

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
MINUTES

February 7, 2012

PRESENT:

Mayor Peter Kelly
Deputy Mayor Bill Karsten
Councillors: Steve Streach
Barry Dalrymple
David Hendsbee
Lorelei Nicoll
Darren Fisher
Jackie Barkhouse
Jim Smith
Mary Wile
Jerry Blumenthal
Sue Uteck
Jennifer Watts
Russell Walker
Debbie Hum
Linda Mosher
Stephen Adams
Robert Harvey
Tim Outhit
Reg Rankin
Peter Lund

REGRETS:

Councillors: Gloria McCluskey
Dawn Sloane
Brad Johns

STAFF:

Mr. Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Cathy Mellett, Municipal Clerk
Ms. Sherryll Murphy, Acting Clerk
Ms. Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant

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1. INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. with the Invocation being led by Councillor Streach.

2. SPECIAL COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Councillors noted a number of community announcements and acknowledgements.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 24, 31 & February 2, 2012

MOVED by Councillor Nicoll seconded by Councillor Wile, that the Regional Council minutes of January 24, 31 & February 2, 2012 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Additions:

12.1 Councillor Harvey – Leave of Absence for Councillor Johns

MOVED by Councillor Harvey, seconded by Councillor Outhit, that Regional Council grant Councillor Johns an extended leave of absence. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

12.2 Councillor Outhit – Parking – Vacant Roadside Bus Bays/Un-Metered Zones (information item #1)

MOVED by Councillor Blumenthal, seconded by Councillor Nicoll, that the order of business be approved, as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE

6. MOTIONS OF RECONSIDERATION – NONE

7. MOTIONS OF RESCISSION – NONE

8. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

9. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

9.1 Correspondence - NONE

9.2 Petitions - NONE

10. REPORTS

10.1 CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

10.1.1 HRM SmartTrip – Ride Matching / Sharing Program (oral)

A copy of the staff presentation was distributed to Council.

Mr. David McCusker, Manager, Strategic Transportation Planning, presented an overview and update of the HRM SmartTrip program to Council, outlining the following:

- The program can quickly and securely find carpool partners
- It matches people to origin and destination with working hours.
- It is privacy protected, fast and easy to use.
- It can also be used to find and advertise parking spaces in HRM.
- Details of the program can be viewed online at hrmsmarttrip.ca.

Mr. McCusker responded to questions from members of Council.

The Mayor thanked staff for the presentation.

10.1.2 Resolution – By-Law T-108, Respecting Regulation of Taxis & Limousines – Section 46B, Zone Restrictions

A staff report dated February 6, 2012 was before Council.

A copy of a letter from Mr. Al DesLaurier, President, Halifax Taxi Driver's Owner's Association, received February 6, 2012 was before Council.

Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor, provided an overview of Council's options with regard to the removal of zone restrictions during the transit strike. She indicated that Council adopted an amendment to the taxi By-law last winter, to ease movement during the Canada Winter Games. This amendment facilitated the opportunity for Council, in a particular circumstance, to relax the rules regarding pick up and drop off of taxi passengers in a zone for a designated period of time. Ms. Donovan advised that Council may, by motion and adoption of that motion by a majority vote move to provide for the relaxing of those rules during the period of the strike.

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Smith, that Halifax Regional Council approve the following resolution (Attachment 1 of the February 6, 2012 staff report) to permit the removal of zone restrictions for the duration of the Metro Transit strike:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of Halifax Regional Municipality, under the authority of Section 305 of the Motor Vehicle Act, Chapter 293, R.S.N.S. 1989 and By-law T-108, Respecting Taxi and Limousine Regulation that:

Pursuant to Section 46(b) of By-law T-108, taxi drivers licensed under By-law T-108 are permitted to pick up or to accept a passenger in any zone and to carry that passenger to another location within that zone or to a location within any other zone for the duration of the Metro Transit strike.

Council discussed the amended motion, with the following comments and concerns noted:

- A suggestion that Council may want to indicate a time frame for opening the zones, so that zones only be opened for the same hours of operation of transit service, from approximately 6:00 a.m. to 12:30/1:00 a.m.
- That taxi demand has not increased enough to warrant opening the zones.
- Concern that there will not be enough taxis to service outlying areas.
- That this is a temporary solution, when the focus should be on ending the strike.

At the request of Council, Ms. Cathy Mellett, Municipal Clerk, clarified that the Taxi & Limousine Liaison Group is not a committee of Council, it is a staff committee.

Discussion ensued on the motion.

On the advice of the Municipal Solicitor, with the agreement of the mover and seconder, the motion was amended to read:

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Smith, that Halifax Regional Council approve the following resolution (Attachment 1 of the February 6, 2012 staff report) to permit the removal of zone restrictions for the duration of the Metro Transit strike, terminating on the ratification of the collective agreement by Regional Council:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of Halifax Regional Municipality, under the authority of Section 305 of the Motor Vehicle Act, Chapter 293, R.S.N.S. 1989 and By-law T-108, Respecting Taxi and Limousine Regulation that:

Pursuant to Section 46(b) of By-law T-108, taxi drivers licensed under By-law T-108 are permitted to pick up or to accept a passenger in any zone and to carry that passenger to another location within that zone or to a location within any other zone for the duration of the Metro Transit strike, *terminating on the ratification of the collective agreement by Regional Council.*

A recorded vote was requested.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED. (12 in favour, 9 against)

Those voting in favour were: Councillors Dalrymple, Fisher, Harvey, Hendsbee, Lund, Nicoll, Outhit, Rankin, Smith, Streach, Uteck, and Watts.

Those voting against were: Mayor Kelly, Deputy Mayor Karsten, and Councillors Adams, Barkhouse, Blumenthal, Hum, Mosher, Walker, and Wile.

Councillors McCluskey, Sloane, and Johns were not in attendance.

10.1.3 Parkland Acquisition – Lot 51A – Civic No. 2210 Crowell Road, East Lawrencetown

A staff report dated December 8, 2011 was before Council.

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Dalrymple, that Halifax Regional Council authorize the Mayor and Municipal Clerk to enter into an agreement of Purchase and Sale for acquisition of Lot 51A (PID#00398263) as per the key terms and conditions outlined in Table 1 of the Private and Confidential Information Report dated December 8, 2011. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

10.2 MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

10.2.1 Councillor Uteck – Request for Report: Property Valuation Service Corporation – Process for Commercial Assessment

Councillor Uteck commented that she is looking for detailed information from staff on the various tax rates throughout HRM. She indicated the need for commercial tax reform, given the disparity between the commercial tax rates throughout HRM.

MOVED by Councillor Uteck, seconded by Councillor Lund, that Halifax Regional Council request a staff report detailing the process for Commercial Property Assessment rates, to provide Council with an understanding of the commercial assessment process, particularly as it applies to increases.

Councillor Walker noted that HRM is appealing approximately 14 commercial assessments on the basis that they are not high enough. He would like discussion included in the report on the justification for asking for an increase on some assessments.

At the request of Deputy Mayor Karsten, Councillor Walker, as a Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) Board Member, indicated that PVSC should be able to provide information for the report.

Councillor Fisher requested that the report include information on a third party appeal process, for example, a tenant in a mall that is affected by an increase in a commercial tax assessment.

Mr. Bruce Fisher, Manager, Financial Policy and Planning, indicated that staff have some commercial assessment information available, both geographical and sector-wise, as well as some benchmarks that show commercial tax rate and assessment across the region that they would be able to share with Council through the report. The Strategic Urban Partnership has been gathering information on commercial tax and assessments, and staff can consult with area Business Improvement Districts.

After further discussion, the **MOTION WAS PUT AND PASSED.**

11. MOTIONS

11.1 Councillor Adams

MOVED by Councillor Adams, seconded by Councillor Rankin, that Halifax Regional Council request a staff report on aligning notices of rescission/reconsideration in Administrative Order 1 with Roberts' Rules of Order. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

12. ADDED ITEMS

12.1 Councillor Harvey – Leave of Absence for Councillor Johns

This item was addressed earlier in the meeting. See page 3.

12.2 Councillor Outhit – Parking – Vacant Roadside Bus Bays/Un-Metered Zones (information item #1)

At the request of Councillor Outhit, Mr. Ken Reashor, Director, Transportation & Public Works, reviewed the Information Report dated February 6, 2012.

Councillor Karsten asked that staff look into the opportunity to install parking spaces along the front of the former Herald building site on Argyle Street, Halifax.

At the request of Councillor Karsten, Mr. Reashor clarified that staff would require at least a two week period to have parking signage set up and in place. He also noted that staff will need time to take the signs down after the strike is over. Mr. Reashor further clarified that there is no intent, nor will there be any allowance for vehicular parking in bike lanes, which is enforced by police.

Councillor Mosher suggested that staff look into offering a discount for multi-occupancy vehicles at the Metro Park and other HRM owned parking lots. She also suggested staff look into working with taxi companies to set up pre-arranged drop off and pick up areas for people to share taxi fares.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested allowing charter bus companies to use park and ride locations.

13. NOTICES OF MOTION

13.1 Councillor Watts

“Take notice that at the next meeting of Halifax Regional Council to be held on Tuesday, February 14, 2012 I intend to put forward a motion to request a staff report on key reserve funds that explains how funds are transferred into the specific accounts, what is the criteria for the dispersal of the funds and documentation that shows the funds received and disbursed for a 10 year period for the identified reserves.”

13.2 Councillor Watts - Communication of staff reports in HRM.

“Take notice that at the next meeting of Halifax Regional Council to be held on Tuesday, February 14, 2012 I intend to put forward a motion to request a staff report and discussion with the CAO on the process of communication and production of staff reports in HRM.”

14. IN CAMERA

14.1 In Camera Minutes – January 31, 2012

MOVED by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Karsten, that the In Camera minutes of January 31, 2012 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

14.2 Labour Relations

14.2.1 ATU Contract Negotiations - Oral

MOVED by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Mosher, that Regional Council convene to In Camera in order to address matters related to the ATU contract negotiations. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

15. ADJOURNMENT

The regular meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m. to convene In Camera.

Cathy J. Mellett
Municipal Clerk

INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Memorandum from Director Transportation and Public Works dated February 6, 2012 re: Parking – Vacant Roadside Bus Bays / Un-Metered Zones
2. Memorandum from the Municipal Clerk dated February 6, 2012 re: Requests for Presentation to Council - None