

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MINUTES JUNE 16, 2003

PRESENT: Ms. Joanne Coffey, Vice-Chair
Councillor Meade
Mr. Donald Mullins
Ms. Peggy Brown
Ms. Sally Campbell
Mr. Patrick Harrington
Ms. Anne Langille
Ms. Maureen Reynolds
Ms. Cynthia Street
Ms. Jane Cale

ABSENT: Councillor Sarto (regrets)
Ms. Elsie Cholette (regrets)
Mr. Bob Venus (regrets)
Ms. Betty MacDonald (regrets)
Ms. Barbara LeGay (regrets)
Mr. Kevin Hindle (regrets)

ALSO PRESENT: Supt. Falkenham, HRP
Ms. Charla Williams, Diversity Program Coordinator
Ms. Lynne Le Boutillier, Legislative Assistant

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1. **CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Coffey in the Training Room, 3rd Floor Duke Tower at 4:00 p.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOVED BY Councillor Meade, seconded by Ms. Cale that the minutes of the April 28, 2003 and May 26, 2003 meetings be adopted as circulated.

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

A discussion followed on the order of business, i.e. whether New Business items should appear before Business Arising items and vice versa. The New Business items were moved down the agenda after Business Arising out of the Minutes and Status Sheet.

The following New Business items were added to the agenda:

Item 4.1 - Neighbourhood Watch Meeting, North Branch Library (Peggy Brown/Don Mullins)

Item 4.2 - Smoking at Bus Stops (Anne Langille)

Item 4.3 - Nova Scotia Disabled Persons Commission Annual Report - 2001-2002

5. **BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES AND STATUS SHEET**

5.1 **SIDEWALK CAFES**

- C Agreement Reached in Accessibility of Sidewalk Cafes, May 30, 2003 - Laughie Rutt
- C HRM News Release - Outdoor Cafes could be Wheelchair Accessible in 2004
- C Mail Star Article "Wheelchair users to roll easily into sidewalk cafes next summer" dated May 31, 2003.

In addition to the above noted items circulated with the agenda package, copies of an Information Report dated June 6, 2003 re Barrier Free Access - Sidewalk Cafes which was going to Regional Council's June 17, 2003 meeting were circulated.

Ms. Coffey updated the members on the meeting she and Mr. Rutt, CPA had attended with

HRM representatives, Phil Francis, Right of Way Engineer, Rick Paynter, Director, Public Works & Transportation, Jim Donovan and Paul Dunphy, Director, Planning and Development Services. The intention is to have all outdoor sidewalk cafes accessible by 2004. Inspections will be done of every sidewalk café to assess their accessibility.

Ms. Reynolds noted there is no reference to the subject of problems associated with pressure treated wood used in the construction of these sidewalk cafes. Ms. Coffey noted that Mr. Rutt thought it would be best to concentrate on accessibility issues this year, then pursue other issues.

It was noted that the potential danger can be easily dealt with by painting surfaces. Ms. Coffey will mention to Mr. Rutt that this is an issue which might be raised when the various sidewalk cafes are visited. Ms. Reynolds pointed out that the operators may not be aware that there is arsenic in the wood, which can pose a problem to children.

Councillor Meade, referring to various concerns related to sidewalk cafes, noted problems the blind encounter as well as those in wheelchairs. Mr. Harrington advised that he will be accompanying Mr. Rutt and HRM staff on the inspections.

Concern was also expressed by Councillor Meade regarding tables and chairs being placed directly on sidewalks in the downtown area.

5.2 WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE TAXIS

Mr. Harrington reported on his and Ms. Williams' meeting with Mr. Rutt to seek clarification of what he wanted the Committee to do as a result of his letter dated February 14, 2003. He advised that Mr. Rutt, CPA would like to see a meeting between CPA representatives, members of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities, Taxi Committee and Utility Review Board to come up with some sort of agreement or plan to get more accessible taxis on the road. At present there is only one accessible taxi in operation. The taxi is operated by Yellow cab and only operates weekdays during business hours. Mr. Rutt would like to see accessible taxis allowed to pick up regular fares when not called out by a disabled individual. It was noted that there are no accessible taxis at the Airport.

Whether this meeting should be arranged by the Committee was discussed, i.e. whether this function would fall within the Committee's mandate.

Reference was made to previous meeting(s) on the subject, which did help in raising awareness and the complexities involved. Mr. Harrington felt that some bending of rules would be required to facilitate the acquisition of accessible taxis which can also pick up regular users.

In the interim, Mr. Harrington will act as the Committee's liaison, reporting back to the Committee. The whole Committee could become involved later on.

5.3 ACCESS-A-BUS SUBSIDY/OR ACCESSIBLE TAXI SUBSIDY

A memo on this subject from Kevin Hindle, dated May 6, 2003 was circulated at the May meeting.

Reference was made to a letter sent to George McLellan from the Taxi Committee following the December 2001 joint meeting of the Committee and Taxi Commission. A general discussion followed and it was concluded that there is still some confusion associated with this complicated matter and the item be deferred until the July meeting when Mr. Hindle is present.

Ms. Reynolds indicated she felt ashamed that the Municipality does not have accessible taxis. Given the huge numbers of disabled identified in the N.S. Disabled Persons Commission Annual Report, it was suggested that if the Taxi Committee can't solve the problem, someone else should take it on this complex issue. Mr. Harrington referred to Mr. Rutt's desire to get the various regulatory bodies together, as outlined in item 5.2.

Ms. Reynolds suggested that some research be done on how other cities provide such a service.

An update will be provided in July.

5.4 HOUSING FOR THE ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE

The Secretary noted that Ms. MacDonald had tried to contact Mr. Connors regarding whether a report was sent to Council, but has not heard back from him. The Secretary did not recall this being done. She had a copy of a report which was to go to Regional Council's June 27, 2002 meeting initially. Subsequently a letter was provided by Ms. Reynolds from Dr. Roy Fox, NS Environmental Health Centre dated November 19, 2002. (Status Sheet indicated changes were to be made to the report and it run by Councillor Sarto, raised again February 2003).

It was decided to pass the draft report to Councillor Meade for review, if he felt it appropriate it be forwarded to the Chair for signature.

5.5 CAPITAL DISTRICT TASK FORCE - URBAN DESIGN PROJECT

Ms. Griffiths requested that this item be deferred to the July meeting.

5.6 HALIFAX ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING FAMILY SUPPORT

The Secretary understood that the Chair has yet to receive a response to her e-mail regarding an invitation for one of their representatives to attend the June or July meeting to clarify issues related to their correspondence re the Mainland Common Recreation Study.

One of the members recalled it being suggested that they might want to have someone from their Association apply for membership on the Committee. The Chair may want to encourage them to submit an application.

A discussion followed on **pools** in general. It was noted by Ms. Brown that the Northcliff pool can only be access by stairs. She requested that this be an item on the July agenda.

Ms. Reynolds made reference to the use of ultraviolet light to disinfect pool water. She felt it would be desirable to have at least one pool in the municipality use this system so individuals with chemical sensitivities could use it. She will do some research into whether this approach is feasible for public pools.

5.7 PRESENTATION TO REGIONAL COUNCIL

It was proposed by Councillor Meade that it would be appropriate for the Committee to make a presentation to Regional Council at a Committee of the Whole. The presentation could refer to past accomplishments and objectives for the upcoming year. This would be a good opportunity to highlight the need for accessible taxis, for example.

A written presentation would not be necessary, but if there was one it should be circulated after the actual presentation. Councillor Meade suggested a half hour would suffice, slides be used and time set aside for questions.

Ms. Coffey felt she and Ms. MacDonald could take this on or alternatively members take a few minutes to discuss a particular aspect or concern, i.e. Ms. Reynolds concerns re pressure treated wood, Anne Langille the issue of sidewalk clearing, etc.

The Committee will aim for a presentation to a Committee of the Whole meeting in October.

Ms. Cale noted that the terms of reference contain the requirement for an annual report to Council. The Secretary will endeavour to locate copies of previous Annual Reports for reference purposes.

Ms. Cale referred to the work plan needing to be revised.

4. **NEW BUSINESS**

4.1 **PUBLIC MEETING - NORTH BRANCH LIBRARY**

Don Mullins and Peggy Brown reported on a meeting held last week at the North Branch Library. A discussion followed on the Capital District Task Force and the announcement of additional low cost housing initiatives in the area.

Concern was expressed by Peggy Brown regarding the proposed sidewalk treatments. She felt that they will pose a problem to cane users. It was noted that it is proposed that a separate pavement material be used for the walkway versus the furnishings area. Ms. Brown did not feel the 'sweep' technique of cane users would pick this up and prevent collision with obstacles. She has addressed these issues with the consultants.

4.2 **SMOKING AT BUS STOPS**

Concern was expressed by Ms. Langille regarding Metro Transit passengers smoking in bus shelters and, on occasion, bus drivers in close proximity of their bus. It was noted that no smoking is allowed in bus shelters. When smoking of this nature is observed, Councillor Meade suggested it be reported to the 490-4000 line, identifying the bus number and time of day.

Similarly, he encouraged the members to call into the 490-4000 line the location of problem curb cuts. This is preferable to contacting a staff member directly, as the complaint is logged in. Also, if they observe RA5 - crosswalk light signs which are broken, they place a call. If such outages are not reported, they won't get repaired.

4.3 **NOVA SCOTIA DISABLED PERSONS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT**

Circulated at the meeting was a copy of the above noted report. The members indicated they would like to receive a copy.

7. **STATUS SHEET**

During the review of the status sheet, it was decided that the following items could be deleted:

- C Activity 1: Persons with Disabilities Policy - Ms. Cale proposed that when the Committee makes its presentation to Regional Council in October, the subject of the Policy be raised. She referred to an Information Report already prepared in this regard.

- C Activity 2: Advise Council through Annual Report - to be done in October 2003.
- C Activity 3: Public Awareness - Both Event Guidelines Update and Smoking By-law deleted.
- C Activity 4: Equitable Access - Physical Environment
 - C Accommodations Guidelines Working Group - off
 - C Building Management Services - Reference was made to the City of Dartmouth's initiatives in this area prior to amalgamation. Charla Williams will call Peter Ross, Procurement as to whether he received the Committee's recommendation and if so, what has been done. (Reminder)
 - C Pedway Update - The HDL pedway of concern is still not accessible. It was suggested that all that is need is an elongated ramp over the set of stairs. Ms. Williams will contact Halifax Developments Limited one more time.
 - C Mr. Harrington reported on his involvement with a consumer group which deals with Accessible Traffic Signals. Audible Traffic Signals can be taken off.
 - C Low Floor Bus Service - Snow Clearing - It was felt this item could be taken off given the good job being done with snow clearing.
 - C Endorsement of ATAC response - off
 - C Construction Sites and Manhole Covers - off
 - C Curb Cuts - off
 - C Accommodations Guidelines Working Group reference second page can also be deleted.
 - C Ms. Williams to contact HRM Business Units - off

*Following the adjournment of the meeting, Ms. Cale indicated that the last two paragraphs on page 3 could be removed. They related to Crime Prevention Information. She noted the Pamphlet for "Crime Prevention Guide for Persons with Disabilities", HR Police Department is completed and a copy was provided for the record. She advised that alternate formats are in process. Sgt. Robert McNeil will contact her when the alternate formats are ready.

If any of the disability organizations wants a presentation, they should call Cst. Jenkins at 490-6350.

Ms. Cale also indicated the HRM Website item page 3 could be removed as Kelly Marney Webmaster was contacted. A copy of that correspondence was provided to the Committee. Kelly Marney assured the Committee that HRM's website is fully accessible.

6. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was decided to hold the regularly scheduled July 21st meeting, but not the August meeting. Ms. Cale gave her regrets for the July meeting.*

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m. on motion of Councillor Meade.

Lynne Le Boutillier
Legislative Assistant