

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

MINUTES

February 21, 2005

PRESENT:

Mr. Patrick Harrington, Chair
Mr. Warren "Gus" Reed, Vice-Chair
Ms. Joanne Coffey
Councillor Gary Meade
Councillor Patrick Murphy (4:14 pm)
Ms. Cathy Cranidge
Mr. Terry Myer
Ms. Jen Powley
Mr. Jeff Wall
Ms. Mary Wallworth

REGRETS:

Ms. Nancy Mann
Mr. Derek Mathers
Mr. Daniel McLellan
Ms. Lynn DeMont

STAFF AND

OTHERS PRESENT:

Councillor Fougere
Mr. Blair Blakeney, HRM Parks & Recreation, Coordinator,
Capital Projects, Parks
Ms. Roxanne MacInnis, Planner, Regional Planning
Ms. Charla Williams, Co-ordinator, Diversity Program (4:24 pm)
Ms. Tatjana Zatezalo, Diversity Consultant
Supt. Cliff Falkenham, Halifax Regional Police
Mr. Larry Hilton, Supervisor Special Services, Access A Bus
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Stephanie Parsons, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Legislative Assistant called the meeting to order at 4:06 pm in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR/VICE-CHAIR

The Legislative Assistant called for nominations for the position of Chair and Vice-Chair. Mr. Patrick Harrington was nominated, there being no further nominations Mr. Patrick Harrington accepted the position as Chair for 2005. Mr. Warren Reed, Ms. Lynn DeMont and Ms. Joanne Coffey were nominated for Vice - Chair for 2005. Ms. Joanne Coffey declined the nomination and Ms. Lynn DeMont was not in attendance. There being no further nominations, Mr. Warren Reed was elected Vice-Chair for 2005.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - November 15, 2004

MOVED BY Ms. Joanne Coffey, seconded by Councillor Murphy that the minutes of November 15, 2004 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

Deletion: Item 8.1 Report to Regional Council Regarding Self Service Gas Pumps

Move: Item 7.1.1 Regional Planning Presentation - move forward to immediately follow approval of the agenda.

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

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

5.1 Status Sheet Items

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

The Chair advised that this matter can be removed from the status sheet.

5.1.2 2004 Election Inconsistencies

Concerns were forwarded to Ms. Jan Gibson, Returning Officer, by the Legislative Assistant. The Chair advised that this matter can be removed from the status sheet.

5.1.3 Accessible Taxis

The Chair advised this issue has been forwarded to Regional Council and HRM's Regional Taxi & Limousine Advisory Committee.

Committee members raised the following concerns/comments during the ensuing discussion:

- Recommend a requirement that 20% of all taxis in HRM be accessible taxis.
 - HRM cannot enforce such a recommendation as the taxi industry is a private industry.
- It was clarified that there is a waiting list for regular taxi licenses but not accessible taxi licenses. There is a minimum as to how long an accessible taxi licence is retained.
- "Need A Lift" Taxi Service began operations on Monday, February, 14, 2005.

The Chair commented that the "Need-A-Lift" service is operating as a shuttle service as the \$22 fee is high. Councillor Meade commented HRM's Metro Transit Access-A-Bus actually costs \$17 per trip but HRM Metro Transit subsidizes \$15 so the customer pays only \$2 per trip. HRM cannot subsidize private industry.

The Legislative Assistant advised that as an advisory Committee to Regional Council the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities has fulfilled their mandate requirements regarding the issue of accessible taxis as the issue and recommendations have been forwarded to Regional Council and the Regional Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee. She added the only action the Committee can consider at present is to continue monitoring the situation and any developments from Regional Council/Regional Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee. The issue of accessible taxis could be added to this Committee's active agenda at some future date if deemed necessary.

Ms. Joanne Coffey indicated there is an "inclusive" transportation initiative in her community and wanted to know if this committee wanted to become involved with the group. Ms. Charla Williams stated that as an advisory committee to Regional Council it is important to stay aware of the issues and that individuals can join whatever organizations they want and bring issues before the committee.

- A communications brief forwarded by Councillor Meade and dated February 1, 2005 entitled "Accessibility Grants Available" from Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations was circulated to the committee.

Ms. Charla Williams indicated the province of Nova Scotia is launching a new grant program through Service Nova Scotia which could permit retrofits to vehicles to make them accessible. It was suggested that Mr. Kevin Hindle be invited to an Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities meeting to provide more detail once the program is officially launched by the province.

The Chair advised that this matter can be removed from the status sheet.

5.1.4 Full Service Gas Pumps

A copy of the report dated December 14, 2004 was before the Committee.

The Legislative Assistant advised that Regional Council approved the recommendation outlined in the report.

Councillor Meade mentioned a recent article indicated a gas station owner stated that if wheel chair users call in advance for assistance at the pumps, service will be provided.

The article is to be forwarded to the Legislative Assistant for distribution in the next agenda package.

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

6.1 Active Transportation

Ms. Roxanne MacInnis provided an update on the Active Transportation Plan to integrate on and off road sidewalks and paths. The mandate of the consultant is to obtain input. The consultant will be providing a presentation to the committee and is looking for people from the public or someone from this committee to become involved with focus groups. If anyone is interested they may contact her through the Legislative Assistant.

Ms. Charla Williams is concerned with the language that it is used specifically the term "special interest group" as their interests are the same as everyone else. Ms. Roxanne MacInnis stated that she would forward this comment along to the Regional Planning Group.

6.2 Accessible Travel Routes

Ms. Roxanne MacInnis explained she received an e-mail in regards to how to get around Halifax in a wheelchair. She stated that she informed the person of the existence of this committee. The Chair stated that this committee could not assist the individual as what some people find accessible others may not.

6.3 Length of Agenda

The Chair advised that this matter can be removed from the status sheet.

7. **CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS**

7.1 Correspondence

7.1.1 Regional Planning

- The Guide to HRM's Proposed Regional Plan was before the Committee

Ms. Roxanne MacInnis made a presentation to the Committee on HRM's Proposed Regional Plan and commented that the Regional Planning Committee is currently at step seven and is looking for input at the community level.

The presentation included the following points:

- The proposed plan consists of regional, district and local centers which consist of green space and corridors.
- The plan has four main benefits environmental, economic, transportation and settlement as outlined on page 2 & 3 of the Guide to HRM's Proposed Regional Plan.
- It is expected that there will be \$250 million dollars in cost savings over 25 years and that Capital Cost are estimated to be \$75 million lower over 25 years.

Ms. Roxanne MacInnis asked that committee members complete the survey. The survey is also available online.

The Committee raised the following concerns/comments during the ensuing discussion:

- Is there a cost analysis being done and if the group has adopted a Universal Design? Does the plan include catastrophe measures and what is being done and if there were bomb shelters incorporated into the plan. How does the committee plan to sell the plan to the public?

Councillor Fougere commented that a cost analysis will be part of the policy development stage. This stage will focus on more detailed policy discussion and will include a formal public hearing. Emergency measures are coordinated by the Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments. The procedures are continually updated but there are no bomb shelters. Ms. Roxanne MacInnis stated that there is one regional center at the core of the peninsula, there are different centers to move people and make more efficient use of transportation centers.

Councillor Fougere stated that it is a land use policy guide to encourage growth in some areas and discourage in it in other areas.

Mr. David McCusker indicated that he had discussions with the consultant in the Herring Cove area. The citizens are looking for higher density around the mall. If HRM increased transit services, the mall owners would increase their services.

Ms. Charla Williams asked if the group would be presenting to the Community and Race Relations Committee. Ms. Roxanne MacInnis stated that she would have to contact Susan Corser.

Ms. Charla Williams asked about the impact of the plan on the Black community in HRM as the communities may be viewed as a historical homestead and the plan may appear to be a negative. Councillor Fougere stated that consultations have been made and that Mr. Wayne Adams is the lead for feedback. The Prestons did have input and are concerned about the potential or lack of development. Mr. Terry Myers commented that it appears that they will be uprooted instead of growing where they are. Councillor Fougere stated that is not the case and that these discussions will come at a later meeting.

7.1.2 Disabled Persons Commission - Invitation

Correspondence dated January 20, 2005 was before the Committee. A copy is on file in the Municipal Clerk's Office.

Ms. Jan Powley and Mr. Daniel McLellan are attending and will provide an update.

7.1.3 DIRECTIONS - Innovations & Challenges, Employment 2005

- A correspondence dated January 26, 2005 was before the Committee. A copy is on file in th Municipal Clerk's Office.

No discussion.

7.1.4 Fax Transmission regarding Snow Removal Program for Disabled and Senior Persons

A fax dated January 20, 2005 form Mr. Bob Venus was before the Committee. A copy is on file in the Municipal Clerk's Office.

No discussion

7.2 Petitions - None

7.3 Delegations (Presentation) - Mr. Blair Blakeney

A copy of the draft report to Regional Council dated January 14, 2005 was before the Committee.

Mr. Blair Blakeney gave a synopsis of the report. He commented that this is a long process and has to be done on a regional basis and that it should be encouraged at all school sites and Access-a-bus can be incorporated. Although there is no legislation in Canada requiring inclusive playgrounds this does not prevent HRM from being proactive in providing inclusive playgrounds.

The cost for an inclusive program is approximately \$13 dollars per square foot. They currently have \$125,000 in seed money. The remainder is to come from:

- Sports Nova Scotia approximately \$75,000
- Service Nova Scotia approximately \$10-\$15,000
- Westmount School - through fund-raising

Westmount school was chosen because there is a higher concentration of students who would benefit. There are 35 students with special needs and it is close to access-a-bus.

Councillor Fougere commented that inclusive playgrounds are not just for children with disabilities but disabled parents who would like to take their kids to playgrounds. There is a video on inclusive playgrounds that is available for viewing.

It was suggested that the video be shown during a Committee of the Whole (COW) in order to have a better discussion. Mr. Blakeney is to confirm with the Municipal Clerk's Office regarding a presentation at the next COW.

MOVED BY Ms. Jen Powley, seconded by Mr. Jeff Wall that the draft report go forward to Regional Council as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. REPORTS

8.1 Membership - Resignations

The Legislative Assistant advised Ms. Ruth Szabo has tendered her resignation. There was a further vacancy on the Committee due to the untimely death of member Ms. Joan Loveridge. The Legislative Assistant advised the Membership Selection Committee is scheduled to meet on March 8, 2005 to fill any vacancies on the Committee.

9. ADDED ITEMS/NEW BUSINESS

9.1 Added Items

9.1.1 None

9.2 New Business

9.2.1 Possible Amendment of By-Law T-108 Regarding Guide Dogs

- Ms. Joanne Coffey reiterated that taxi drivers need to take guide dogs as some cab drivers have refused.
- Supt. Cliff Falkenham stated taxi drivers cannot refuse to take guide dogs as there is provincial legislation prohibiting the refusal.
- It was suggested that the by-law cite the provincial legislation and that the committee make a recommendation to the Taxi & Limousine Committee and copy Mr. Kevin Hindle so that he knows it is up for discussion.
- The chair is concerned with language as there are various types of guide dogs such as dogs for the deaf and mobility dogs.

MOVED BY Ms. Joanne Coffey, seconded by Ms. Cathy Cranidge that the Regional Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee consider an amendment to By-Law T-108 to include the provincial legislation regarding service animals. Also if the provincial legislation does not use the term "Service Animal or Assistance Animal" that those terms be used and not Guide Dog. MOTION WAS PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting will be held on Monday, March 21, 2005, Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

It was asked that the accessibility of Tim Horton's be placed on the next agenda.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:56 pm.

Stephanie Parsons
Legislative Assistant