

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

October 20, 2011

- PRESENT: Councillor Jennifer Watts, Chair
 Councillor Debbie Hum, Vice Chair
 Councillor David Hendsbee
 Mr. Lawrence Plug
 Mr. David Jackson
 Mr. Troy Nauffts
 Mr. John Hawkins (for Walter Regan)
 Mr. Clive MacGregor
 Ms. Elizabeth Pugh
- REGRETS: Mr. Scott MacPhee
 Mr. Myles McCallum
- STAFF: Mr. Paul Euloth, Regional Trail Coordinator
 Mr. David MacIsaac, TDM Program Supervisor
 Mr. Dave McCusker, Manager, Strategic Transportation Planning
 Ms. Shawnee Gregory, Legislative Assistant
 Ms. Julie Vandervoort, Legislative Support

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. in Room 108, Bloomfield Centre, Halifax.

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair announced an open house October 26, 2011 at the Atlantica Hotel on the future use of the Oval, stating that there may be the opportunity of summer cycling or bike lessons.

Mr. Nauffts informed the Committee that he was involved in a pilot project, starting with one trail, to make trails accessible from the website to the bus transit to the signage.

Mr. John Hawkins, of the Halifax Regional Trails Association, added that this was an active issue for the HRTA.

Mr. MacGregor announced that the Halifax Cycling Coalition was running a photography contest and invited everyone to submit entries.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – August 18, 2011 & September 15, 2011 (Notes)

Councillor Hendsbee noted that he was absent from the September 15, 2011 meeting. The Chair stated that Item 5.5 of the September 15, 2011 minutes should be corrected to read “In the first six months of 2011 there have been the following tickets issued on the Peninsula”.

MOVED by Mr. Plug, seconded by Mr. MacGregor that the minutes of August 18, 2011 be approved as submitted and that the meeting notes of September 15, 2011 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Councillor Watts suggested Item 7.3.1 be moved up to follow 5.1. The agenda was accepted as amended.

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

5.1 Updates from Staff

Prior to the update, Councillor Watts requested that staff provide hard copies of the Active Transportation Plan to Mr. Regan and Mr. Plug as noted in the August 18, 2011 minutes. Mr. MacIsaac stated he would provide these.

Mr. MacIsaac advised members that a stakeholder meeting was scheduled for November on the North-South bike corridor and he would circulate details as they became available. He stated that more bike racks are being installed, that the bike count study along Quinpool Road was not finalized and that the Bridge Commission also does a bike count.

Item 7.3.1 was addressed at this time.

7.3.1 Nova Scotia Blue Route – Ms. Susanna Fuller, NS Bikeways Coalition

Ms. Fuller circulated an information sheet and provided a presentation to the Committee on a proposal for a province-wide linked network of bicycle paths and trails (working name The Blue Route). She explained that much of the initial work on the proposal has been at the provincial level but the NS Bikeways Coalition is also looking at municipal Active Transportation (AT) plans. She added that consistent signage, branding and trail standards are key factors in such a route and the Committee could support the Blue Route by being part of a possible pilot project for HRM as a Blue Route hub. She noted that similar initiatives in other jurisdictions, particularly Quebec, have been significant in job creation.

Ms. Pugh, as part of the discussion, clarified that it is legal to cycle on 100-series highways unless it is specifically posted that it is not permitted.

The Chair thanked Ms. Fuller for the presentation and the Committee returned to the Order of Business.

5.2 MacDonald Bridge and Active Transportation Infrastructure – Mr. Dave McCusker, Manager, Strategic Transportation Planning

A Chronicle-Herald article dated October 10, 2011, an article by Mr. Rocky Lis, and information from the September 22, 2011 Transportation Standing Committee were circulated.

Mr. McCusker informed the Committee that the HRM and Bridge Commission's joint statement on this issue was at the draft stage and not yet ready for distribution. He discussed the cost/benefit analysis of various options that have been studied including a bike overpass, cyclist and pedestrian path-sharing, improving the grade for cyclists and widening the sidewalks on the Bridge. He noted that there may be an opportunity to improve the AT infrastructure when the Bridge is redecked.

The Chair emphasized the timeliness of any potential AT improvement becoming part of the redecking. She requested that staff, through Mr. Steve Snider, arrange for an ATAC representative to be invited to future stakeholder meetings of the Bridge Commission.

Councillor Hendsbee conveyed information from the Bridge Commission that there have been few cycling accidents on the Bridge; there is no separate log of such accidents.

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERED BUSINESS

6.1 Draft Active Transportation Plan Review

The Committee reviewed the draft motion from the September 15, 2011 Meeting Notes.

MOVED by Councillor Hum, seconded by Ms. Pugh, that the Active Transportation Advisory Committee recommend that the Transportation Standing Committee consider approving the initiation of a 5 year Planning Review of the Active Transportation's Functional Plan. Which is to be overseen and implemented by the Active Transportation Advisory Committee as outlined in the attached Terms of Reference dated September 2011. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6.2 Push Button Activated Lights

The Chair discussed complaints from residents about push button lights. She asked Mr. MacIsaac to provide a staff report outlining any issues identified with either push-to-walk or push-for-sound (for the visually impaired) button systems.

6.3 Bike Lane Maintenance

The Chair referred the Committee to the staff Information Report, dated August 31, 2011. Councillor Hendsbee noted that the focus of the report is on debris on bike lanes and does not address issues such as potholes, or surface cracks and gaps. Councillor Hum stated that she would take the report back through Chebucto Community Council. The Chair suggested that lane users call any problem into the 490-4000 number and keep the call service number; then if the issue is not dealt with, to contact your Councillor with that service number.

6.4 HRM Commemorative Naming Program

Members were provided with the information that citizens interested in the naming program are required to wait one year from the date of death of the person they wish to have commemorated.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

7.1 Correspondence

7.1.1 Electric Bikes – Ms. Catherine Klefenz, Chair, BLT Rails to Trails Association

A copy of Ms. Klefenz' e-mail, dated September 22, 2011, was before the Committee.

Ms. Pugh read the description of “bicycle” as defined in the provincial *Motor Vehicle Act* and noted that, under that definition, many electric bikes would be a legal bicycle on the trails. Mr. Nauffs pointed out that such bikes can be an issue for the visually impaired as the bikes are often almost silent. The Committee discussed options such as the *Motor Vehicle Act* may not apply to municipal trails or that a By-law could regulate electric bikes; where trails are on provincial Crown land, the issue could be managed by community groups. Ms. Pugh stated that the definition of “bicycle” may be modified in an updated *Motor Vehicle Act* due to the increase in types of bikes with various forms of motors. Members agreed to continue to monitor this issue.

7.2 Petitions - NONE

7.3 Presentation

7.3.1 Nova Scotia Blue Route – Ms. Susanna Fuller, NS Bikeways Coalition

This item was discussed previously, please see page 4.

8. REPORTS

8.1 Halifax Regional Trails Association – Update

Mr. John Hawkins informed the Committee that the Halifax Regional Trails Association wanted to create interest in the potential trail opportunity for a segment of the Windsor-Hantsport rail corridor. Ms. Pugh noted that this segment of the rail line was not “abandoned” in the sense that a licensing fee was still being paid on it. ATAC members expressed interest in monitoring this matter.

**MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Mr. Plug, that the Active Transportation Advisory Committee request the Transportation Standing Committee and Regional Council explore the active transportation opportunities, benefits and potential for acquisition presented by the possible discontinuance of the rail line between HRM and Windsor and direct staff to prepare a report.
MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

8.2 Education & Safety Committee - Update

The Chair stated that the Education & Safety Committee met and is moving ahead on bike safety training for children and information on key points to consider when buying a child’s first bike.

9. ADDED ITEMS

9.1 Correspondence from the Halifax Cycling Coalition – Mandatory Bicycle Helmet Legislation

Correspondence between the Halifax Cycling Coalition and Premier Darryl Dexter, dated August 24, 2011, was before the Committee as an information item.

9.2 Windsor to Halifax Railway Line – Potential Active Transportation Opportunity

This item was dealt with under 8.1, please see page 6.

9.3 Committee Members

The Chair informed the Committee that Mr. Ted Scrutton has resigned from ATAC.

10. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - NONE

11. NEXT MEETING DATE – November 17, 2011

12. ADJOURNMENT

In closing, the Chair informed the Committee that she would look into active transportation infrastructure at the new Dartmouth bus terminal and bring that information back at a future meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:59 pm.

Julie Vandervoort
Legislative Support