

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

NOTES

July 19, 2004

PRESENT:

Ms. Betty MacDonald, Chair
Ms. Joanne Coffey, Vice-Chair
Councillor Meade
Ms. Lynn DeMont
Mr. Patrick Harrington
Ms. Barbara LeGay
Mr. Warren Reed
Ms. Ruth Szabo

ABSENT

WITH REGRETS:

Ms. Peggy Brown
Ms. Sally Campbell
Ms. Joan Loveridge
Ms. Cathy Robertson
Councillor Sarto
Ms. Roxanne MacInnis, TDM Coordinator
Supt. Cliff Falkenham, Halifax Regional Police

STAFF:

Ms. Charla Williams, Co-ordinator, Diversity Program
Mr. Blair Blakeney, Coordinator, Capital Projects - Parks, Real
Property & Asset Management
Ms. Jana Delaney, Interpreter
Ms. Karina Burris, Interpreter
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm without quorum present.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - June 21, 2004

Correction: The following members sent regrets for the June 21st meeting. The minutes are to be corrected to reflect: Ms. Janet Spares, Ms. Cathy Robertson sent regrets. Also, SPEARS should be SPARES.

Ms. Joanne Coffey commented there is a lot of slang used during Committee meetings and terms such as *disabled community* should be changed to *persons with disabilities* in the minutes. Ms. Betty MacDonald, Chair, advised it is not the Legislative Assistant's responsibility to make these corrections and when these terms are used the person making the statement should be informed at that time.

MOVED BY Ms. Joanne Coffey, seconded by Ms. Ruth Szabo that the minutes of June 21, 2004 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

ADDITIONS:

8.1.1 Staff Presentation - Accessible Playgrounds - Mr. Blair Blakeney. *To be dealt with immediately following approval of the agenda.*

Information Item: A copy of a report that went to Regional Council on July 6, 2004 regarding Accessible Housing for Persons with Disabilities and dated June 29, 2004 was circulated to the Committee for information purposes only. No further action required.

MOVED by Councillor Meade, seconded by Ms. Lynne DeMont that the agenda be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1.1 Staff Presentation - Accessible Playgrounds

Mr. Blair Blakeney, Coordinator, Capital Projects - Parks, Real Property & Asset Management, gave a brief presentation and requested dialogue from the Committee on how

staff could/should be making HRM playgrounds more inclusive. He advised input from this Committee is part of his research in learning how to approach the matter of inclusive play areas. Further, HRM's Parks and Recreation Terms of Reference will be expanded to include parks and not just play areas. He invited/requested any interested Committee members to form a Sub-Committee with his department to further discuss the matter of inclusive playgrounds/parks on an ongoing basis. He circulated pictures of HADLEY PARK, an inclusive playground in Washington, DC, USA as a sample of what could be done in HRM.

Mr. Blakeney explained HRM's proposed accessible play area projects are:

- A partnership with the Waterfront Development Corporation and the Port Authority for a theme playground at DeWolfe Park, Bedford. Henderson Playground Equipment was the winning tender. HRM Parks & Recreation is recommending \$10,000 for this project: \$5,000 for the play area and \$5,000 for the parking area.
- The second project is development of a new playground in Fall River/Waverley. HRM's Park Planner has met with the community and learned there are three children with accessibility issues. This is an opportunity for HRM to cost share \$10,000 from their budget with the community.
- The third proposed project is for Westmount School in West End Halifax. There are approximately 35 children with disabilities attending the school. This would be the first major project and would use the majority of the \$145,000 budget (\$125,000) for an accessible recreational facility.

Mr. Blakeney added staff would like to have the support of this Committee for these projects. He further advised HRM is not legislated in this issue right now whereas the United States has the *Americans with Disabilities* and *Veterans Act* ensuring that US parks are inclusive. There is work to be done in HRM at lobbying to get legislation in place.

The following comments were raised by the Committee during the ensuing discussion:

- Contact: Mr. Laughie Rutt, *Canadian Paraplegic Association* as well as the *Disabled Individual Alliance* for assistance with information regarding inclusivity of play areas.
- Approach other levels of government for assistance with Westmount School project.
- Is it possible for HRM to put legislation in specifically for HRM. If we wait for the Province, it could take ten years. *Staff advised this issue will emerge and be discussed at Regional Council. HRM needs to make a policy that there be a higher level of accessibility. This may mean less parks per year but they will be better parks. LESS PARKS BETTER is the hoped for standard.*
- Do the able bodied use parks like HADLEY PARK? *Staff responded the play areas are completely inclusive. There should be no barriers to any disability or ability. The majority of children at HADLEY PARK were able bodied.*
- Durability of rubberized surfaces? *Staff responded the Dartmouth Waterfront Park is three years old and holding up. The general lifespan of a playground is usually*

10-15 years. Easily fixed - delamination of rubber and the quality will go up with demand.

- Concern with working tightly with LITTLE TYKES. Will playground become the NORTH END LITTLE TYKES PLAYGROUND for example? *Staff responded all HRM projects go to tender.*
- Suggested *inclusivity* for the Public Gardens and Point Pleasant Park as there is an aging population in HRM. There are also tourists who have disabilities. *Staff responded the idea of inclusivity has to become a philosophy for design staff.*
- Agreement that there is indeed difficulty finding parks and washroom facilities that are wheelchair accessible in HRM.
- Should include a TTY payphone at play areas/parks in case of emergency for those deaf parents who may require the service.
- The Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities agreed to allow their names to stand as a resource to HRM's Parks and Recreation staff. Ms. Williams suggested the Committee could identify areas the membership is familiar with and forward this to staff. Staff could then contact the Committee with specific requests for information. Staff were asked to make regular contact with the Committee as ideas for playgrounds were developed.

Ms. Barb LeGay expressed concern with the Committee endorsing funding when we (The Committee) do not know. Ms Charla Williams commented there should be a comment to staff from this Committee to show support for these positive projects/initiatives.

MOVED BY Ms. Barb LeGay, seconded by Ms. Joanne Coffey that the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities support the efforts of HRM Parks & Real Property Asset Management for the three projects outlined by staff for Westmount School, Fall River and Bedford.

Mr. Warren Reed expressed concern with this motion as he did not feel he had sufficient information regarding the total picture of parks and whether or not this proposal is appropriate. He would like to know more about what the Municipality is trying to do.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Status Sheet Items

4.1.1 Meeting Room Location

The Legislative Assistant advised the Committee of the following meeting locations available in HRM to accommodate a large group: City Hall, Alderney Gate Library or the Keshen

Goodman Library. The Committee raised the following comments during the ensuing discussion:

- A larger meeting room is not needed.
- Concern with last minute notice for change from City Hall to Duke Tower, specifically for those who travel by Access-a-bus.
- Keep HR Training Room as a back-up.
- Concern that Access-a-bus will not go down a one-way street (Argyle Street).
- Reminder that nine members are missing tonight. With everyone here it is crowded and there is no room for members of the public who may attend. No room for additional staff for presentations.
- Halifax Hall is just across the street and Access-a-bus members could cross at the marked pedestrian crossing.
- The Mayor's Office have indicated they will make every effort to work around the Committee's schedule.
- Safety concern: we are now located on the third floor and if there is an emergency and there are no elevators available, it could be a problem.

MOVED BY Councillor Gary Meade, seconded by Ms. Joanne Coffey that starting September 20, 2004, the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities will hold their regular meetings in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street.

The Legislative Assistant is to send a memo to Access-a-bus indicating the situation and that on occasion the location may change from Duke Tower, Duke Street to City Hall, Argyle Street. The meeting location would be changed by HRM and not by the individual clients so Access-a-bus should be aware to expect calls from clients regarding location change.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4.1.2 All New Sidewalk Handicap Ramps Painted Blue

Councillor Meade advised a staff report is expected for September. Concern was raised by the Committee that blue may not be a visual enough colour and perhaps yellow could be used. Concern was also expressed that yellow may be confused with parking issues as yellow is used to indicate parking is not permitted and is also the colour used for street markings. Further discussion **deferred** to September 20, 2004 meeting.

4.1.3 Braille Copies of Ottawa Para-Transportation Information

The Legislative Assistant advised Ms. Kathy Riley, Accessible Transit Specialist, Ottawa, ON, is attempting to provide braille copies of the information or have the information available in a Wordperfect format or on diskette to be sent to the HRM Print Shop. Ms. Riley indicated

anyone interested could contact her at 1-613-842-3636, ext. 2873 regarding accessible transit as her position is a newly formed position.

The Committee advised it was not necessary to provide braille copies of large documents as the braille documents are too bulky, do not get read, are difficult to store due to their size and are expensive to copy. Further, HRM should not have to braille copy large documents from outside sources.

The Legislative Assistant commented she understood from the Committee that braille copies were to be encouraged in order to advise organizations there is a need for access to information for all. This knowledge would also enable the organizations/departments to include the cost for braille copies or their budgets. Ottawa is attempting to provide braille copies or a disque of their information for HRM.

Ms. Williams requested guidance from the braille users on this issue. The Committee responded with the following comments:

- Information on disque would be acceptable.
- It is important braille copies be available to the blind and it is important to lobby this issue to ensure there is accessibility to information for all.
- Braille copies are expensive, approximately \$3.00 per braille page. Each printed page equals approximately three braille pages.
- HRM should not have to braille any documents from an outside source.
- Perhaps one copy of larger documents could be kept in a central library.
- Get larger documents on disque and if the Committee feels there are sections that should be circulated and brailled, then we will do only those portions.
- **The Legislative Assistant is requested to first contact the members who require braille and ask if they wish to have a copy of a large document in braille.**

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

5.1 Members of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities Presenting to the Regional Planning Committee

- A draft text of the presentation prepared by Ms. Joanne Coffey and Mr. Patrick Harrington was before the Committee.

Ms. Joanne Coffey advised the text has been drafted and forwarded to the Regional Planning Committee (RPC) as there was a deadline to meet. The RPC has approved the request for the presentation and it will take place at 2:00 pm on August 18th.

MOVED BY Ms. Joanne Coffey, seconded by Mr. Patrick Harrington that the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities make a presentation to the Regional Planning Committee on August 18, 2004 and that the outline prepared be endorsed by the Committee. Further, that Ms. Joanne Coffey and Mr. Patrick Harrington make the presentation on behalf of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities.

Mr. Warren Reed requested the word *accessible* be included in the presentation in regards to universal design. Ms. Barb LeGay advised she has a copy of the Seven Principals of Universal Design document and the whole idea of universal design is inclusive. Ms. LeGay will forward the document to the Legislative Assistant for circulation to the Committee.

Ms. Charla Williams added this Committee is comprised of Persons with Disabilities and their advocates and it is important the Regional Planning Committee (and HRM) consider there may be some convergent points of view in the community. It is important for HRM Staff to know that they cannot carve in stone what this Committee says as there may be other issues out there and opinions that we have not raised.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5.2 HRM Noise By-Law - RE: Recent Notice Filed with Human Rights for Discrimination Based on Disability

- An e-mail response from Mr. Barry Allen, Municipal Solicitor, dated June 14, 2004, was before the Committee.
- A copy of the HRM Noise By-Law was also before the Committee.

The Chair asked for guidance from the Committee regarding this issue. The Legislative Assistant read Mr. Allen's response regarding a definition of "*unreasonable disturbance*". The Committee inquired what action/response is being requested from this Committee.

Ms. Williams cautioned the Committee members from getting drawn into neighbour to neighbour type issues. She explained it may be better to develop better relationships between neighbours instead of changing By-Laws. Ms. Williams added a successful amendment to this By-law may mean other inappropriate noises may creep into our communities. She suggested it may be more appropriate to train the individuals who enforce the By-Law, perhaps some discussion with the police department who enforces this, to ask questions regarding the specifics of the situation.

The Chair requested this issue be discussed further at the September meeting to allow her an opportunity to discuss the issue at a more in-depth level with the individual.

5.3 Resignations from Committee

The Legislative Assistant advised three resignations have been received from Committee members; Mr. Nigel Allison, Ms. Janet Spares and Mr. Kim Kenney who has moved from the region. One staff person, Kevin Hindle, has resigned due to a change in position and a replacement will be appointed for September. In discussion with Ms. Syms in the Municipal Clerk's office, it has been advised an advertisement would be placed in the newspapers in the fall for all vacancies to HRM Boards and Committees.

5.4 Workplan

Deferred to September due to time constraints.

6. **CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS - None**

7. **REPORTS**

7.1.1 Building Code Sub-Committee

Deferred to September due to time constraints.

8. **ADDED ITEMS/NEW BUSINESS**

8.1 **Added Items**

8.1.1 Presentation: Accessible Playgrounds - Mr. Blair Blakeney

This item was dealt with earlier on the agenda. See page 3.

8.2 **New Business**

8.2.1 Full Service Gas Pumps - Ms. Peggy Brown

Deferred to September meeting due to time constraints and the absence of Ms. Brown.

8.2.2 Buskers on Street Corners - Ms. Barb LeGay

- An e-mail response from Supt. Stephen Sykes, HRP, was before the Committee.

Deferred to September meeting due to time constraints.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

The Committee agreed to **cancel the August 16th meeting**. The next meeting will be on **Monday, September 20, 2004** at 4:00 pm in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 pm.

Chris Newson
Legislative Assistant