

## HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

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### ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MINUTES MARCH 19, 2001

PRESENT: Paul Connors, Chair  
Peggy Brown  
Cynthia Street  
Bob Venus  
Anne Langille  
Jane Cale  
Elsie Cholette  
Ken Hines  
Maureen Reynolds  
Mary Anne Jones  
Mary MacDonald  
Barb LeGay  
Councillor Sarto

REGRETS: Don Mullins  
Sally Campbell  
Deputy Mayor Blumenthal  
Darrell Robar  
Betty MacDonald

STAFF: Charla Williams, Diversity Coordinator  
Roel Vis, Metro Transit Scheduler  
Lynne Le Boutillier, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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0.1 **IDENTIFICATION OF ATTENDEES AND INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS**

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 3:30 p.m. with introduction of members.

1.0 **APPROVAL OF AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

The following items were added to the agenda.

- 3.2 Alderney Gate Landing Plaza Renovation (Old Dartmouth City Hall Ramp)
- 3.3 Snow Removal - Dartmouth resulting in parking tickets to Home Care Service providers

The agenda was adopted, as amended.

2.0 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A change was required to item 4.1, page 3 of the February 19, 2001 minutes. In the sentence beginning with the words "It was suggested" that the balance of the sentence be changed to read "that the words 'such as' be added prior to the bullets for activities 3, 4 and 5.

The minutes were adopted as amended.

3.0 **NEW BUSINESS**

3.1 **FEDERAL DISABILITY COMMISSIONER PROPOSAL**

Information pertaining to a proposal to create the position of a Federal Disabilities Commissioner was circulated in the agenda package. Support was being sought across the country.

The members discussed their understanding of what the position would entail. Ms. Williams noted this is a Federal Government position and it would have impact at the Federal level versus the Provincial or Municipal levels. There was consensus on the Committee that this proposal would be a good thing and the members debated the best way to lend their support.

It was felt that since the Committee was an advisory committee to Council, it should be identified to Council that the Committee supports the proposal and request Council lend its support as well. **MOVED BY Cynthia Street and seconded by Peggy Brown that a letter be sent to Council with recommendation that Council support the proposal. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Williams will draft the letter.

### 3.2 **ALDERNEY GATE LANDING PLAZA RENOVATION - OLD DARTMOUTH CITY HALL RAMP**

Circulated at the meeting were minutes of a March 5, 2001 meeting held on the above noted renovation. Problems associated with accessibility of the School Board Building, which was the former Dartmouth City Hall, had been raised at the February meeting with Mr. Labrecque, General Manager, Building Management Services. Mr. Labrecque was unable to attend today's meeting, but as promised he provided information on the project via Phil Townsend, Project Manager, Building Management Services.

Mr. Venus noted that he and Cynthia Street had attended the March 5, 2001 meeting. It is hoped that the project will result in a more user friendly wheelchair ramp.

Highlights of the meeting were as follows:

- C Work not to commence until the fall to avoid the tourist season.
- C An entrance from Alderney Drive into the School Board building is not part of the mandate of this project. The project is only to replace the step/ramp system between Alderney Gate and the former Dartmouth City Hall (School Board Building).
- C The intent is to change the design to make the ramp/stairs more accessible.
- C Concern about making the front door accessible was raised but it was indicated that this would not be dealt with, unless there is a future project to redesign the front of the building.
- C Ms. Street and Mr. Venus are to be advised of future meetings.

It was felt Building Management Services should be commended for following up on this matter so swiftly and including members of the Committee in the review.

### 3.3 **SNOW REMOVAL**

Mr. Venus related to the Committee concerns expressed to him by Home Care Workers that they are being ticketed because of provisions in the By-law related to snow removal and on street parking.

Mr. Venus noted that frequently there is no off-street parking available to these care givers. The Committee discussed the need for identification of these individuals to the By-law Enforcement Officers. There would be a need to coordinate the use of such identification through the agencies the home care workers are employed by. Ms. Williams will contact Peter James, to determine if there is a way to address this situation. She was asked to report back to Mr. Venus.

### 4.0 **BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

Before dealing with this portion of the agenda, Mr. Connors indicated that rather than having so many Business Arising items on the agenda, it is proposed that the Committee adopt the use of a Status Sheet. He indicated he intended to concentrate at this meeting on identifying which items could be transferred to the Status Sheet.

#### 4.1 **2001-2002 WORKPLAN**

In addition to the copy of the Workplan circulated with the agenda package, the members were provided with copies of the Information Report scheduled to go to Council, tomorrow evening. Since it is an information report, it will not be discussed at Council but there will be opportunities for discussion when the Annual Report is presented.

The Chair thanked Ms. Cale for the initiative she took to complete the work plan. He noted that it is the intention to present an Annual Report to Council in due course.

The members were encouraged to review the Work Plan, so they are very familiar with its contents. Ms. Cale suggested that the members review each activity and identify ones of interest that they might be willing to take on. Ms. Cholette suggested that members may wish to bring a copy of the Work Plan to every meeting.

Referring to Activity 3, Public Awareness, reference was made to point 3 - ensuring there is a full range of disability resources present on the Municipality's Website. The Secretary reiterated that the Municipal Clerk has made a commitment to having the minutes, agendas and terms of reference on Board and Committee Websites for the time being. Ms. Brown recalled that it had been intended to include biographies at one time.

Referring to Activity 1 - Persons with Disabilities Policy, Ms. Cale noted that she has not been successful in contacting the Chair of the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee to discuss expanding their Policy to include inclusion of persons with disabilities in its definition of "Diverse Communities". Ms. Williams assured the Committee that at the last Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee meeting in March, Ms. Thomas, the Chair had referred to Ms. Cale's communications and indicated it was her intention to follow-up. It was explained to the new members that it was felt that rather than having two policies, a simple amendment to the Community and Race Relations Policy to create a higher profile of persons with disabilities would suffice.

The item was moved to the Status Sheet. The five activities to be identified individually on the Status Sheet.

#### 4.2 **ACCOMMODATIONS GUIDELINES WORKING GROUP**

Ms. Brown felt that she and Ms. Reynolds would have something for the next meeting. It was noted that this item fell under Activity 4.

The item was moved to the Status Sheet. The five activities to be identified individually on the Status Sheet. The Secretary and Ms. Cale will be in contact on how to structure the Status Sheet to accommodate these activities.

#### 4.3 **MR. LABRECQUE, BUILDING MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

Deleted from agenda.

#### 4.4 **CROSSWALK UPDATE RE MS. BEAVER'S DEAF DAUGHTER**

Ms. Williams explained why this item can be removed from the agenda. She understands the child is going to another school and the mother's business telephone number is no longer valid.

#### 4.5 **PEDWAYS - UPDATE**

When Mr. Robar relayed his regrets to the Secretary, he noted that he has been unsuccessful contacting Halifax Developments. If another member of the Committee felt they could be more successful, he encouraged them to pursue the matter, i.e. enquire about their plans. Ms. Williams noted that the lift observed laying on its side in the pedway has been removed. The item was removed to the Status Sheet with Mr. Robar's name. Ms. Williams will contact Mr. Robar.

#### 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**

For the benefit of the new members, it was recalled that the matter was brought to the Committee by former Councillor Graham Read. The item still remains on Council's Status Sheet. The Chair reflected that the scope of the project is massive and the Committee was not prepared to do this work, i.e. prepare a list of crosswalks and curb cuts where there are problems.

The Chair will contact Mr. McCusker, Traffic Authority to ask the status of this item and reiterate that the Committee does not have the resources to do this work. The Committee debated whether it would be more feasible for the Committee just to deal with complaints as they are brought to their attention by directing to Council or appropriate staff. Councillor Sarto noted that when such matters are brought to his attention he just alerts staff and corrective

measures are taken. Ms. Cholette confirmed that this has been her experience as well, ie. when she has written Public Works.

Ms. MacDonald identified to the Committee problems with a curb cut on the west side of Spring Garden Road near the Library. As a result of construction work in the area, the curb cut was left at a very steep angle. Mr. Connors will alert Mr. McCusker of the situation.

Ms. Reynolds questioned whether the members were aware that problems such as the above can be directed to their Councillor. This may be the case, but Mr. Connors felt the first approach would be to direct the concern to staff and in the event the situation is not rectified, the Councillor be called. When Mr. Connors speaks with Mr. McCusker he will ask Mr. McCusker who on staff should be contacted regarding matters associated with curb cuts and he will provide the telephone number to the members where complaints can be registered.

Ms. MacDonald reflected that when the work was being done on Spring Garden Road, a lot of dangerous obstacles, to those with mobility and vision impairments, were left. It was noted that there are certain standards to be followed in this regard. This item will be added to next month's agenda for further discussion. In the interim, Mr. Don Maling, Corporate Safety Co-ordinator will be contacted to determine what measures contractors are required to take in this regard.

Ms. Jones posed questions regarding who is responsible for snow and ice being cleared from sidewalks. Ms. Williams noted that in the former City of Halifax, this is the responsibility of the home owner or business operator.

It was concluded that once the Chair has discussed the crosswalk and curb cuts item with Mr. McCusker, recommendations should be drafted for Council. The report may simply recommend the Municipality should take responsibility for checking curb cuts and continue to be prepared to respond to any concerns brought to staff's attention on a case by case basis. Mr. Vis suggested that one of the recommendations be that the Councillors include in their newsletter a write-up from Mr. McCusker on the process to follow. The Chair will prepare a report to Mr. McCusker and to Council.

Councillor Sarto noted that in the proposed Capital Budget for 2001-2002 there is a significant amount of money for sidewalk renewal. Mr. Connors reflected that in the past more than one specification was used for curb cuts. Whether this is still the case was not known. Ms. Williams suggested that shortcomings may be the fault of the contractor not the specifications, but Inspectors should be picking up these things it was noted.

#### 4.7 **EVENT GUIDELINES**

Moved to Status Sheet.

4.8 **ACCESSIBLE LOW FLOOR BUSES - MEMO TO COUNCIL**

It was directed that since this item was dealt with it could be removed from the agenda. The Secretary expressed concern that this was not the case. She and the Chair will discuss.

4.9 **AUDIBLE TRAFFIC SIGNALS**

A draft letter composed by Mr. Robar, dated January 15, 2001 had been provided to the Secretary. Referred to Status Sheet.

4.10 **HRM WEBSITE**

Reflecting on the fact that restrictions have been placed on only terms of reference and minutes being contained on the Committee's Web site, it was observed by Ms. Cale that while there is reference to the terms of reference on the web page, they are not there.

Ms. Brown recalled that it had been originally intended that biographies of the members be put on the site and these had been provided.

It was observed that there is reference on the page to Web site accessibility. Rather than being just on the Committee's page, it was felt it should be on the front page of the HRM's web page as well.

4.11 **REQUEST FOR PAINTED CROSSWALK - LOWER WATER STREET AT PRINCE**

Not dealt with.

4.12 **BUS PASSES FOR BLIND - REQUEST FROM REGIONAL COUNCIL**

Information pertaining to the extension of CNIB passes for the year 2000 was circulated to the members.

For the benefit of the new members, it was recalled that this item had been forwarded to the Committee by Council. It was noted that the provision of free Metro Transit bus passes for the blind was being reconsidered.

Mr. Connors and Ms. Williams provided an update on a meeting held this morning with the CNIB. Also in attendance had been Ms. LeGay. They noted this was essentially a fact finding meeting to gather information from all sources. It is hoped that when the situation is resolved,

rather than taking bus passes away from the blind, those with other disabilities will be added to the bus pass list. A facilitated meeting is planned in the future.

#### 4.13 **SIGNAGE AT COUNCIL**

Ms. Brown once again reiterated the importance of Councillors being identified by not only name but the number of the District and the area they represent at Council meetings. Councillor Sarto was asked to raise this matter at Council.

Mr. Vis suggested that this might more practically be done during a role call at the commencement of the meeting. It was felt that this should be done by the Mayor everytime a Councillor speaks. Councillor Sarto will raise the matter with the Mayor, perhaps through an added item at tomorrow night's Council meeting.

#### 4.14 **BRILLE PRINTER UPDATE**

Problems associated with production and delivery of minutes, agendas and attachments are still being encountered.

Ms. LeGay reflected that the current printer only prints one side of the page and given the cost of braille paper, she proposed that HRM consider upgrading the printer which can print on both sides. She recalled that HRM was hoping to do contract work to generate revenue, so such cost savings in paper would be important. She advised that she has made some enquiries and a Thomas printer would only cost an additional \$1,200. The company which sold the printer indicated that they would be willing to exchange the current model, as the printer is essentially new and little used.

Ms. LeGay will discuss with Dorothy Cartledge.

### **CLEANING PRODUCTS**

Ms. Reynolds questioned whether the information she had provided on cleaning supplies which would be safe for those with chemical sensitivities had been passed on. Mr. Connors assured her that they had been forwarded to the Procurement Department and they were asked to follow-up. Mr. Connors had not heard back from them.

It was suggested this item be transferred to the Status Sheet, but it was noted that it would probably fall under Accommodations - Workplan.

## 5.0 **ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Approved minutes of the November 27, 2000 meeting were circulated.

**STATISTICS - ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE -  
DECEMBER 2000**

Circulated in the agenda package.

6.0 **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting, which normally falls on the third Monday of the month, had to be rescheduled as April 17 is Easter Monday.

It was decided to hold the meeting, the fifth Monday of the month, April 30<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Brown indicated she had a conflict and gave her regrets.

Members were encouraged to contact the Chair or the Secretary if they had items to add.

7.0 **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Lynne Le Boutillier  
Assistant Municipal Clerk

To do:

Run by Jane the wording of the change in minutes.

Give Paul copy of Cynthia Street's submission on Darrell. It is proposed that a presentation be made to Darrell at Council. Anyone who knows Darrell who had something to add, was encouraged to pass the information along.

Disability Commissioner Proposal - Charla needs to draft letter to Council.

Ms. Brown asked for the Plan in braille. Large print for Mary-ann.

Check with Brent about my understanding of Vi's limits for the Web site. Need to give him terms of reference. Paul wants me to report back to him. (Done)

Ms. Thomas to be reminded to contact Ms. Cale about Policy.?

Send draft minutes to Betty via e-mail.

NOTICE OF CHANGE OF DATE TO ALL MEMBERS.

Mary Ann needs materials in large font i.e. 16 or more.

Handouts at meeting: info package CNIB passes.

FRIDAY: Discuss with Jane Status Sheet breakdown re Workplan

Ask Patti if Sarto brought up the subject of Identifying Councillors by District no. And area.