3.7 HRM 2000 INITIATIVE

Cynthia Street submitted a completed work book. It was noted that the deadline for submissions is March 31, 2000.

The members discussed whether or not the Committee should make a submission. As the Chair was leaving on vacation for two weeks, they did not feel the March 31st deadline could be met. It was decided that an extension to the deadline should be requested and a special meeting of the Committee was tentatively arranged for Friday, April 7th, Halifax Hall from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Clerk will write the Co-Chairs of the Organizing Committee.

In the interim, the members were encouraged to think about the variety of things they'd wish accomplished in the next 20 years; what would enhance their lifestyle, etc. Some ideas put forward at the meeting were:

- Municipality take responsibility for snow clearing of sidewalks.
- Signaled crossings be adapted for the blind.
- Ordering at establishments such as Tim Horton Drive-throughs offer individuals, such as the deaf, the option of typing in their order.

Even in the event the deadline can't be changed, Ms. Williams expressed confidence that a submission from the Committee would be beneficial. While an interim report is scheduled for April, there will still be a final report to Council in May. She felt it was very important that the Committee have its input into the document.

Ms. Williams noted that staff within HRM has not been asked for its input. She anticipated that once the final report is presented, staff will be asked to reflect on what is feasible; can be accomplished immediately and what items require long-term planning.

3.8 FREEDOM AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY (FOIPOP) CORRESPONDENCE

With the return of signed FIOPOP letters from Ms. Hiltz and Ms. Reynolds, only one letter is outstanding. Concern was expressed by Ms. Reynolds about her street address appearing. Only the street name will appear, not her number in future.

4.0 NEW BUSINESS

4.1 SERVICES FOR DISABLED GUESTS

Information on designated seating for the disabled and services had been previously circulated.

At the previous meeting Ms. Reynolds requested that Mr. Venus check into the use of deodorizers in washrooms at the Halifax Metro Centre. These substances cause problems for those with chemical sensitivities. Ms. Reynolds was assured by Mr. Venus that he raised the issue with Mr. Williams, who will look into the matter and get back to the Committee.

The members were polled on whether they had any questions or concerns regarding the seating arrangements for the disabled. Ms. Langille identified that she has a concern that there is no railing, for a visually impaired person to hold onto, when going up or down stairs in the upper or lower bowl. It was noted that such installations would effectively block off admittance to the rows of seats.

Ms. Williams emphasized to the Committee not only to identify areas of concern but to propose strategies to rectify situations.

ROSE FACILITY MANAGEMENT COMPANY

Ms. Reynolds circulated copies of AEHA's Guide to Less Toxic Products. It was suggested a copy be put in the Corporate Library. A brochure on Environmental Sensitivities was also provided. The Clerk will circulate copies with the next agenda package. Ms. Reynolds apologized that an electronic version of the Guide is not available.

A discussion followed on the takeover of management of HRM facilities by the Rose Facility Management Company. This initiative is intended to save money for HRM. The General Manager was hired last week.

Ms. Williams felt that it would be very timely to introduce such resource material to this

company, however she cautioned that she was not aware of what was contained in the tender. Ms. Reynolds offered to compile a list of safe cleaning products. Also making them aware of the Accessibility Guidelines from Toronto and Peterborough was discussed. There are also Federal Guidelines, but Ms. Street noted they contain more items than the Nova Scotia Building Code.

A discussion followed on the challenges faced in retrofitting old building, versus the incorporation of accessible features at the time of new construction.

Charla Williams will provide additional information re Rose Facility Management's mandate for the next meeting.

**4.2 CORRESPONDENCE FROM CANADIAN PARAPLEGIC ASSOCIATION RE
SIDEWALK CAFES/TIE DOWN FOR WHEELCHAIR CONSUMERS UTILIZING
METRO TRANSIT**

It is the Chair's intention to write a letter to confirm that the Municipal Solicitor reviews applications to develop sidewalk cafes to ensure they are consistent with the barrier free path of travel contained with the N.S. Building Code Regulations.

The tone of the letter will be positive, noting that the members are not against sidewalk cafes, but feel they should be installed in locations which are not too narrow or on a hill. The correspondence will also ask that the cafes be made accessible.

The second issue raised in the Canadian Paraplegic Association's letter of November 23, 1999 pertained to the use of tie downs for wheelchair consumers in Metro. Discussion of this topic was deferred until Mr. Vis was in attendance.

4.3 CANADIAN DISABILITY NEWS WEB SITE AND BULLETIN

This information item will be re-circulated with the next agenda package.

4.4 ACCESS-A-BUS CONCERNS

Donald MacDonald was unable to attend today's meeting, but requested that concerns he had associated with Access-a-Bus be brought to the Committee's attention. The Clerk conveyed particulars of these concerns to the Chair. Mr. Robar noted that it was decided by the Committee that any matters pertaining to Access-a-Bus be directed to the Access-a-Bus Advisory Committee.

4.5 CROSSWALK UPDATE

Betty MacDonald noted that at a meeting in the fall, the mother of a deaf child, Ms. Beaver, raised concern regarding the safety of her daughter traveling to and from school without crossing guards. She wondered if the Committee had taken any action regarding Ms. Beaver's concern and if not, what was the Committee going to do to resolve the problem.

Mr. Connors recalled that Ms. Beaver was directed to contact Mr. McCusker of the Traffic Authority and Police Services. Ms. MacDonald noted that the Police Service advised Ms. Beaver that they could not help her in providing a crossing guard(s).

The Chair indicated he would like to be provided with an update on the situation in writing from Ms. Beaver, ie. what avenues she pursued and the responses. Ms. Williams will follow-up with Ms. Beaver.

4.6 IDENTIFICATION OF SPEAKERS AT COUNCIL

With an election to be held this fall and new members being appointed to Regional Council, Ms. Brown felt it imperative that the need to identify both speakers and the District they represent, be re-emphasized.

It was agreed that there is a need to remind the elective representatives of the need to be identified by name and district and for those speaking to take into account that a signer is interpreting their comments.

It was felt that an information sheet should be drafted to this effect. Ron Alley will provide for the next meeting. Betty MacDonald, Peggy Brown and the signers will provide Mr. Alley with input. This information sheet could be circulated to all members of Council and staff and put on file in the Municipal Clerks Office and in the Corporate Library. It could also be put on HRM's Web site.

4.7 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - ACCESS-A-BUS

Ms. Brown noted that the AGM is to be held May 10, 2000 at the Northend Community Centre, Dartmouth.

4.8 PEDWAYS

Concern had been expressed to the Chair regarding the design of the pedway to 1881 Brunswick Street. There are stairs in the middle of the pedway. It was also identified

that the slope of a ramp in Scotia Square is very steep.

These pedways are owned by HDL. In order to remove the stairs and replace with a ramp to 1881 Brunswick, it was suggested that a total redesign of the pedway would be required. This accommodation would be very costly. The matter will be raised with HDL and a response requested. It was suggested that the correspondence make reference to the ageing population and the fact that there is a business case for making accommodations now.

VON TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Brown reflected on a radio program which indicated that volunteers are available to pick up individuals at their home and accompany them on appointments. Ms. Brown will contact the VON and request additional information on the program to be distributed to the members.

5.0 ACCESS-A-BUS COMMITTEE MINUTES

The February 7, 2000 Access-a-Bus minutes and attachments were circulated with the agenda package.

6.0 NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held April 17, 2000.

7.0 ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Darrell Robar
Chairman

Lynne Le Boutillier
Assistant Municipal Clerk

