

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

December 8, 2011

PRESENT: Councillor Jennifer Watts, Chair
Councillor David Hendsbee
Mr. David Jackson
Mr. Walter Regan
Mr. Clive MacGregor
Mr. Myles McCallum
Mr. Lawrence Plug
Ms. Elizabeth Pugh

REGRETS: Councillor Debbie Hum, Vice Chair
Mr. Troy Nauffts

STAFF: Ms. Jessie Debaie, Assistant Regional Trails Coordinator
Mr. Dave MacIsaac, TDM Program Supervisor
Ms. Sarah Pellerine, Legislative Support

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00PM in Room 208, Bloomfield Centre, Halifax.

2. UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were made:

- The Halifax Cycling Coalition will be having their birthday party on January 19, 2012
- Halifax Regional Trails Association is having their Christmas social on December 12, 2011 at 5:00PM and the Active Transportation Committee is invited.
- A Kickstand Workshop is in the works
- Open space functional plan – there will be more active transportation training within the plan as well as additional on and off road training.
- Doctors Nova Scotia discussion

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – November 17, 2011

MOVED by Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. McCallum that the minutes of November 17, 2011 be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

- 9.1 Response to Public Gardens Letter
- 9.2 Active Transport Coordinator Position

Agenda accepted as amended.

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

5.1 Trail Access for Visually Impaired Residents

The Committee deferred the item until the next meeting because Mr. Nauffts was unable to attend the meeting, and the meeting regarding access for visually impaired residents will take place later in December.

5.2 Bike Week Discussion

On December 13, 2011 at 3:00PM there will be a meeting on Bike Week at the Bloomfield Centre and there will be representation from the Halifax Cycling Coalition.

Mr. Regan stated he would like to see a budget increase as well as a grant increase.

The Chair noted that if no one else wanted to take on the Adult Tri-cycling Event, she would take over the responsibility in memory of Ms. Gai Thomas so that the event continues.

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERED BUSINESS - NONE

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

7.1 Correspondence

The Chair would like to have included in the next meeting package, the letter dated November 17, 2011, which was in the Councillor package on Bike Route Safety from Al Darrach.

7.2 Petitions - NONE

7.3 Presentations

7.3.1 Bicycle and Pedestrian Safe Instruction for Municipalities

A presentation was given to the committee by Mr. Lawrence Plug, Bicycle Nova Scotia on Multi-Use Paths (MUP's).

The Committee stated that MUP's tend to be more scenic due to the nature of their location, but at the same time road trails can be very scenic as well and can prove to be more of a challenge for cyclists. Often roads pull more cyclists because that is where restaurants and shops are located. It was noted that Mr. Biglow feels that mountain bike and hiking trails should fall under the Parks Committee and not the Active Transportation Advisory Committee. The Committee felt that based on this comment the Active Transportation Advisory Committee would like to be involved in discussions about mountain bikes and hiking trails.

In response to questions about Bike Nova Scotia's position on MUPs, it was noted that there is no set position outside of it is a good way to increase active transportation in the area. It was said that MUPs seem to get people out cycling and they will eventually start to consider cycling for commuting and that turns into active transportation. Halifax Cycling Coalition will be going to schools in the new year to talk to them about the use of MUPs with the Making Tracks and Safe Route to School programs.

In response to questions regarding the safety of MUPs, it was noted that the public see them as a safe place to cycle and start into an active transportation lifestyle. In places where there is a lot of cycling, MUPs can be used for incubation to teach new cyclists until they are comfortable with cycling on the road. At the same time, it is said that if more money went into road infrastructure people would be more comfortable with biking along the roadway as to MUPs. The one problem with MUPs is the interaction between cyclists and non-cyclists and sometimes accidents between them.

Where do we go from here?

- 1) We need to get across to new cyclists that roadways are relatively safe.
- 2) We need to get across that the health benefits from cycling outweigh the perceived risk of cycling.
- 3) Find a way for HRTA to take the information discussed in the meetings and go forward with the information.
- 4) Look into development of bike lanes due to their lower cost as to trail development as a way to increase cycling around HRM.
- 5) Have Mr. Plug send the power point presentation to LA and get feed back from HRTA and HCC and bring these comments back to the next meeting.

8. REPORTS

8.1. Safety and Education Sub-Committee – NONE

8.2 Staff

There was a meeting on the North/South connector route and there was a lot of endorsement from the community. The Agricola St. Association was very in favor of the whole idea, and feel there is a good possibility of using one side of the street for the trail, which HRM staff will look into. In January they will have a public consultation session to see thoughts on this.

The only concern from business owners was they feel they may lose customers if parking is taken away. It was noted that HRM is looking into how to over come this issue and may be able to acquire a parking lot that could be used for public parking.

The Committee would like to have a presentation at the next meeting for the Bike and Trail maps as well as the North/South connector. It was also asked for Mr. Jackson to put his data in the presentation regarding the number of bikes.

8.3 Committee Members

Mr. MacGregor noted that the Halifax Cycling Coalition board would be bringing up the replacement for the Active Transportation Coordinator and would like to have this formal.

Mr. Regan had received an email wondering about the winter snow removal on trails, and would like the Active Transportation Committee to look into this at a future meeting.

Ms. Debaie noted that community groups with HRM trails that she has provided that Committee with information on funding and a map showing the trails. She also noted that there are ways to get provincial funding for trails and Multi-Use Paths could be a way of getting this funding. Ms. Debaie also brought up that they are awaiting the Burnside to Bedford connector and what it will look like.

8.4 New Business

8.4.1 Status of Replacement of “Cycle-Unfriendly” Catch Basin Grates – Staff Memo

A memo dated November 29, 2011 was before the Committee

It was noted that all the Catch Basin Grates have been cleared with the exception of Duncan and Windsor, but this will be cleared in the near future. It was told to the Committee that if the Committee sees a Catch Basin Grate needed to be cleared to pass the information along to Mr. MacIsaac.

9. ADDED ITEMS

9.1 Response to Public Gardens Letter

The Chair met with Ms. Bev MacPhail, Halifax Public Gardens/HRM Greenhouses, regarding the letter sent to the Public Gardens Association about bikes in the park.

Ms. MacPhail told the Chair that over the last while there has been a high transition of Commissionaires. Over the past year they have changed the rules regarding walking on the grass, noting that unless you are sitting on the grass for a long period of time you will not be spoken to for walking on the grass. The same is going to go for bringing bikes into the Public Gardens. Cyclists will be allowed to walk their bike through that park without being spoken to.

It was noted that the messaging around the park would not change; just simply they will be a bit more lenient with enforcing the rules.

9.2 Active Transportation Coordinator Position

This item was discussed under item 8.3. Please see page 5.

10. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - NONE

11. NEXT MEETING DATE – January 19, 2012

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00PM.

Sarah Pellerine
Legislative Support