

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

NOVEMBER 20, 2000

MINUTES

PRESENT: Ms. Jane Cale, Vice-Chair
Mr. Don Mullins
Ms. Peggy Brown
Ms. Cynthia Street
Ms. Donald J. MacDonald
Mr. Bob Venus
Councillor Blumenthal
Ms. Anne Langille
Ms. Maureen Reynolds

ALSO PRESENT: Ms. Charla Williams, Diversity Coordinator
Mr. Roel Vis, Schedule Planner, Metro Transit
Ms. Lynne Le Boutillier, Assistant Municipal Clerk

REGRETS: Paul Connors, Darrell Robar, Sally Campbell and Barb LeGay

TABLE OF CONTENTS

0.1	Identification of Attendees	3
1.0	Approval of Agenda, Additions and Deletions	3
2.0	Approval of Minutes	3
3.0	New Business	
3.1	Braille Printer - Update	3
4.0	Business Arising from Minutes	
4.1	2000 - 2001 Work Plan - Subcommittee Update	4
4.2	Accommodations Guidelines Working Group	4
4.3	Vestar	4
4.4	Crosswalk Update re Ms. Beaver's Deaf Daughter	5
4.5	Pedways - Update	5
4.6	Regional Council Request that the Committee Investigate the Matter of Crosswalks and Curb Cuts for Wheelchairs to Identify any that could be Improved	5
4.7	Tie Downs for Wheelchair Consumers - Mr. Dave White, Manager N.S. Utility Review Board	5
4.8	Event Guidelines	5
4.9	Presentation - Chemical Sensitivities	6
4.10	Accessible Low Floor Buses	6 & 7
4.11	Presentation for Provincial Trade Show and Workshop on Oct. 2000 ...	7&8
4.12	Taxi By-law - Sensitivity Training	8
4.13	Audible Traffic Signals	8
4.14	HRM Website	8
4.15	Request for Painted Crosswalk - Lower Water Street at Prince	8
5.0	Access-a-Bus Advisory Committee Minutes	8
6.0	Next Meeting	9
7.0	Adjournment	9

The meeting was called to order by the Vice-Chair, Jane Cale in the Training Room, 3rd Floor, Duke Tower at 3:40 p.m.

0.1 IDENTIFICATION OF ATTENDEES

Before the meeting commenced, those present identified themselves and Ms. Cale made reference to regrets having been received from Paul Connors, Darrell Robar, Sally Campbell and Barb LeGay.

1.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

Ms. Langille requested that the following two items be added to the agenda:

ALF Buses - Roel Vis - Combined with item 4.10

Crosswalks - Seeing Eye Dogs - Combined with item 4.15

The Chair noted that since Mr. Connors and Mr. Robar were unable to attend today's meeting, a number of items under Business Arising will have to be deferred.

2.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Referring to page 11 of the October 16, 2000 minutes, item 4.11 - Ideas on Accessibility Matters for Councillors' Orientation Package, Ms. Cale noted that the article was not entitled "President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities", but "Communicating With and About People with Disabilities " from the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities.

On motion of Mr. Venus and Mr. MacDonald, the minutes of July 17, 2000 were approved, notes of September 18, 2000 and notes/minutes of October 16, 2000, as amended.

3.0 NEW BUSINESS

3.1 BRaille PRINTER - UPDATE

In her update, Ms. Williams indicated that it is anticipated that the training to operate the braille printer will commence once Information Services have integrated the software into the HRM computer system. It is anticipated that next months agenda will be available in braille, as well as today's minutes.

4.0 BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

4.1 2000 - 2001 WORK PLAN - SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

The Chair summarized discussions to date on the Work Plan. At the July 17, 2000 meeting whether a Policy Statement was required was discussed at length. It had been agreed by consensus that something could be simply added to the Community and Race Relations Policy. The members had been asked to submit wording for Activity 2 to reflect concerns of Ms. LeGay that the reference to diverse communities was not broad enough in the Community and Race Relations Policy. Jane Cale and Cynthia Street's submissions were read by the Chair.

It was suggested by Ms. Williams that this would be a good time to meet with representatives of the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee on wording to ensure members of both committees understand the intent and meaning. It was noted that the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee meets the first Wednesday of December and before that time, Betty Thomas the Chair should be contacted so she can raise the matter with the Committee and several dates be put forward. It is being proposed a sub-committee only meet. The members agreed with this approach.

Referring to Activities 5 and 6, Ms. Cale noted that the access issue has been divided into the two main areas.

Reflecting on the wording, Ms. Williams felt the word "equitable" should be substituted for "equal".

Ms. Williams suggested that the Work Plan should be submitted to Regional Council, as soon as possible, in the form of an Information Report.

MOVED BY Mr. Venus and seconded by Ms. Brown that the Committee accept the Work Plan for 2000-2001, as presented, and it be sent to Regional Council. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4.2 ACCOMMODATIONS GUIDELINES WORKING GROUP

Ms. Brown reported that she has not had a chance to speak with Ms. Reynolds on this item and requested the item be deferred.

4.3 VESTAR

Deferred. Mr. Venus advised that Mr. Connors indicated to him that Mr. Labrecque could not attend today's meeting.

4.4 CROSSWALK UPDATE RE MS. BEAVER'S DEAF DAUGHTER

Ms. Williams requested the item be deferred.

4.5 PEDWAYS - UPDATE

In the absence of Mr. Robar, Ms. Williams provided an update. She has observed a stair lift leaning against the wall of the pedway, apparently awaiting installation. She had not had an opportunity to contact Halifax Developments Limited (HDL) regarding their intentions. Ms. Brown reflected that they are probably awaiting an inspection before installing.

If the lift is installed, Ms. Williams suggested a letter of thanks be sent to HDL and indicating the Committee's desire to work with them on subsequent installations as new improved technology becomes available.

4.6 REGIONAL COUNCIL REQUEST THAT THE COMMITTEE INVESTIGATE THE MATTER OF CROSSWALKS AND CURB CUTS FOR WHEELCHAIRS TO IDENTIFY ANY THAT COULD BE IMPROVED

As a result of discussions with Mr. McCusker at the October meeting, a draft notice was provided by Mr. McCusker to Mr. Robar for comment. The members questioned how the notice will be distributed. It was suggested the HRM Website, newsletters of organizations, etc. would be utilized.

The members reviewed the wording and it was suggested by Mr. Vis that if they have any modifications, they be conveyed to Mr. Robar.

While the members were generally in favour of the wording presented, it was suggested that if the HRM Call Centre is going to be used to record responses, the number of the Call Centre be included, as well as the TTY number. Secondly, although it was recognized that the notice should not be too wordy, it was suggested that the request for input should imply that this is an open ended question, perhaps by the addition of the words "or other issues".

4.7 TIE DOWNS FOR WHEELCHAIR CONSUMERS - MR. DAVE WHITE, MANAGER N.S. UTILITY REVIEW BOARD

At the September 18, 2000 meeting, Mr. Connors had indicated he would contact Mr. White

about attending an upcoming meeting. Mr. Vis noted he will be unable to attend the December meeting and since he desired to be present when Mr. White made his presentation, requested that arrangements be made for the January meeting.

4.8 EVENT GUIDELINES

Ms. Williams requested that this item be deferred.

4.9 PRESENTATION - CHEMICAL SENSITIVITIES

A presentation was made to the Committee to the Committee on how ones life is affected when you have chemical sensitivities, which is an invisible disability. She will provide copies to the members, in due course. Some of the items addressed in the presentation related to the following:

- C symptoms
- C diagnosis
- C treatment
- C diet
- C environment
- C difficulties associated with traveling
- C parking issues
- C worries
- C loneliness
- C the need for education

With respect to the parking issues, she felt a percentage of accessible parking spaces should be set aside for those with invisible disabilities. She has canvassed those experiencing such disabilities on the matter and is still awaiting more replies.

A general discussion followed on the status of the Fall River Clinic and treatment and research being conducted.

Ms. Williams wondered if there is anything the Committee could do to make Ms. Reynolds' attendance at the meetings more comfortable. The members were assured that the environment is not causing her any undue problems.

Ms. Williams, reflecting on the presentation, felt this would be valuable information for people to access through the HRM Website, with some minor modifications.

4.10 ACCESSIBLE LOW FLOOR BUSES

A letter has been drafted as requested, but is awaiting signature.

Ms. Langille questioned Mr. Vis on why ALF bus drivers don't put down the wheelchair ramp when riders display a white or regular cane. She noted that due to problems with depth perception, she personally has a problem with stairs. Mr. Vis responded it is a question of respecting the dignity of the user. Rather than the ramp being lowered automatically, the user should indicate to the drivers the need to have the ramp lowered. Some members of the Committee were concerned that the onus is being left with the individual with the disability to make such a request.

It was suggested to Mr. Vis that signs should be posted, perhaps by the ticket box, encouraging users to request the driver lower the ramp if needed. This would not only educate the disabled user, but the able-bodied ridership. Secondly, reference in the Transit Schedule would help with educating the clientele that a ramp is available upon request.

Mr. Mullins also observed that due to bus drivers having to rush to maintain their schedules, he has observed users falling because they were not seated before the bus left the stop. He felt that some of the drivers need sensitivity training. Mr. Vis encouraged the members to take note of the bus number and report incidents to the Metro Info Line. He also encouraged members to pass along compliments if drivers are observed doing a particularly good job.

Mr. Vis noted that there are buses which kneel and buses which kneel and have a ramp. In order to facilitate use of the ramp, it is required the bus is parallel to the curb, otherwise there is a 30 cm. step up.

(Editor's note: The following information was received on November 21, 2000 from R. Vis.

Indeed I meant 30 centimeters yesterday. Perhaps the following might be helpful information to the Committee:

- 1. When the low floor bus is not kneeling and there is no curb the distance from the ground level into the bus is 16 inches (40 centimeters)*
- 2. When the bus driver is requested to "kneel" the bus the distance is 11 ½ inches (30 centimeters) from the ground level into the bus.*
- 3. The curb heights in general vary from 6 inches to 10 inches with the 6 inches being the more common one."*

Mr. Venus noted he had discussed with Mr. Vis when ALF service will be available in Dartmouth. Mr. Vis was confident that Mr. White, in his presentation, will be able to address

Mr. Venus' questions. In the interim, members were encouraged to ask for expansion of the service by calling 490-6600.

It was noted that motorized scooters can't be accommodated due to the turning radius required.

4.11 PRESENTATION FOR PROVINCIAL TRADE SHOW AND WORKSHOP ON OCTOBER 2000

Copies of Mr. Vis' presentation, together with the Community Transport UK Experience were included in the agenda package for the members' information. Ms. Williams felt Mr. Vis' presentation should be put on the HRM Website. Mr. Vis noted it is on the Province's Website and is an attachment to the Access-a-Bus minutes on the HRM Website.

Mr. MacDonald sought an update on the batching system from Mr. Vis. Mr. MacDonald indicated that he has been advised that a number of users refuse to call for a bus. The subject of complaints laid with the Human Rights Commission was also raised.

4.12 TAXI BY-LAW - SENSITIVITY TRAINING

Deferred. Mr. Connors revising the draft.

4.13 AUDIBLE TRAFFIC SIGNALS

Mr. Robar was to draft a note to Regional Council endorsing audible traffic signals. Deferred in his absence.

4.14 HRM WEBSITE

Ms. Williams was of the opinion that a better job could be done linking the Committee's Website to the Access-a-Bus Advisory Committee's Website, as an example. Reference was also made to the presentation on chemical sensitivities and Roel Vis' presentation. It was left with the Secretary to coordinate with Kelly Marney and/or Marilyn MacKenzie.

Ms. Reynolds will provide staff with an electronic copy of her presentation for inclusion. It was noted that Councillor Blumenthal had requested copies for circulation to Councillors.

Referring to the Councillors' Orientation Sessions, Ms. Williams felt the chemical sensitivities presentation would be worthwhile for inclusion to help improve awareness.

Ms. Williams noted that she was requested to participate in one of the Orientation Sessions

which reflects a change of awareness of issues related to disabilities.

4.15 REQUEST FOR PAINTED CROSSWALK - LOWER WATER STREET AT PRINCE

Due to the late hour, this item was deferred to the next meeting, however Ms. Langille noted that the subject of problems being encountered by the blind and their seeing eye dogs was raised on her behalf at the previous meeting. She expanded on the comments, noting that she had discussed this matter with Barb LeGay. The problem related to vehicles going through crosswalks or stopping in them. The danger lies in the seeing eye dog not understanding that a vehicle is stopped within the crosswalk, thus the dog leads the individual around the obstacle and into traffic. She felt there needs to be more enforcement of crosswalk infractions.

5.0 ACCESS-A-BUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

The approved Access-a-Bus Advisory Committee minutes for September 25, 2000 were circulated in the agenda package, together with statistics for July 2000.

6.0 NEXT MEETING

There was some discussion as to whether to hold the regularly scheduled December 18th meeting, given the proximity of the Holidays, particularly in light of Councillor Blumenthal and Mr. Vis having given their regrets and concerns about achieving a quorum. It was concluded that the members must advise the Secretary 10 day before the next meeting, Friday, December 8th if they will be unable to attend. If it is determined that a quorum, can't be achieved, the December 18th meeting will be cancelled.

7.0 ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Paul Connors
Chair

Lynne Le Boutillier
Assistant Municipal Clerk