

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

MINUTES

AUGUST 20, 2001

PRESENT: Paul Connors, Chair
Peggy Brown
Cynthia Street
Bob Venus
Anne Langille
Sally Campbell
Mary MacDonald
Betty MacDonald
Deputy Mayor Blumenthal
Maureen Reynolds
Darrell Robar
Ken Hines
Barb LeGay
Elsie Cholette

REGRETS: Mary Anne Jones, Jane Cale, Charla Williams and Don Mullins

STAFF: Lynne Le Boutillier, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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0.1 **IDENTIFICATION OF ATTENDEES**

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 3:50 p.m. with introduction of members.

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

The following item was added at the request of Ms. Reynolds:

Item 3.3 - Smoking By-law

She had also requested the addition of an item related to barriers across sidewalks and the need for them to be identifiable, perhaps through wind chimes attached to them, but the Chair noted that the matter has already been referred to staff.

Peggy Brown made reference to a technical seminar at the Institute for the Blind. Refer item 4.4 - CNIB Meeting - Audible Traffic Signals.

2.0 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the May 28, 2001 were adopted, as circulated, on motion of Ms. MacDonald and Mr. Venus. Notes of the June meeting were circulated in the agenda package.

3.0 **NEW BUSINESS**

3.1 **BICYCLE PARKING**

- C A memo dated July 25, 2001 from David McCusker, Manager, Traffic and Transportation Services to the Chair re Bicycle Parking.

Mr. McCusker in this introduction, noted that there is a need to increase the amount of bicycle parking in the Downtown area and he is working with the Bikeways Task Force. He sought input from the Committee on how this can be done safely, particularly from the accessibility to sidewalks perspective. In his presentation he outlined to the Committee a design for securing bicycles and the location of the posts for this purpose between parking meters. He noted that each post could accommodate the locking of two bicycles by their frames, parallel to the curb and street. The intent of the design is to not encroach on the sidewalk. At present bicycles are frequently locked to parking meters and utility polls and there is potential for them to rotate and protrude onto the sidewalk.

During the discussion which ensued on elements of design to reduce the impact on pedestrian movement, the following points were raised:

- C A similar lolly pop design is used in the Spring Garden Road area. These posts are approximately waist high.
- C Concern was expressed that the location between parking meters might prohibit access to the passenger doors of parked cars. Mr. McCusker noted that the locations are between two headed parking meters and if the vehicles are parked appropriately, this should not be a problem. Staff would avoid locating the posts in the vicinity of accessible parking spots.
- C Staff should consult with the CNIB on the impact the design could have for individuals with dogs and using canes. Mobility instructors be asked for an assessment. It was noted that similar posts have been used in the past and the CNIB may have documented experience with them.
- C If there had been negotiations with property owners to set aside bicycle parking spaces in their parking lots? Mr. McCusker indicated they would be concerned with the potential loss of parking lot revenues and vehicle parking lots are not the preferred location of bike users.
- C Instead of parking on the sidewalk, it was proposed that a car parking space be used to provide bike parking. Mr. McCusker noted that the disadvantages of this would be the loss of a car parking space and the need to remove the mechanism for locking the bikes to allow for snow clearing. Permanent installations would hamper such seasonal work.
- C In response to a query from Deputy Mayor Blumenthal regarding whether a by-law will be required to control people continuing to use parking meters to lock up their bikes, Mr. McCusker indicated voluntary compliance will be encouraged.
- C The inclusion of the circle on parking meter polls to help reduce clutter was proposed.
- C It was recommended that consideration be given to placing these bike racks adjacent No Parking Zones.
- C In addition to parking on sidewalks, Ms. Langille felt the Bikeways Task Force should review driving bikes on sidewalks. She referenced speed limits and insurance in the event a person on a bike hurt someone.
- C Deputy Mayor Blumenthal thought enforcement and education will be key.
- C Should any promotional materials be developed by the Bikeways Task Force, it would be good to remind bike riders that those who can't hear or see well may not be aware of their approach and could step out into the path of their bikes. It was felt that education will be very important on this issue.

- C Reference was made to cities which provide bikes for general public use for people to get around. Mr. McCusker indicated the Bikeways Task Force is familiar with this and other initiatives. The first step will be to deal with bike parking, bike lanes, etc.
- C As part of the criteria in selecting what sidewalks, or portions of sidewalks, could be used for bike parking, width be taken into consideration.

3.2 **SIDEWALK (OUTSIDE) CAFES**

- C Letter to the Chair from Laughie Rutt, Executive Director, Canadian Paraplegic Association requesting an update on the subject of Outside Cafes.

The Chair provided Mr. McCusker with a copy of the correspondence which sought an update on what solution had been put forward by the Committee regarding accessibility.

Deputy Mayor Blumenthal noted that he had raised the subject at Regional Council following the annual meeting on Accessibility. He advised that next year all sidewalk patios have to be accessible. An extract from the minutes respecting this subject will be provided to Mr. Rutt. Ms. Cholette will also provide a copy of correspondence from the Nova Scotia League of Equal Opportunities to the Clerk on this matter.

BOUQUETS

Before Mr. McCusker departed, Bob Venus asked him to pass along a bouquet to Tasio Koutroulakis. He recalled that Tasio Koutroulakis had attended a Committee meeting a couple of months ago and encouraged the members to use the HRM Call Centre for assistance. He had a problem with a sidewalk in his neighbourhood, dialed the Call Centre and was referred to Ivan Zinck, who promptly had the sidewalk fixed.

Mr. Venus also reported that he has attended a couple of Regional Council sessions on behalf of the Committee associated with Activity 3 - Public Awareness on the Work Plan. He felt this was one way to bring visibility to the Committee. He thanked Deputy Mayor Blumenthal for his introduction, etc.

3.3 **SMOKING BY-LAW**

Ms. Reynolds expressed concerns regarding smoking at crowded outdoor events such as the Buskers. She passed on her observations to the Committee. These

observations included not only being exposed to second hand smoke, but the danger posed to children walking in a crowd where people are smoking. It was noted that while HRM has a Smoking By-law, it regulates only indoor smoking. It was noted that the Smoking By-law Committee is being reconvened and perhaps they should be asked to take into consideration smoking at outside gatherings. If nothing else, the Chair noted that the Committee will once again be 'planting a seed'. It was recognized that this is a legitimate concern but limitations would be difficult to enforce, thus education will play an important role.

It was requested that Ms. Reynolds draft a letter to the Smoking By-law Committee for the Chair's signature, to be forwarded to the Clerk. It was suggested the correspondence stress the safety issue, i.e. common sense not to smoke in crowds and in the vicinity of children.

It was suggested by Ms. Campbell that there should be an area for those who wish to smoke at outdoor events. Deputy Mayor Blumenthal cautioned that while you can educate the HRM residents, one can't do much to sensitize tourists.

At events such as the Buskers, it was felt that signs should be displayed in future indicating that smoking is prohibited during performances. Additionally an announcement could be made by Buskers asking members of the audience not to smoke.

It was felt that a copy of the letter should be sent to Andrew Cox, Special Events Coordinator. The Chair could also mention to Andrew Cox.

4.0 **BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

4.1 **FEDERAL DISABILITY COMMISSIONER PROPOSAL**

Deferred in Ms. Williams absence.

4.2 **RAILS TO TRAILS - HUBBARDS**

Deferred in Ms. Williams absence. She was to research the area of responsibility before the Chair responded to Mr. Floyd. Item referred to Status Sheet.

4.3 **TAXI SERVICE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (JOINT MEETING WITH TAXI COMMITTEE)**

The Chair reviewed discussions which took place at the June meeting regarding holding a joint meeting with the Taxi Committee to discuss issues those with disabilities have

with the taxi service. No decision was made as there was no quorum. There was agreement that a joint meeting should be held.

It will be proposed to the Taxi Committee that a joint meeting be held the third Monday of October in Halifax Hall. It was suggested that the Committee hold the regular portion of their monthly business meeting at 3:30 p.m. and then proceed with a joint meeting. It was noted that the Taxi Committee has the same regular meeting date as the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities.

A letter will be sent to the Taxi Committee regarding this proposal. The correspondence will be accompanied by a list of points of concern the Committee would like addressed. Barb LeGay will draft the list. Input was given at the meeting and members were encouraged to e-mail or telephone Ms. LeGay with additional points.

Some of the points to be included in the list of issues the Committee wishes to discuss at the joint meeting are as follows:

- C Problems individuals encounter obtaining taxi service when they have a dog. What kind of direction is being given to dispatchers and drivers regarding the option to refuse service?
- C Training - There was previous discussion of designing a program to train drivers on providing service to those with various disabilities. What has become of the program?
- C Clarification of what charges can be levied when aiding a disabled person, i.e. amount per bag, etc.
- C Reference was made to a By-law being in effect, which would deal with issues such as the transport of individuals with guide dogs. Mr. Venus recalled drivers have to have a medical reason to refuse service. Ms. LeGay questioned who records the medical reasons. The Chair suggested that the Taxi Drivers license should indicate if he has an allergy. It was further suggested that the licenses should also be in braille.

Ms. MacDonald recalled a similar subject being discussed in the past. She questioned whether these discussions will be repeated. The Chair felt that in some part they might. Ms. MacDonald recalled a blind individual being denied service and problems with English skills. She will provide Barb with a list of problems the deaf community encounters.

The Chair noted that some of the issues raised have been incorporated in the Taxi By-law. The joint meeting will present an opportunity to increase awareness. There is a part of the Taxi By-law which relates specifically to disabled individuals. If there is difficulty in locating that portion of the by-law, Mr. Venus can provide. Copies will be

provided for the next meeting and the subject will be added as an agenda item.

4.4 CNIB MEETING - AUDIBLE TRAFFIC SIGNALS

Ms. Brown could not provide an update as she was unable to attend the June 21st meeting. Barb LeGay noted that the purpose of the meeting was to have two companies, who distribute audible traffic signals, demonstrate their systems. A meeting will be held in September to discuss what recommendations should be forwarded to the Municipality. Ms. LeGay will provide updates in due course.

Mr. Robar asked Ms. LeGay what became of the study of the hand held devices. Ms. LeGay reported that there had been a lot of problems with these devices. Some had flaws and were defective. She confirmed that the whole subject of audible traffic signals is a big issue in the visually impaired community.

4.5 BROCHURE - REGIONAL COUNCIL

The Clerk advised that she contacted Dorothy Cartledge regarding having the Councillor brochure provided in braille. Ms. Cartledge advised that a document containing columns will not translate well into braille. The Clerk will endeavour to locate a Word Perfect version, minus columns to be brailled.

Ms. LeGay and Ms. Brown reported that there are still problems with the braille being produced. For example, letters are missing from words at the end of lines in the minutes. It was suggested that the Municipality hire someone who can deal with these problems in the braille software package as obviously something has gone wrong. Wayne Huskins, Revenue Canada or the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) may be able to help. An alternative would be for Ms. LeGay and Ms. Brown to identify problems and have a person come in as needed.

4.6 AREA RATE FOR SIDEWALK SNOW PLOWING DISTRICT 15 (FAIRVIEW & CLAYTON PARK)

At the June meeting, Ms. Langille noted that the issue of ice and snow removal from sidewalks in the former City of Halifax had been raised at an advocacy committee meeting. The Clerk was asked to investigate what happened to the initiative this year to set an area rate for this purpose. Copies of an extract from Regional Council's minutes related to this matter were distributed in the agenda package. Staff's recommendations were defeated.

It was felt the subject should be raised again when Deputy Mayor Blumenthal was present. It was requested that the item be added to the next agenda. It was noted that Councillor Walker is the District 15 representative on Council. The Chair will contact him. It was felt that the Councillors should be made aware that there is a concern,

thereby once again 'planting a seed'.

5.0 **STATUS SHEET**

Ms. Street and Mr. Venus reported on progress made on Activity 4 (a) - Alderney Gate Landing Plaza Renovation Meeting. Copies of minutes of the June 15, 2001 meeting were circulated in the agenda package. The members described to the Committee the design of the ramp which was selected. Construction will commence once the tourist season is over.

Mr. Venus and Ms. Street were thanked by the Chair for representing the Committee at these meetings.

Activity 5 - Braille Printer Update - In addition to the copy of an e-mail provided to the members on this subject, circulated at the meeting was a letter to the Chair dated August 7, 2001 from Deborah Storey, Manager of Marketing, Design and Print Services. The Chair read the letter which explains why upgrading the present braille printer to print on both sides of the paper is not deemed practical at this time.

It was reported that the subject of the braille printer was discussed at the Client Services Forum.

6.0 **INFORMATION ITEMS**

A copy of a letter drafted by Ms. Reynolds for the Chair's signature to the Mayor, Councillors and staff re the Pesticide By-law was provided in the agenda package.

ACETONE SMELL

Ms. Reynolds reported on an incident where an acetone smell emanated for a whole block in the vicinity of construction. She felt if a builder knew that an acetone smell was being emitted from the site, a sign at the edge of the building to alert members of the public would be desirable. The Chair will determine who would be the person to contact.

7.0 **NEXT MEETING**

Ms. MacDonald reported that she has a new job and will not be able to make 3:30 p.m. meetings. The Chair reflected that Ms. MacDonald was a great asset to the Committee and he would not wish to lose her as a member. Ms. LeGay noted that perhaps consideration should be given to starting the meetings at 4:00 p.m. which was the original meeting time. The time had been moved back to 3:30 p.m. to accommodate her, but this was no longer necessary. The subject of meeting times will be placed on next month's agenda for a decision by the Committee.

8.0 **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Lynne Le Boutillier
Assistant Municipal Clerk