

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MINUTES JULY 21, 2003

PRESENT: Ms. Betty MacDonald, Chair
Councillor Meade
Mr. Patrick Harrington
Ms. Anne Langille
Ms. Cynthia Street
Ms. Jane Cale
Mr. Bob Venus
Ms. Barbara LeGay
Ms. Joanne Coffey

ABSENT: Councillor Sarto (regrets)
Ms. Elsie Cholette (regrets)
Mr. Kevin Hindle (regrets)
Mr. Donald Mullins
Ms. Peggy Brown (regrets)
Ms. Sally Campbell (regrets)
Ms. Maureen Reynolds (regrets)

ALSO PRESENT: Supt. Falkenham, HRP
Ms. Charla Williams, Diversity Program Coordinator
Ms. Janet Delaney, Translator
Ms. Sandra Spears, Translator
Ms. Lynne Le Boutillier, Legislative Assistant

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Upon called the meeting to Order at 4:00 p.m., Training Room, 3rd Floor Duke Tower, with the agreement of the members, the Chair moved item 5.1, Capital District Task Force - Urban Design Project - Curb Cuts and Pavers up on the agenda.

5. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

5.1 **CAPITAL DISTRICT TASK FORCE - URBAN DESIGN PROJECT - CURB CUTS AND PAVERS**

Ms. Lesley Griffiths and Mr. Gordon Ratcliffe, Gordon Ratcliffe Landscape Architects were in attendance to provide an update on what has taken place since their last presentation to the Committee, a couple of months ago.

In her update, Ms. Griffiths referred to an Information Report which went to Regional Council July 15, 2003 regarding the replacement of brick sidewalks in the Capital District. Copies of the report to be circulated with the next agenda package. Ms. Griffiths noted that following the April meeting, they shared concerns expressed by Committee members regarding the use of concrete pavers. As a result, broom finished concrete has been proposed for walking surfaces.

Following Ms. Griffiths' update, with the use of an overhead projector, Mr. Ratcliffe explained proposed designs for sidewalk systems and curb cuts.

Essentially the sidewalk corridor being proposed consists of four zones, if space allows, i.e. curb zone (18 inches), furnishing and service zone (3 to 4 feet), pedestrian through zone and frontage zone. The minimum pedestrian through zone is 7', to allow for sidewalk snow plowing and two wheelchairs to pass. The proposal outlined could be accommodated in whole if the sidewalk width is fifteen (15'), but it is recognized most sidewalks are twelve (12') or less in width. In instances of 12' sidewalks, the frontage zone, in front of buildings, would disappear.

It was felt that the materials being used would make it easier for blind persons, who use canes, to travel more safely. Mr. Harrington met with the designers and noted that there will be a groove between the different textures for a cane user to follow.

Mr. Ratcliffe referred to a slide of the present situation on Barrington Street where tables, chairs and sandwich boards are put on the sidewalk and bicycles are secured to poles, resulting in the sidewalk width being reduced to two to three feet. He explained, with an illustration, one way the design could be modified to accommodate these uses, but allow for safe passage, i.e. the sidewalk be brought out to the curb and around these

obstructions. He felt that by using a consistent system, in association with tactile materials, the blind could navigate such areas. It is recognized that more study is required in conjunction with individuals such as Mr. Harrington. It is not the desire to eliminate outdoor cafes, as they add life to the city.

Mr. Harrington referred to a report Mr. Phil Francis, Right-of-Way Engineer had prepared for Council on the issue of sidewalk cafes.

Questions were posed regarding whether delineation of access routes to stores and where individuals are dropped off by Access-a-Bus has been taken into consideration. Mr. Ratcliffe indicated they are considering the use of better concrete pavers for this purpose. One option is upside down pavers. While these can be a bit bumpy for wheelchair users, Mr. Harrington indicated they work well for someone with a cane, as there is no bevel.

Referring to curb cuts, Mr. Ratcliffe explained one design which has been forwarded to HRM engineering staff for input. Essentially a change in texture and color is proposed for corner areas, with road and sidewalk elevations adjusted to be flush. This will result in a much gentler grade for users. Different materials will be used to identify the edge of the curb cut and directional grooves will be made to allow the blind to align themselves properly to cross the intersection. Work is being done with Kevin Murphy.

Mr. Ratcliffe indicated that research has determined that other municipalities' designs don't handle the problem of curb cuts very well, however one of the best designs was utilized in Hamilton, Ont. It was noted that due to the frequent freeze and thaw cycles in HRM, unique problems are presented.

Reflecting on the proposal for curb cuts, Ms. Williams wondered if they will require special maintenance. If so, it is important that this be identified so staff can be trained properly. Note should be made in all reports to Council and winter maintenance identified as a priority.

Supt. Falkenham expressed concern about the safety of these corners if they are flush with the road surface, i.e. cars may inadvertently cut the corner and drive over the curb cuts. Mr. Ratcliffe referred to the installation of bollards. It is recognized that there needs to be enough room for emergency vehicles to get around such corners.

Test areas were identified in the Capital District of the new concepts outlined above, i.e. Lower Water and George Streets.

Referring to what is happening next, it was noted that in the fall the bricks used on Lower Water Street will be replaced and some intersections redesigned. Ms. Griffiths noted that several reports, now in draft form, will be going to Capital District. Another Public Meeting

is planned the last week of August. Landscaping plans and a short presentation will be given at the Open House. Once the location is determined, the information will be passed on to the Board's Secretary.

The Chair thanked Ms. Griffiths and Mr. Ratcliffe for coming back and providing an update.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY Councillor Meade, seconded by Ms. Coffey that the minutes of the June 16, 2003 meeting be adopted, as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

A number of items were deferred to the September meeting, as associated members were absent or for reasons specified below.

Item 5.2 - Accessible Taxis - Mr. Harrington suggested this item be deferred as Mr. Rutt is on vacation, so he has been unable to discuss with him.

Item 5.3 - Access-a-Bus Subsidy or Accessible Taxi Subsidy - deferred in absence of Ms. Reynolds.

Item 5.8 - Pools - Use of ultraviolet light to disinfect public pools - Ms. Reynolds absent

Item 5.10 - Pedway - at the request of Ms. Williams

MOVED BY Mr. Harrington, seconded by Mr. Venus that the agenda be adopted as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. NEW BUSINESS

4.1 REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRAVEL

Ms. Coffey explained that a subcommittee has been meeting to think of strategies for the recruitment of new members. They felt it might be a selling point if applicants understood their transportation, to and from meetings, would be paid for. She noted that this is the case with the Access-a-Bus Committee, i.e. Metro Transit bus tickets are given out.

The Board's Secretary indicated that she had raised the subject with the Municipal Clerk and was advised in an e-mail that there is nothing in the budget for transportation. The issue would be something that Governance would look at and she has forwarded the

matter to Betty MacDonald, Director, Governance as it is a policy issue, not something the Municipal Clerk's office would be responsible for. The Chair requested a copy of the e-mail.

Reflecting on the above comments, regarding compensation for Access-a-Bus Committee members, Ms. Williams noted that this is a departmental advisory committee, the department being in this instance Metro Transit, and she could understand them issuing bus tickets.

She felt that if an argument was made to Regional Council to adopt the practice of reimbursement for travel of committee, board and commission members, it should be argued on the basis of the issue of accommodation, not committee membership.

Ms. Coffey noted that Councillors are reimbursed for mileage, why not volunteer committee members. Ms. Williams explained that the difference lies in the fact that Councillors are assigned to the various Boards, Committees and Commissions while individuals volunteer to participate. Ms. Coffey indicated she did not wish to get into the issue of special treatment.

Mr. Venus noted that provisions had been made at the City of Dartmouth to provide bus or taxi fares.

It was felt by Ms. Williams that it would be best to poll those interested in applying for committee membership as to whether the issue to the cost of transportation is a consideration. She felt that if it was determined that this is a factor, it would hold more weight in recommending the practice be initiated than the Committee just making the recommendation.

Councillor Meade suggested that the Committee wait to hear from Betty MacDonald, Director, Governance. In the interim, the applicants will be polled to determine if reimbursement for travel is important to them.

4.2 **NOVA SCOTIA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION - APPLICATION FOR GRANTS**

- C Correspondence from Mayann Francis, Director and CEO, Human Rights Commission dated June 9, 2003, enclosing Guidelines and application form.

For the Committee's information. Ms. Williams noted that Mr. Michael Noonan should be contacted if there are any questions. His telephone number is 424-3131.

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

5.2 **WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE TAXIS - UPDATE**

Deferred.

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

Deferred.

5.4 **HOUSING FOR THE ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE REPORT**

There was a lengthy discussion on the status of this report. Councillor Meade volunteered at the last meeting to review the report.

Councillor Meade made some observations regarding the report noting that references need to be made to Nova Scotia not North America, for instance. In its current form, he did not feel it would get to Regional Council.

The Chair advised that she has been unable to contact Paul Connors about the status of this item.

Ms. LeGay recalled the intention was to provide Regional Council with an information item, to "plant the seed", by making Councillors aware of the issue and thinking about concerns of the environmentally sensitive. She recalled that there had been a motion, following a review of the draft that the Committee would allow Paul Connors and Ms. Reynolds to make any changes and forward on to Council, accompanied by correspondence from Dr. Fox. She felt that most of the Committee felt this had been done sometime ago.

It was noted that Barb Nehiley is looking into issues related to housing and perhaps it would be best to contact her at this time. The Chair will set up a meeting with Ms. Nehiley, once she has contacted Ms. Reynolds.

Supt. Falkenham indicated he could bring up the subject with the Homeless Action Committee.

5.5 **HALIFAX ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING FAMILY SUPPORT**

The Chair advised that she sent out an e-mail to this Association, but has yet to receive a response to the Committee's invitation. It was agreed that she should send out a follow-up e-mail.

5.6 **PRESENTATION TO REGIONAL COUNCIL**

The Secretary advised that she contacted Darrell Robar, a past Chair who had drafted an annual report. She was endeavoring to locate a version which could be provided in electronic form for braille. He is looking into his files for a copy.

5.7 **AGENDA ORDER - NEW BUSINESS AND BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

Due to time restraints not dealt with.

5.8 **POOLS - RESEARCH ON USE OF ULTRAVIOLET LIGHT TO DISINFECT PUBLIC POOLS**

Deferred in absence of Ms. Reynolds.

5.9 **BUILDING MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

Ms. Williams reported that from conversations with Procurement staff she has determined that if the City of Dartmouth used products which were environmentally sensitive and/or scent free, the initiative did not get carried over at the time of amalgamation.

Procurement staff will look into the matter. It was noted that these products generally cost more to use, as they don't clean as well.

She suggested this item be taken off the status sheet, given staff is looking into and will advise the Committee of their findings.

5.10 **PEDWAY - HDL**

Deferred at the request of Ms. Williams.

7. **REVIEW OF STATUS SHEET**

It was decided that Activities 1 and 2 could be deleted.

Under Activity 4, the following items could be deleted:

- C Building Mgt. Services - Cleaning Products
- C Crosswalk - Flamingo Drive
- C Bayers Lake Business Park

Ms. MacDonald will in future contact members a week or so before meetings to remind them to contact the Board's Secretary of items which can be removed from the status

sheet.

ITEMS NEXT AGENDA

Councillor Meade requested that an item be added under New Business re Apartment Buildings - Wheelchair Accessible.

Ms. Cale provided a copy of an article from the Chronicle Herald/Mail Star dated July 5, 2003 entitled "Sign firm breaks barriers". She wished copies circulated as information items.

REGRETS FOR SEPTEMBER MEETING

Ms. Langille and Ms. Cale.

6. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday, September 15, 2003, 4:00 p.m. - Training Room.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:15 p.m.

Lynne Le Boutillier
Legislative Assistant