

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
MINUTES**

MAY 28, 2007

PRESENT:

Mr. Alan Farquhar, Chair
Mr. Gary Russell, Vice-Chair
Ms. Helen Cianfaglione
Mr. Kevin Bulley
Ms. Sanaz Gerami
Ms. Rebecca King
Ms. Helen McFadyen
Ms. Mary Newcombe
Councillor Patrick Murphy
Councillor Gary Meade

STAFF:

Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant
Superintendent Cliff Falkenham, HRP
Chrissy White, Legislative Assistant

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. in Halifax Hall, 2nd Floor City Hall.

2. **INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair invited Committee Members to announce their attendance for the benefit of visually impaired members.

3. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

6.1.1 page 4 should read “voice programs, reading scanners and zoom text” instead of low vision simulators.

MOVED by Councillor Meade, seconded by Mr. Kevin Bulley, that the minutes from April 16, 2007 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

9.1 Letter Allan Ruffman

MOVED by Councillor Meade, seconded by Mr. Bully that the Order of Business be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. **REPORTS**

5.1 **Sidewalk Cafes and Accessibility Issues**

Mr. Phil Francis, Manager, Right-of-Way Services was in attendance to address questions from Committee Members regarding the above noted.

Mr. Francis advised of the following:

- Businesses must apply for a permit and abide by the HRM policy regarding new sidewalk cafes. The process is similar for existing cafes, and was instituted in 1998,
- HRM staff monitor cafes to ensure the sidewalks are built to code,
- Sandwich boards and cafes are two different subjects; the sandwich boards are not restricted under an authorization process,
- The MacDonald’s restaurant on Spring Garden Road is located on private property. The sidewalk beyond the café is HRM property, but MacDonald’s is in

compliance.

Committee members provided their comments. The following points were noted:

- The HRM Access A-Bus stops in front of the Spring Garden Road MacDonalds, and due to the three existing cafes, it makes it very difficult for persons with disabilities to manoeuvre around that area,
- Committee Members expressed concern regarding the remaining sidewalk space once a café is erected,
- HRM has jurisdiction over sandwich boards as approved by Council,
- There must be a minimum of seven feet of clear sidewalk beyond the café,
- Staff take traffic into consideration when approving café permits,
- If the business has no permit, then the café would have to be removed,
- By-law enforcement should be contacted regarding a request to increase control over sandwich boards,
- Decorative objects must meet the seven foot compliance,
- Members expressed concern regarding no penalty for sandwich board non-compliance,
- Councillor Meade advised that the Corporate Call Centre will give a reference number per complaint to monitor the situation,
- By-law enforcement monitors the sandwich boards,
- Sandwich boards in non-compliance must be reported. Staff try and monitor as much as possible,
- Cafes will be fined if they do not dispose of the excess garbage properly,
- HRM does not own most of the sidewalk on Spring Garden Road as the property is deeded,
- Committee Members expressed concern regarding the clutter of vehicles and garbage cans on Spring Garden Road. It was suggested that a specified area be marked with yellow lines for Access-A-Bus parking,
- The café permits are for one year, and a business must re-apply annually,
- Trucks are allowed to load and unload in “no parking” areas. This is an exemption in provincial legislation,
- There is a permit process for sandwich boards under the sign by-law,
- Regulations for sandwich boards are the same for all areas within HRM,
- A business can vend in front of their property without a permit but they can not open a café without a permit.

Councillor Meade expressed concern with enforcement regarding sandwich boards and advised that he would bring the issue up in Council.

5.2 Verbal Update re: Metro Transit Priority Seating and Etiquette- Paul Beauchamp

Deferred to the next meeting. Staff member not present.

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS

7.1 Reply letter from Minister of Transportation regarding Crosswalk Safety Task Force/ Schedule a presentation

- A response letter dated May 2, 2007 from the Honourable Angus MacIsaac, Minister of Transportation was before the Committee.

Mr. Rutt volunteered to attend a meeting of the Task Force on Crosswalk Safety as a representative for the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities.

Mr. Bulley advised that the Chair should respond to the Task Force by requesting a spot on the waiting list for appointments to the Committee.

Ms. Gerami suggested inviting the Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotian's to make a presentation in the summer.

Mr. Rutt, Ms. McFadyen and Mr. Farquhar volunteered to create a presentation to submit to the Task Force on Crosswalk Safety.

8. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

8.1 Discussion regarding summer schedule and Terms of Reference

Moved by Mr. Gary Russell, seconded by Ms. Helen McFadyen that the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities recommend that Regional Council amend the Terms of Reference to allow no less than six meetings per year. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Rutt advised that Committee Members should review the terms of reference before deciding to cancel any meetings during the summer months.

8.2 Update regarding Wheel Chair simulation at City Hall

Mr. Rutt, Diversity Consultant advised that he has secured the use of three wheelchairs for the wheelchair simulation.

Councillor Meade suggested inviting all Councillors as well as transportation and transit staff (Jeff Spares, Phillip Townsend) to participate in the exercise. The session would

be held on the last Tuesday in June, and would take approximately two hours.

Ms. McFadyen advised that this should be an annual event held in conjunction with Access Awareness Week. She suggested partnering with the Canadian Institute for the Blind (CNIB) to coordinate this event for next year.

Councillor Meade advised that the intent of the exercise will be to educate Council and staff on the proper use of a wheelchair.

9. ADDED ITEMS

9.1 Letter from Mr. Alan Ruffman

- A letter from Mr. Alan Ruffman, Geomarine Associates Ltd. dated May 2, 2007 was before the Committee

In his letter to the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities, Mr. Ruffman expressed concern regarding accessibility issues surrounding the Harbour Solutions project, mainly on the corner of Inglis and Barrington Street. He advised that “ on the north side of Inglis Street the sidewalk has not been replaced, and a person in a wheelchair or a person with a walker or cane is left to negotiate a very rough gravel patch or a very muddy alternate route.”

Councillor Murphy suggested contacting engineering staff to invite them to the June meeting to address this issue. He further advised that Harbour Solutions would be responsible to replace the sidewalks disturbed by the project.

In response to Ms. McFadyen regarding a street closures bulletin, Councillor Meade suggested contacting the Corporate Call Centre to inquire. He further advised that most HRM street closures are announced on the radio.

Councillor Murphy suggested contacting Mr. Dave Hubley, Manager Design and Construction to create an accessible bulletin board to advise citizens of street closures.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities will be June 18, 2007 at 4:00-6:00 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Legislative Assistant