

NORTH WEST TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

March 12, 2008

PRESENT: Mr. Philip Cox, Chair
 Councillor Brad Johns
 Mr. John Merrick
 Mr. Terry Churney
 Mr. Gunther Seyffarth
 Mr. Steve Scott
 Mr. William Chaffey

STAFF: Mr. Dave Reage, Planning and Project Delivery Coordinator, Metro
 Transit
 Ms. Shawnee Gregory, Legislative Assistant

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm in Boardroom #1, Sackville Planning Office, 1st Floor, 636 Sackville Drive, Lower Sackville.

2. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - January 9, 2008**

Corrections:

- 7.1 1st bullet - add *one side of the driveway to the expansion of the Sackville Terminal* for clarification
- 4th bullet - add premium bus that *uses the highway* for clarification
- 5th bullet - line states, "budget to buy busses", however, the larger problem is parking
- 8th bullet - add *former Wal-mart site* for clarification
- 9th bullet- there was debate over how many parking spaces were coming. The line will be omitted
- 8.2 last sentence should state that busses have a *five minute window* as it is not a service standard per say
- 8.4 Accessible *routes* rather than busses
The Wal-mart site is at the Bedford Common not Dartmouth Crossing

MOVED BY Councillor Johns, seconded by Mr. Seyffarth that the minutes of January 9, 2008, as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. **APPROVAL OF ORDER OF BUSINESS AND ADDITIONS/DELETIONS**

Additions

- 8.1 Park and Ride Margison Drive -Councillor Johns
- 8.2 Parking Lots at Sackville Terminal - Councillor Johns
- 8.3 Transit Commission - Councillor Johns
- 8.4 Ridership Counts - Chair
- 8.5 Manager's Position of Metro Transit - Chair
- 8.6 Route 88 - Mr. Steve Scott

MOVED BY Councillor Johns, seconded by Mr. Merrick that the agenda, as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Cobequid Terminal Parking Lot - Snow Clearing

C A letter from Mr. Robert Wilde dated January 7, 2008 was submitted.

Mr. William Chaffey questioned whether the Committee should be looking into this issue as parking was not included in the North West Transit Advisory Committee's Terms of Reference.

Mr. Dave Reage, Planning and Project Delivery Coordinator, advised that this was a provincial park and ride lot and, therefore, not part of the services provided by the municipality. He stated that he had been speaking with HRM Real Estate staff and that HRM was looking into doing a land swap with the province which would include this parking lot. He noted that if that was the case, HRM should have control over the lot by this time next year. Mr. Reage also indicated that he had been speaking to Mr. Hugh Burns from the operations department and that his response on the issue was that the Cobequid Terminal parking lot was not a high priority. Mr. Burns also stated that the province only had one plow used for clearing this particular lot and if it was not in service like it was during the last storm then the lot was simply not cleared at all.

Mr. Phillip Cox indicated that he would ask Mr. Wilde to contact the province on this issue as it was not the Committee's or HRM's mandate. Mr. Cox also noted that his only problem with the situation was that the province was not plowing the lot at all.

MOVED BY Mr. Chaffey, seconded by Mr. Seyffarth, that the North West Transit Advisory Committee respond to Mr. Wilde that snow clearing in parking lots was not the mandate of the Committee and advise that it was a provincial issue. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS

6.1 CORRESPONDENCE - NONE

6.2 PETITIONS - NONE

6.3 DELEGATIONS - NONE

7. REPORTS

7.1 Standing Passengers Route 86

Mr. Cox stated that this was primarily a Bedford route and that the passengers were a close group as there was only one round trip per day. He advised that he had been receiving e-mails stating that standing room only was occurring very early on in the route; usually before the bus even turned on to highway 102. He also advised that there was a high floor bus for the morning route but not in the afternoon which was also posing a problem.

Mr. Reage advised that Metro Transit was aware of this issue, however, they currently had fewer high floor busses than routes that needed them. He indicated that he was currently working with dispatch to send high floor busses for this route. He noted that he had received numerous reports in January of passengers being left behind; particularly in the Kearney Lake Road area. Mr. Reage also stated that Metro Transit was hoping to create a second daily trip for route 86. After speaking with passengers, he stated that there was a fair consensus that a second trip, leaving a half an hour later would be favorable. He saw this as a good opportunity to split the passenger load between two (2) busses. In closing, he stated that as long as the budget passed it would be one of Metro Transit's priorities to add a second trip to route 86.

MOVED BY Mr. Chaffey, seconded by Mr. Merrick, that the North West Transit Advisory Committee recommend that the North West Community Council request from senior management staff that steps be taken to alleviate standing room only on route 86 on highway 102 as it may be a liability issue. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7.2 Transit Industry Operating Standards

Mr. Cox noted that he would like to see a copy of the Transit Industry Operating Standards.

Mr. Reage advised that the Transit Industry Operating Standards for Metro Transit had been drafted when the strategic plan was completed five (5) years ago and approved by Council. He indicated that he would forward the Operating Standards on to the Committee for the next meeting also noting that, pending budget approval, another strategic plan would be done for

service standards as it was to be revised every five (5) years. Mr. Reage stated that a consultant aids with the creation of the strategic plan and that Metro Transit standards were based on national industry standards. He noted that IBI Group had done the consulting for the last strategic plan and that they did that type of work all over North America. He also indicated that a great deal of public consultation was done for the last report so he expected the same for the upcoming one. He directed members to the Canadian Urban Transit Association website at <http://www.cutaactu.ca>.

7.3 Bedford Visioning Meeting update

Mr. Merrick provided the Committee with the following highlights from the Bedford Visioning Meeting:

- C He had attended two (2) meetings since January, 2008;
- C In the fall of 2006 HRM identified fifty (50) communities; three (3) of which being Musquodoboit, Fall River and Bedford, to go ahead with a pilot project of visioning exercises asking residents what they would like to see develop in their communities;
- C There is a community liaison group in each of the three (3) areas and different task groups for each as well;
- C Bedford's four (4) task groups are as follows:
 1. Development and Design
 2. Environment
 3. Community Facilities and Infrastructure
 4. Transit and Transportation
- C He noted the resources these groups had available to them from HRM planning staff;
- C He thought there would be a good synchronicity for him to be involved with the Transit and Transportation task group and the North West Transit Advisory Committee;
- C He suggested having a Committee member involved with Dave McCusker's, Manager, Regional Transportation, five (5) year prioritization plan;
- C He saw a good opportunity for the three (3) communities as well as the task groups and the North West Transit Advisory Committee to work together.

Regarding Mr. McCusker's five (5) year prioritization plan and Metro Transit's five (5) year plan Mr. Reage advised that the two (2) groups did work together.

MOVED BY Mr. Merrick, seconded by Mr. Scott, that the North West Transit Advisory Committee request to be kept advised of the five year plan and to be given the opportunity to be involved when it does commence. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED BY Councillor Johns, seconded by Mr. Chaffey, that a regular update from Bedford Visioning be added to the agenda. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The Committee requested that status items be put back on the agenda.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Park and Ride - Marginson Drive - Councillor Johns

Councillor Johns requested confirmation on the actual number of new parking spaces that the Marginson Drive parking lot was receiving as well as how large the space Metro Transit had acquired was. His concern was that with the amount of new development in the area that the problem of parking and transportation was only going to get worse. He suggested asking Mr. McCusker or Mr. Mike Labrecque, Director of Transportation and Public Works, for the next meeting.

Mr. Reage stated that there were currently no new details on the situation, however, there would be a Link bus servicing the area and that it would be a separate route.

Councillor Johns suggested the opportunity to get the Link extended to the Mount Uniacke car pool lot which was provincially owned and almost completely empty each day be explored. He saw it as an opportunity to partner with East Hants and further alleviate the parking issue on Marginson Drive.

8.2 Parking Lots at Sackville Terminal - Councillor Johns

Councillor Johns suggested making the second parking lot at the Sackville Terminal a car pool lot. He stated that it may encourage people to car pool if they are enticed with parking. Mr. Reage's concerns with Councillor Johns' suggestion was that it would be a hard rule to enforce and that forcing people to car pool would just anger them further. Regarding the issue of standing room only on busses, he advised that the busses at the Sackville Terminal were not at capacity as riders were not being left behind. Mr. Reage then updated the Committee and stated that he had met with Crombie management regarding parking at the old Wal-Mart site and that the meeting had not gone as he had hoped it would. He noted that Crombie management was now a real estate investment trust which meant that they were under strict federal laws over what they could use their parking lots for. He stated that they were not willing to take the risk as it may effect their tax status. In closing, Mr. Reage stated that Metro Transit had been exploring alternative parking options.

MOVED BY Councillor Johns, seconded by Mr. Chaffey, that an information report be drafted regarding the opportunity to create a car pool lot at the Sackville Terminal. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

8.3 Transit Commission - Councillor Johns

Councillor Johns noted that prior to amalgamation there was a transit authority that collected money from all municipal units. He wondered if there were options for a transit authority, similar to the Halifax Water Commission, that would be at arms length from HRM and answerable to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board more so than to Council. Councillor Johns stated that this way HRM would receive a bill for services provided rather than having the ultimate ability to make transit decisions.

Mr. Churney advised that the previous transit authority had generally operated in the black. He stated that fare box revenue was good and that busses were cheaper, however, you could not buy as many busses as you can today and he believed that this was the reason why the commission was done away with in the first place. He noted that there was merit in Councillor Johns' idea, however, it would have to be looked into further.

Councillor Johns noted that he would like to see this happen as transit was not considered a priority by HRM. He advised that he wanted to present the idea to his fellow Committee members and that he was also going to consult a local MLA from an opposition party. He stated that he would have some options to present at the May North West Transit Advisory Committee meeting and that he would also like feedback, including possible pros and cons, from his fellow members at that time.

8.4 Ridership Counts - Chair

Due to lack of time this item was deferred to the next agenda.

8.5 Manager's Position of Metro Transit - Chair

Due to lack of time this item was deferred to the next agenda.

8.6 Route 88 - Mr. Scott

Mr. Scott requested an update on what had occurred with Route 88 and the Research in Motion (RIM) site.

Mr. Reage advised that Route 88 and RIM were two (2) separate things and that Route 88 would not change in the foreseeable future. He stated that most of the RIM employees lived in the Parkland Drive area and, therefore, Metro Transit would like to have a route starting at the Lacewood Terminal going down Parkland Drive to Kearney Lake Road and Bluewater Road and then along the Bedford Highway to the Cobequid Terminal. Mr. Reage noted that this route was contingent upon road improvements at the RIM site and that Metro Transit was in a holding pattern for that now.

Councillor Johns advised that Clayton Developments planned on putting signal lights in the RIM area this summer.

Mr. Cox noted that more people were starting to use the route 88 service.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, April 9, 2008.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 pm.

Shawnee Gregory
Legislative Assistant

The following items were added as information:

1. Canadian Automobile Association article - March 2008 - Mr. Bill Chaffey