

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

MINUTES

February 20, 2006

PRESENT: Patrick Harrington, Chair
Councillor Gary Meade
Councillor Patrick Murphy
Terry Myer
Mary Wallworth
Kevin Bulley
Betty Macdonald
Charles Burnell

REGRETS: Helen Cianfaglione
Warren Reed

STAFF: Ms. Charla Williams, Diversity Coordinator
Ms. Stephanie Parsons, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Roxane MacInnis, Planner
Superintendent Cliff Falkenham

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:02.

The Committee members introduced themselves to the new members.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - November 21, 2005

MOVED by Ms. Wallworth, seconded by Mr. Myer, that the minutes of the November 21, 2005 meeting be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

MOVED by Ms. MacDonald, seconded by Councillor Meade, that the agenda be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTE

4.1 Status Sheet

4.1.1 Membership - Terms of References

Mr. Harrington, Chair advised the Committee that the Terms of Reference has been amended. The composition of the membership has been reduced to eight residents, and still includes two Councillors.

A discussion ensued regarding the current composition of the Committee. In response to questions from the Committee the Chair advised that appointments are made by the Membership Selection Committee.

4.1.2 City Hall Audit - Update

The Chair advised that Mr. Townsend, Manager Capital Projects has contracted a consultant to conduct an audit. He s asked the consultant to assist in developing a list of priorities for implementation. When that list is complete, he will report back to the Committee for input and discussion. He has allocated funds toward accessibility upgrades in the 2006-2007 budget.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

5.1 Appointment to Taxi Committee

The Chair advised that the Committee meets on the second Wednesday of the month from 10:00-12:00 at the Keshen Library.

The Chair called for an expression of interests to serve on the Taxi Committee.

Mr. Brunell advised that he would be interested in serving on the Committee. Ms. Williams raised concern regarding a potential conflict of interest. After a brief discussion the following motion was placed.

MOVED BY Councillor Meade, seconded by Ms. MacDonald that Patrick Harrington be appointed representative of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities on the Taxi Committee. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence - None

6.2 Presentations

6.2.1 Regional Plan Update

The Chair asked Ms. MacInnis for an update on accessible transit and the implementation of universal design within the Regional Plan.

Ms. MacInnis advised of the following

C The Regional Planning Committee is in the process of reviewing submissions and recommendations. Public meetings are being held in Halifax Hall, she will forward the dates of the public hearing to the Legislative Assistant.

C The long term goal is to have an entire fleet of low floor buses. There have been requests to provide low floor buses to the rural communities. However, staff is suggesting a community-based transit system. The type of service provided will depend on the needs of the individual communities.

C Implementation of Universal Design will be part of the Urban Design Guidelines.

Councillor Murphy entered the meeting at: 4:31 p.m.

The Chair raised concern regarding snow removal around bus stops and the sidewalks leading to the stops. He suggested that staff focus on clearing the nine designated accessible routes.

A discussion ensued regarding bus drivers providing assistance to passengers in a variety of capacities. Staff advised that drivers who provide assistance do so at their own discretion. There are Union and liability implications in providing assistance. The intent of the low floor bus is to provide regular scheduling for persons with wheelchairs. The person's must be able to drive the wheelchair onto the ramp. Only those bus drivers of "Access A Bus" are required to provide assistance.

A discussion regarding the lack of communication to persons whom are deaf ensued. Councillor Meade advised that a deaf person must communicate to the bus driver by writing a note, otherwise the bus driver does not know that a person is deaf.

Councillor Murphy requested that staff advise as to what type of training an Access -A- Bus driver receives compared to the training of a regular bus driver. What if any training is provided to enhance the drivers ability to communicate with the deaf.

The Committee noted the following:

1. The new building code only applies to new buildings.
2. Old and new buildings (public places) should be required to have fire alarms that light up to aide deaf persons.
3. There is a lack of public education, it is important to include the larger disabled community when conducting public consultation sessions.
4. A Disabilities Act is required.

Ms. MacInnis advised the Committee that she will forward the Committees comments to Mr. Kevin Silver.

She advised the Committee of the following open houses on the Active Transportation Plan:

Monday March 6, Fair Banks Center

Wednesday March 8 - Halifax hall

Thursday March 9 - Sacred Heart Church and Acadia School in Sackville.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities Annual Report to Council

The Chair advised that he will bring the draft report to the next meeting and suggested that the report be submitted for information.

Councillor Meade commented that making a presentation to Council would be more effective. Ms. William's added that there is an opportunity for the Committee to discuss the concerns of the Committee.

7.2 Meeting Schedule 2006

MOVED by Councillor Murphy, second by Ms. Wallworth, that the meeting schedule for 2006-2007 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

8. ADDED ITEMS

9. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The Chair advised the Committee that he is not re-offering to serve as Chair and called for nominations for the position of Chair.

Ms. Macdonald was nominated for the position of chair, but she declined the nomination.

MOVED by Councillor Meade, seconded by Ms. Wallworth, that Mr. Myer be elected Chair of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities for the year 2006-2007.

After a brief discussion Mr. Myer accepted the nomination. With no further nominations **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

MOVED by Councillor Meade, seconded by Ms. Macdonald that the election of Vice Chair be deferred to the next meeting. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE - March 20, 2006.

11. ADJOURNMENT - The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Stephanie Parsons
Legislative Assistant