

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MINUTES FEBRUARY 17, 2003

PRESENT: Ms. Cynthia Street, Acting Chair
Councillor Meade
Ms. Peggy Brown
Mr. Patrick Harrington
Ms. Anne Langille
Ms. Jane Cale
Ms. Maureen Reynolds
Ms. Barbara LeGay
Ms. Joanne Coffey

ABSENT: Mr. Paul Connors (regrets)
Councillor Sarto (regrets)
Mr. Donald Mullins (regrets)
Ms. Elsie Cholette (regrets)
Mr. Bob Venus (regrets)
Ms. Betty MacDonald (regrets)
Ms. Sally Campbell (regrets)
Supt. Falkenham (regrets)

ALSO PRESENT: Ms. Charla Williams, Diversity Program Coordinator
Mr. Wayne Groszko, Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator
Mr. Kevin Hindle, Supervisor, Special Services, Metro Transit
Ms. Lynne Le Boutillier, Assistant Municipal Clerk

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Call to Order and Introductions	3
2.	Election of Chair and Vice-Chair	3
3.	Approval of Minutes	3
4.	Approval of the Order of Business and Approval of Additions and Deletions	3
5.	Business Arising from Minutes/Status Sheet	
5.1	Sidewalk Cafes - Update Chair	5 & 6
5.2	Draft of Council re CNIB Bus Passes	6
5.3	Timberlea Area Sign	6
5.4	Crosswalks and Curb Cuts for Wheelchairs	6
5.5	Update Concerning Pedestrian Issues	6
5.6	Housing for the Environmentally Sensitive	6
5.7	VG Parking - Nova Scotia Museum	7
5.8	Snow Clearing	7
5.9	Update West End Mall - Peggy Brown	7
5.10	Taxi Issues - Scents and Dogs	7 & 8
6.	New Business	
6.1	Wheelchair Accessible Taxis	4
6.2	Halifax VIA Station Expanding - New Trains	4 & 5
6.3	Housing Options Workshop	5
7.	Date of Next Meeting	8
8.	Adjournment	8

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Ms. Street called the meeting to order. Introductions followed.

2. **ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

Deferred in the absence of the Mr. Connors. The Secretary was asked to check with Mr. Connors to see if he is still willing to serve in this capacity.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was noted that the date in item 4.5 - Interpreters, page 5, should read New Years Eve 2003 not 2004.

MOVED BY Councillor Meade and seconded by Ms. Brown that the January 20, 2003 minutes be adopted, as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. **APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

It was recalled that the Committee had requested that the order of the agenda have New Business before Business Arising Out of the Minutes and Status Sheet. Item 6, New Business was moved up on the agenda.

The following items were added to the agenda under Business Arising:

- 5.6 Housing for the Environmentally Sensitive (Ms. Reynolds)
- 5.7 VG Parking - Nova Scotia Museum (Ms. Reynolds)
- 5.8 Snow Clearing (Councillor Meade) and Mr. Venus
- 5.9 Update West End Mall (Ms. Brown)
- 5.10 Taxi Issues - Scents and Dogs (Ms. Brown and Ms. LeGay)

Under New Business:

- 6.1 Wheelchair Accessible Taxis
- 6.2 Halifax VIA Station Expanding/New Trains (Ms. Cale)
- 6.3 Housing Options Workshop

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1 WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE TAXIS

Copies of a letter from Mr. Rutt, Executive Director. CPA to Councillor Adams, Chair of the HRM Taxi Committee dated February 14, 2003, were circulated at the meeting. The letter essentially was seeking action from the Taxi Committee to resolve the problem of the lack of wheelchair accessible taxis. Brailled copies of the correspondence will be provided in due course.

There was support expressed for the initiative being taken by the Canadian Paraplegic Association, i.e. to seek action to resolve the problem of the lack of wheelchair accessible taxis. Mr. Rutt proposed the Taxi Committee take a lead role and hold a stakeholders meeting with the intention of forming a task force to make this become a reality.

During the ensuing discussions, reference was made to the following:

- C A joint meeting held with the Taxi Committee December 2001 in Halifax Hall.
- C A letter written re a subsidy for Access-a-Bus to the CAO from the Taxi Committee. The Clerk was requested to check with Sherrill Murphy on whether any response was received. Kevin Hindle recalled a response from the CAO.
- C Out of the original four accessible taxis, there is now only one in operation.
- C The negative affect that licensing practices have on accessible taxi operations.
- C The number of levels of government involved in regulating.
- C Whether just an indication of support is required to the CPA or a list of suggestions be provided.
- C The need to work in partnership with the Taxi Committee, i.e. be an advisory committee to the Taxi Committee.
- C In addition to the list of agencies copied the correspondence, the Capital District Task Force should also be involved.
- C If any thought has been given to HRM running its own Accessible Taxi program similar to the Access-a-Bus program. It was noted that HRM could not operate as cheaply as independent operators.
- C The benefit of Mr. Rutt providing data on what is done with respect to Accessible Taxis in other jurisdictions.

6.2 HALIFAX VIA RAIL STATION EXPANDING - NEW TRAINS

Ms. Cale referred to a recent newspaper article regarding the expansion of the Halifax Station and the acquisition of new passenger cars. She noted that the new cars will contain a fully-accessible suite for either overnight or day occupancy, plus one coach in

every train will provide a wheelchair tie-down. While the service is currently provided between Montreal and Toronto, no date has been given for when the Halifax to Montreal service is to commence.

6.3 **HOUSING OPTIONS WORKSHOP**

Ms. Cale referred to a workshop entitled 'It's Time of Move' sponsored by Lifetime Ability Networks of Nova Scotia (LANNS) to be held March 1, 2003 at Mount Saint Vincent University. The workshop is about creating housing options for people with disabilities. This workshop was advertised in the February 14, 2003 edition of the Mail Star.

5. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES/STATUS SHEET**

5.1 **SIDEWALK CAFES - UPDATE CHAIR**

It was noted in the January 20, 2003 minutes that the Chair was to contact Mr. Paynter, Director, Public Works and Transportation, as permits to allow encroachment on sidewalks are issued by Environmental and Right of Way Services, which falls under Public Works and Transportation. Ms. Coffey noted that she had not heard from the Chair, so she hasn't commenced the draft.

During discussion of this ongoing item, the following points were made:

- C A letter should be sent to Planning and Development Services to ensure that new sidewalk cafes are not designed like the existing ones.
- C There may be more sidewalk cafes in response to the Smoking Bylaw.
- C The CPA has a lot of information with respect to good and bad Sidewalk Cafe design.
- C Wood containing arsenic, used in the construction of the older sidewalk cafes, could poison children who come in contact with it. The exposure could be reduced if the wood was painted. While the pressure treated wood previously sold will no longer be permitted for sale, apparently an environmentally safe substitute has been identified.
- C The guidelines for building new cafes should make reference to what variety of wood should be used and/or surfaces be painted.

The Committee was anxious to have Kevin Barrett's replacement(s) attend a meeting. They wished this individual(s) invited to the next meeting, as there are number of issues to discuss including materials used in construction, smoking and accessibility.

Ms. LeGay recalled a discussion regarding having city planners attend an awareness session of things which should be considered before issuing a license.

5.2 DRAFT TO COUNCIL RE CNIB BUS PASSES

Ms. Williams noted that she did not receive any additional comments from the members on her draft. At the January meeting only one change had been made in paragraph 3. The words 'maintaining and/or possibly expanding this practice to all persons with disabilities' were deleted and 'such a policy' substituted. The members were encouraged to submit their input. Ms. Brown will need another copy of the draft brailled.

5.3 TIMBERLEA AREA SIGN

Deferred in absence of Ms. MacDonald.

5.4 CROSSWALKS AND CURB CUTS FOR WHEELCHAIRS

While there are number of instances related to crosswalks and curb cuts discussed by the Committee over the years, the Secretary emphasized that the query sent to the Committee by Regional Council March 2000 has to be addressed, otherwise it will remain on the Regional Council status sheet. It was noted that on the Committee's Status Sheet reference was made that at the June 17, 2002 meeting the Chair advised of progress and the matter should be resolved shortly. The Secretary was asked to contact Mr. Connors to determine if any response was subsequently sent to Regional Council on this matter initially raised by Councillor Read.

5.5 UPDATE CONCERNING PEDESTRIAN ISSUES

Circulated at the meeting was a written update by Mr. Groszko. Mr. Groszko reviewed his report with the Committee which listed measures to facilitate pedestrian transportation.

5.6 HOUSING FOR THE ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE

Ms. Reynolds provided a letter from Dr. Roy Fox, N.S. Environmental Health Centre dated November 19, 2002. The letter essentially lends support to the need for suitable housing through the creation of environmentally safe housing units.

The status sheet notes that draft correspondence to the Mayor re housing concerns of those with chemical sensitivity was discussed at the October 2002 meeting. Ms. Reynolds noted that she had been asked to provide a supporting letter.

5.7 VG PARKING - NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM

Ms. Reynolds raised a concern she had with handicapped parking associated with the

Nova Scotia Museum, particularly the accessibility to obtain a ticket for it. She noted that arrangements have been made by the hospital to use the Museum parking area until their parking facilities have been constructed. She felt this obstacle should be brought to the attention of someone at the QEII complex. It was suggested that rather than raise such matters at the Committee, if such instances are observed a call should be made directly. In the event, no remedial action is taken, bringing it to the Committee would be appropriate. It was also suggested by staff that the Committee is not the best place to bring issues which fall outside the jurisdiction of the Municipality.

5.8 **SNOW CLEARING**

When giving his regrets for today's meeting, Mr. Venus referred to a letter he had sent to the Mayor and Councillors regarding the value of a snow shoveling program which has been offered the past two years to seniors and the disabled. He encouraged Council to include funding in next years operating budget.

At the January meeting, Councillor Meade suggested that the Board may wish to recommend to Regional Council that snow clearing of sidewalks by HRM be put into effect for Halifax through the general tax rate. He felt this would be beneficial for those with disabilities. He noted that programs exist in the former City of Dartmouth, Town of Bedford and Sackville and one was initiated for District 15. Councillors Whalen and Mosher are considering requesting similar programs for their Districts.

MOVED BY Ms. Reynolds and Ms. Brown that the Committee recommend to Regional Council that the Municipality clear the sidewalks in the former City of Halifax area for the benefit of the elderly and disabled, both in clearing and utilization and spread cost amongst all residents, similar to the City of Dartmouth's program. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5.9 **UPDATE WEST END MALL - PEGGY BROWN**

Due to time constraints, item deferred to the March meeting.

5.10 **TAXI ISSUES - SCENTS AND DOGS**

Deferred to the next meeting.

In closing, the Acting Chair suggested that for the next agenda the subject of the Status Sheet be made an agenda item. Also it should be noted that it would be easier if items for a meeting would be conveyed to the Secretary, a week before the meeting so they could be included on the agenda.

7. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held Monday, March 17, 2003.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Lynne Le Boutillier
Legislative Assistant

