

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

MINUTES

APRIL 15, 2002

PRESENT: Mr. Paul Connors, Chair  
Ms. Jane Cale  
Councillor Sarto  
Councillor Meade  
Mr. Donald Mullins  
Ms. Peggy Brown  
Ms. Cynthia Street  
Ms. Elsie Cholette  
Mr. Bob Venus  
Ms. Betty MacDonald  
Ms. Anne Langille  
Ms. Maureen Reynolds  
Ms. Barb LeGay

ALSO PRESENT: Ms. Charla Williams, Diversity Program Coordinator (part)  
Mr. Kevin Hindle, Supervisor, Special Services, Metro Transit  
Ms. Lynne Le Boutillier, Assistant Municipal Clerk  
Mr. Chris Racine, Interpreter  
Ms. Laura Bartlett, Interpreter

REGRETS: Mr. Ben Marston, Sally Campbell and Ms. Joanne Coffey

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The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 4:10 p.m. in the Training Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Duke Tower.

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

Mr. Hindle suggested that item 4.5 be changed to read - West End Mall Transit Terminal Concerns rather than Traffic Concerns.

Jane Cale asked that under New Business an item 5.1 - Announcement be added. Ms. Cholette also had an announcement to make associated with a Cross Country Fact Finding Mission on Health Care.

The agenda, as amended, was adopted on motion of Ms. Cholette and Ms. Street. The order of the agenda was subsequently changed to allow for Ms. Williams early departure.

#### **CROSS COUNTRY FACT FINDING MISSION ON HEALTH CARE**

Ms. Cholette provided details pertaining to the above hearing which is taking place April 17, 2002 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Sheraton Hotel. Anyone can make a presentation about how they feel regarding health care cuts.

#### **BRILLE PRINTER**

Ms. LeGay expressed concern that another month has gone by without materials being provided in braille. It was noted that the braille printer had been sent to Toronto for repairs. She felt enquiries should be made by the Print Shop staff as to when it will be returned. This might speed up the process. Ms. Brown advised that from conversations with Ed Goodhew of the Print Shop, she was advised that it is being fixed under warranty.

Several suggestions were made on how HRM might be able to provide information in braille in the interim, i.e. ask for a replacement until the machine is fixed, contact the Deaf Advocacy Association of Nova Scotia, which has a brailier or ask the CNIB to arrange for braille. The Clerk was asked to provide Ms. Kaiser, Director, Shared Services with the options.

Ms. Williams proposed that training be provided to staff who will be preparing documents for braille. She will investigate what training would be available through HRM. Ms. LeGay noted that if the individual running the braille printer knows how to use the software, this should not be necessary. The software allows for the conversion to braille of all kinds of documents. Ms. LeGay felt a bit of training at both ends would go a long way. The Committee was advised that once the machine is returned, Wayne

Huskins, CNIB will provide training to Mr. Goodhew.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

Mr. Venus alerted the Committee to the fact that Councillor Sarto at the April 2, 2002 Regional Council meeting referred to concerns he had associated with those with disabilities, when an item was debated with respect to a heritage building on Morris Street.

### **2.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The following changes were made to the March 18, 2002 minutes:

- C Page 4, last paragraph - Change 'Mr.' to 'Ms' Cholette.
- C Page 5, second sentence - Rather than the reference to 'four hundred (400) intersections are to be replaced', Councillor Meade clarified that in fact changes are to be made to one hundred (100) intersections, which consist of four corners or four hundred (400) curb cuts.
- C Page 5, second paragraph. Delete the words 'with her' at the end of the first sentence.
- C Page 5, second paragraph, third sentence should read "In this instance, she suggested that a **mobility instructor for the blind, as well as a wheelchair user** be involved, to demonstrate the hazards.

The March 18, 2002 minutes, as amended, were approved on motion of Ms. Cholette and Ms. Cale.

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

#### **UNIVERSAL DESIGN POLICY - CITY OF WINNIPEG**

Ms. Williams reported that the Universal Design Policy was not available on the City of Winnipeg Web site. At the March 18, 2002 meeting, it was suggested copies be provided to the members and HRM staff. She referred to discussions she had with Planning staff. She indicated to them that she felt this is something HRM should look into. It was indicated to her that a Planner would be assigned this project to determine how HRM could incorporate into it policy(s).

Ms. Cholette offered to contact her national body in Winnipeg to have a copy forwarded. Ms. Williams did not feel this was necessary, she will either make the

necessary contact with City of Winnipeg staff or ask the Planner assigned to the project to do so.

### 3.0 **STATUS SHEET**

Ms. Cale noted that she had provided the members in November 2001 a strategy on how to better organize the Status Sheet. Since that time another aspect of the Status Sheet has come up, i.e. timely resolution of items. She felt the Committee needs to think of ways to get items off the Status Sheet in a timely fashion.

It was suggested by the Clerk that the format adopted for the Status Sheet to allow it to be brailled may be creating problems. She proposed that the Status Sheet be developed consistent with general HRM practices and a format which can be brailled be kept up-to-date for braille purposes.

Ms. Williams felt that rather than adopting the Status Sheet format being used by Regional Council, boards and committees, their formats should be changed to allow for braille.

Ms. LeGay explained that the braille line is only 40 characters wide, thus a table format is not practical. As an alternative, a standard order for subject categories could be used. At the top of such documents, there is a statement identifying what is contained in each line, i.e. date the subject was brought up and/or revisited; subject; text; person or group assigned task; date of completion.

It was suggested that someone could take on the work of developing an alternative format, in conjunction with Barb LeGay, which the Clerk could forward to the Municipal Clerk.

### **CNIB BUS PASSES**

The Chair recounted the history of this item, i.e. request coming from Councillor Hetherington, January 2001 that the Committee look into the matter; subcommittee set up of Ms. Williams, Mr. Connors and the transit representative; a facilitated meeting planned, etc.

The Chair referred to how complex this subject is. It was suggested by Mr. Hindle that the Committee correspond with Brian Taylor, Director, Metro Transit for an information update on the Transit Strategy Report to determine if there is anything contained in it related to the subject of bus passes for the blind or disabled.

### **ACCESSIBLE PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS** **CROSSWALKS AND CURB CUTS FOR WHEELCHAIRS**

The Committee had received a memo from David McCusker in January, accompanied by an Information Report to Regional Council re **Accessible Pedestrian Signals**. The Chair advised of a conversation he had with Paul Burgess, HRM Design Engineer, a couple of weeks ago. He was advised that staff is working with the CNIB and CPA on design updates. Whether or not this item should be left on the Status Sheet, given it is being actively pursued by staff, was discussed. Ms. Street questioned whether staff will be getting back to the Chair with a document detailing changes. Mr. Connors felt confident staff will get back to him, but whether it would be in the form of a document, he did not know.

The Committee also considered whether the item, pertaining to Regional Council's request that the Committee investigate the matter of **crosswalks and curb cuts** for wheelchairs to identify any which can be approved, should be taken off the Status Sheet as well.

Ms. Street related to the Committee the outcome of her research of the CSA standards. Essentially they require two curb cuts at each corner. She could not find anything under the Building Code, however.

The Chair indicated that Mr. Burgess assured him that staff is aware of the desirability of curb cuts straight off the pedestrian walkway. The matter is being actively worked on. Councillor Meade referred to the disadvantages of those designs, i.e. while appropriate for a flat area, the 45 degree angle on hills, slows down those using skateboards, rollerbladers, etc.

The Chair referred to alternatives, i.e. having two curb cuts at each corner or a completely open area at the sidewalk corners. Councillor Meade cautioned that vehicles are likely to cut corners too tightly in these instances and their wheels ride over the sidewalk.

Referring to the fact that the subject of **Audible Traffic Signals** was raised as far back as 1989, Ms. LeGay felt it would be worthwhile to commence a BF system. The Chair reflected this subject may go back as far as the late 70's. He assured the members that it is just as frustrating for staff as the Committee. Mr. Connors referred to problems encountered with the various systems and the need for a universal system.

In his update on the subject of **crosswalks and curbcuts** directed to the Committee by Regional Council to investigate, Mr. Connor recalled that the Committee concluded this was a huge task. Mr. McCusker was advised that it was impractical for the Board to take it on. It was proposed that when designing new intersections or retrofitting older ones, issues related to wheelchairs be taken into consideration. If the members run into situations which require attention, they report the locations through the HRM Info

number.

The Clerk noted that in order to get this outstanding matter off the Council status sheet, a report is required. Mr. Connors will speak with David McCusker.

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

#### 4.4 **DRAFT CORRESPONDENCE TO MAYOR, HOUSING CONCERNS OF THOSE WITH CHEMICAL SENSITIVITY**

A draft letter had been previously circulated to the meeting, but the Committee felt it should be reformatted into a report with the a recommendation.

Ms. Reynolds circulated to the members some information from the April 2002 edition of "Our Toxic Times", a publication of the Chemical Injury Information Network, re MCS (Multichemical Sensitivity) as it relates to homelessness. She included with the handout a summary of the article which she reviewed with the members. She was seeking feedback from the Committee on how to proceed in developing her report to Regional Council.

Ms. Reynolds wondered if she should ask the Environmental Health Clinic or HRM to conduct a similar survey. The Chair did not feel there was a need for a study over and above the material provided to accompany the report to Council. This should suffice in making citizens and Council aware of the problem. He suggested it might be worthwhile for Ms. Reynolds to phone or write the Environmental Health Coalition of Western Massachusetts for more information.

Councillor Sarto indicated he would like to know the size of their sample. He also sought a definition of homelessness. The Chair felt that even someone who owns a home, but is displaced from their home, effectively makes them homeless. More research might better define the term homelessness.

Ms. Reynolds also relayed to the members an initiative two doctors have undertaken to raise funds to construct a building to house six individuals with MCS. One of the doctors has thirty individuals on their waiting list for suitable housing. It was suggested to Ms. Reynolds that any further information she can gain regarding this initiative could be attached to the report to Council. Personal testimonies would also be useful. Ms. Reynolds and the Chair will work on the report.

Ms. LeGay recalled that a couple of months ago, the Committee considered applying for funds under the HRM Community Grants Program. While the deadline for 2002 has passed, maybe the Committee could apply for funds to conduct a survey of homelessness related to MCS.

#### 4.5 WEST END MALL TRANSIT TERMINAL CONCERNS

Mr. Hindle was in receipt of a report from a Transit Technician dated April 12, 2002 regarding this item. The report referred to a meeting with representatives of the Halifax Shopping Centre Corporation. As a result, a number of items were addressed related to the accessibility of the new terminal, etc. A commitment was received that they will address issues related to crosswalks and the intersection between the two locations.

Secondly, Metro Transit staff is working with the shopping centre representatives to provide an accessible bus stop adjacent to Walmart for Bus No. 3. Appropriate curbcuts and a proper landing pad will be installed. They have been provided with the installation guidelines. Hopefully service to this location will commence in May.

Staff is also continuing to bring forward concerns associated with pedestrian traffic in the area.

Mr. Hindle confirmed there is still a reluctance by management to introduce too much bus service to the front of the building, as they have liability concerns.

Mr. Mullins referred to a shuttle service which only runs weekends. Mr. Hindle was unaware of this service. Mr. Mullins will make some enquiries why it is not running all the time.

In response to a query from Ms. Langille, Mr. Hindle noted that the No. 3, is the only low floor accessible service whose route includes the West End Mall. At present the No. 3 service does not run on weekends.

#### 4.8 PLAYGROUNDS

The subject of accessible playgrounds was raised by Councillor Meade at the January 2002 meeting. Councillor Meade felt that if regulations are not in place to make playgrounds accessible, nothing will likely get done. In his update, the Chair referred to a conversation he had with Paul Burgess, HRM Design Engineer. Apparently, in conjunction with Parks and Recreation, design standards are being looked at. It was suggested he contact Blair Blakeney and or Steve Oakey. The Chair will follow-up.

#### 4.2 ENDORSEMENT OF THE POLICY STATEMENT

Ms. Cale advised that she understood that at the April 3, 2002 Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee meeting, a motion was passed accepting the Statement of Endorsement from the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities. It has been Mr. Lahey's, a member of the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee,

intention to attend today's meeting to convey this motion, however due to a change in shifts, he sent his regrets.

Ms. Cale will give Mr. Lahey a call to confirm her understanding was correct. The members were in receipt of an information report to be signed by both the Chair of the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee and the Chair of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities. It was felt that the report can now go forward to Council. If it is the intention of Committee representatives to address the subject at Council, the Clerk expressed concern that an Information Report would not provide this opportunity. Information items are simply circulated to the Councillors with their agenda packages. The Clerk was asked to consult with the Municipal Clerk on how to proceed.

Ms. Street questioned the consequences of adopting such an approach, i.e. would it result in more teeth? She reflected on other levels of government tying funding to policies. Ms. Cale indicated that as far as she knew there was no requirement of HRM for the Committee to have a policy. She felt the presentation to Regional Council was essentially for awareness purposes. She acknowledged that some concerns were expressed by the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee representatives that an endorsement from the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities might translate into financial implications.

#### **4.1    MOTORIZED WHEELCHAIRS REGULATION**

C       Memo dated March 15, 2002 from David McCusker

It was concluded that Mr. McCusker's reply adequately addressed the subject.

#### **4.3    POLICE SERVICE - SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS FOR THE DEAF**

It had been requested at the March meeting that the Police Commission be advised of the concerns raised at the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities re the right of deaf people to proper communication. Ms. MacDonald felt it would be helpful if a standard was developed.

The Clerk apologized that she missed adding this item to the April 12<sup>th</sup> Police Commission agenda. She will endeavour to include on their next agenda. She noted that in retrospect, it would have been desirable to have a presenter or at least a report with a recommendation for the Board of Police Commissioners to consider.

As an alternative, it was suggested it would helpful if a representative of the police service(s), as the HRM is not only patrolled by the HRP, but RCMP, attend the next meeting. Ms. MacDonald felt this would provide an opportunity to clear up any

misunderstanding which exist.

#### 4.6 **JOINT MEETING WITH TAXI AND LIMOUSINE COMMITTEE**

##### 4.6.1 **SUBSIDY FOR ACCESS-A-BUS**

The Clerk was advised by Ms. Murphy, the Clerk associated with the Taxi and Limousine Committee that no response has been received from Mr. McLellan, CAO re subsidy options for Access-a-Bus to allow for more profitable operation of the service during evenings and weekends.

#### 4.7 **BUS NUMBERS (BACK OF BUS AND AUDIBLE)**

In his update, Mr. Hindle noted that a number of defects were reported in the prototype numbering system being tested. A redesign may be required.

He advised that he has spoken with representatives of the Canadian Urban Transit Association to determine if there are any systems in operation which provide an audible message to identify the bus number. They are conducting research across Canada to identify any systems in operation. Hopefully he will have a further update for the May meeting.

Ms. LeGay noted that the American Disabilities Act requires audible notification systems for their buses. She suggested it might be worthwhile to look into the American experience. Mr. Hindle reflected that these systems are funded 100% by their Federal Government for their transit systems. The American standards are different from Canadian standards. He anticipated the Canadian Urban Transit Association will extend its research to the United States, if they can't find anything in Canada. He noted that while a number of systems have been tested, the difficulty is finding ones still in use.

#### 4.9 **HRM POLICY - CURB CUTS**

Refer to item 3.0 - Status Sheet.

#### 4.10 **CROSSING AT ALMON - VICINITY OF CNIB**

The Chair will follow-up with Mr. McCusker. (Refer January 2002 meeting minutes.)

#### 5.0 **NEW BUSINESS**

##### 5.1 **ANNOUNCEMENT**

Ms. Cale reported that the HRM and the Ecology Action Centre have hired a Coordinator, Wayne Groszko to deal with bicycle and pedestrian concerns. It was suggested that he be invited to the May meeting.

### **CNIB CLIENT SERVICES**

Ms. Brown advised that a meeting has been tentatively scheduled for the CNIB Client Services for May 5.

### **6.0 NEXT MEETING**

As the next regularly scheduled meeting, the third Monday of the month would fall on May 20, which is Victoria Day, it was decided to reschedule the meeting to May 27, 2002. The Clerk will confirm the availability of the Training Room on that date. The members were asked to check their agenda carefully to ensure the meeting is being held in the same location.

### **7.0 ADJOURNMENT**

The Chair encouraged the members to review the Status Sheet to determine if there are any updates they can add and to help familiarize themselves with the items, so discussions can proceed more quickly.

Before adjournment, Ms. MacDonald noted problems she is encountering printing off the agenda. She noted that the minutes print off fine, but not the agenda.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:00 p.m.

Lynne Le Boutillier  
Assistant Municipal Clerk