

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE June 12, 2007 MINUTES

PRESENT: Mayor Peter Kelly, Chair
Deputy Mayor Sue Uteck
Councillors: Krista Snow
David Hendsbee
Harry McInroy
Gloria McCluskey
Andrew Younger
Bill Karsten
Becky Kent
Jim Smith
Mary Wile
Patrick Murphy
Dawn M. Sloane
Sheila Fougere
Russell Walker
Debbie Hum
Linda Mosher
Stephen D. Adams
Brad Johns
Robert P. Harvey
Reg Rankin
Gary G. Meade

REGRETS: Councillors: Steve Streach
Gary Martin

STAFF: Mr. Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Jan Gibson, Municipal Clerk
Ms. Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kelly called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOVED by Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Snow that the minutes of May 29, 2007 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. FAST FERRY SERVICE

This matter had been deferred from the May 29, 2007 meeting of Regional Council.

- C A copy of a PowerPoint presentation was submitted.
- C A copy of an extract of the Regional Council Minutes of August 8, 2006 was submitted.
- C A copy of a staff report dated July 28, 2006 (submitted at the August 8, 2006 Regional Council Meeting) was submitted.
- C Information pertaining to the HRM Regional Transit Planning Harbour Link Project was circulated.

Mr. David McCusker, Manager of Regional Transportation Planning advised that the purpose of his presentation was to respond to questions that have been raised in regard to transit service priorities in the Regional Plan, and why the ferry is considered the best choice, and to respond to questions concerning the cost and funding sources for the Project .

In his presentation, Mr. McCusker reviewed the most recent information staff have on this issue, highlighting the following points:

- C The primary transit priority is to get the highest number of drivers out of their cars; and the secondary transit priority is to provide transit as an alternative to more HRM residents.
- C Staff are targeting areas that provide the highest market; the Mill Cove collection area has about 50,0000 residents.
- C 10 percent of all transit trips are done by ferries
- C The consultants' study found that a 26 minute trip by rail would take 15 minutes by ferry; and the 26 minute trip did not include stops at the universities.
- C It would take four trains for the frequency of service that two ferries could

provide.

- C Six out of ten respondents advised that they would find the ferry a better way to commute.

At approximately 1:15 p.m. Councillors Hum, Mosher, and Murphy entered the meeting.

- C The project cost is \$20 million vs. a previous estimate of \$30 million; and this was due to staff recommending a smaller size ferry than what the consultant recommended.
- C The HRM planned contribution for the project is \$6.7 million, with funding allocated from the Strategic Growth Reserve. To date, \$200,000 has been committed in 2007/08 budget to move the project forward; staff expect the Provincial and Federal Governments will cost share.
- C Funding for the project will be over and above other transit money; the Strategic Growth Reserve is designed to leverage new money; and staff feel that the Fast Ferry Project gives a good opportunity to do this. There is no opportunity to leverage new money with conventional buses with the Provincial and Federal Governments

Mr. McCusker introduced Mr. Larry Jacobs, advising that he was the Transportation Coordinator for the Government of Bermuda, and was invited to share with Regional Council, Bermuda's experience with high speed ferries. He added that Mr. Jacobs guided the development of the Bermuda National Transportation Management Plan that was completed in 2001.

Mr. Jacobs addressed Council and provided an overview of how the Government of Bermuda approached their public transport initiatives. In his remarks he advised that they took a market-driven approach to solving transportation problems and this involved extensive market research across the island and, subsequent to that, it was followed by targeted research. Mr. Jacobs elaborated on the results their research and information on the type of ferries that were purchased, and on the dock locations. In concluding his remarks, Mr. Jacobs offered assistance to HRM, adding that Bermuda has a lot of resource information and would be pleased to share it with HRM.

A discussion ensued with Mr. McCusker, Mr. Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer, and Ms. Debbie McCaig, Acting Manager, Budget and Financial Analysis, responding to questions of Council. The following points being noted:

- C If the project were not to proceed, the funds in the Strategic Growth Reserve will not be available for conventional transit, as the Reserve has a business case built around it; in this situation, staff would then look for opportunities whereby to leverage other funding.

At 1:36 p.m. Councillor Hendsbee entered the meeting.

MOVED by Councillor McInroy, seconded by Councillor Mosher that Regional

Council re-affirm its commitment to proceed with the Fast Ferry Service Project, as approved by Regional Council on August 8, 2006 and as outlined in the July 28, 2006 staff report.

Additional comments by Council were put forward:

- C Concern was expressed that there were numerous outstanding transit issues to be resolved and that these should be done before a fast ferry project is considered.

Councillor Fougere indicated her concern was with the changes in today's presentation compared to last year's, the lack of a business plan approach, and that there was no real commitment in terms of Federal funding. She advised that last year she requested a supplementary report and nothing was received. She added that this presentation has provided different information from last year's. In particular, she noted:

- C the size of the ferries are smaller,
- C the travel time has increased to a 30 minute trip vs. a 20 minute trip;
- C last year's report included shuttles to the universities and hospitals and universities in the \$30 million cost;
- C an overpass in Bedford and free parking in Bedford;
- C a \$5 one-way fee per person;
- C staff would continue to look at opportunities for Purcell's Cove and Eastern Passage.

In addition, Councillor Fougere noted issues that were brought forward previously, and still not addressed were as follows:

- C the annual operating cost of the service
- C the cost of fuel, and the fact that it has escalated enormously in the past year
- C the \$5 fare
- C the issue of accelerating the waterfront development corporation's plan for infill, and the potential \$9 million cost on infill
- C the cost of the ferry project vs. commuter rail

In response, Mr. Paul Dunphy, Director of Community Planning clarified that Regional Council has not authorized any spending over the \$200,000 it did during budget deliberations. He added that staff will continue working on the issues and the concerns raised by Council, including a business case, and it will be brought forward to Council. Mr. Dunphy also noted that staff were cognizant the Federal Government will require a substantial business case before it considers any funding.

In response to a further question by Councillor Fougere, Mr. Dunphy advised that staff will be providing a report to Council within the month. He explained that the report will illustrate the sequence of the project, but not necessarily the timing because the timing will depend on answers from other levels of government.

In response to questions concerning the motion on the floor, the Chair asked Councillor McInroy to clarify. Councillor McInroy advised that the intention of his motion was to reflect Mr. Dunphy's comments and that he was asking Council to continue to support the project, in

principle.

In response to the concerns that were expressed, Mr. Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer advised that today's presentation was designed to provide an update, as requested by a Councillor. He noted that staff are not at the stage where they can address all the questions or provide timelines and that staff will continue along the timelines approved last August.

Mr. McCusker responded to some of the issues raised, providing the following points:

- C In regard to the declining cost, nothing has been cut from the project; the difference is their intention to purchase smaller ferries. These ferries will have the capacity to be scaled up as the need arises.
- C There will be adequate parking for the park and ride sites, however, not all sites will be located directly beside the ferry site.
- C The free parking mentioned in the report refers to areas that are remote parking from the ferry terminal; staff believe that additional parking which is closer to ferry terminal needs to be developed.

At 2:12 p.m. Mayor Kelly left the meeting and Deputy Mayor Uteck assumed the Chair.

In response to further questions about the motion on the floor, Mr. English, CAO explained that if there was no motion on the floor, staff would proceed in accordance with the approved motion of August 8, 2006; and if the motion on the floor were defeated, staff would want Council to revisit the August 8, 2006 motion. Mr. English added that even without today's discussion, staff intended to come before Council with a report based on the August 8, 2006.

Mr. English went on to note that as the process continues, reports will be brought to Council for proper decision making. He emphasized that at this point there is no project, and that the idea has only been approved in principle. Mr. English referred to a point raised concerning the Strategic Growth Fund and clarified that was set up by Council and is Regional Council's Fund. He advised that if Council wanted to change the business case in regard to this fund, then that would be Council's decision.

At 2:27 p.m. Mayor Kelly assumed the Chair, and Deputy Mayor Uteck took her usual seat in Council.

At this time Councillor Hum indicated that this meeting was scheduled to adjourn soon and it was unlikely that Council would be able to deal with the two remaining items. She suggested that, rather than keep staff waiting, Council decide to continue on and deal with the remaining items or defer them.

MOVED by Councillor Hum, seconded by Councillor Kent that items number 4 (Graffiti Management Plan and Draft Graffiti By-law) and 5 (Terms of Reference - Graffiti Task Force) be deferred to the next Committee of the Whole. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Discussion continued on the Fast Ferry Service.

Councillor Hum expressed concern that Council did not have enough information to make an informed decision as to proceed or not with the Fast Ferry project. She asked that, in moving forward, staff take into consideration the following:

- C The Bedford South Interchange and how this could potentially impact the ridership for the Fast Ferry (once the interchange is constructed, would the Fast Ferry will still be a viable option).
- C The Birch Cove option be considered with the entire plan for the Western Shore Bedford Basin study, and all the land in and around the Chinatown Restaurant area.

Councillor Smith advised that he hoped future consideration of ferry service will be given to Purcell's Cove, Eastern Passage, Shannon Park, and Birch Cove. He added that the whole transit system is integral, and that the neighbourhood transit system has to be considered. Councillor Smith also suggested that this could be looked at as a great opportunity for a development tool for Shannon Park, and he asked that the report address the environmental benefits of the fast ferry service.

Councillor Johns advised that he supported the fast ferry idea last year because he foresaw it happening in about 10 years. He added that the reason he requested the item come forward at this time was because approximately a month ago there was a report which showed \$20 million being committed to this project for next year. Councillor Johns indicated that this was contrary to his understanding of what had been approved and that he did not support this project going forward next year. Councillor Johns explained that there are issues with the consultants' report and there are a number of questions yet to be answered and, as well, he would like clarification around the plans for a Purcell's Cove ferry. Councillor John elaborated on his concerns and issues in regard to the Fast Ferry project, raising the following points:

- C Previously, Council had a commuter rail committee when it was considering this option. With the potential to spend 20 to 30 million dollars, there should be similar input from councillors on this project.
- C Assurance that this project would not result in redistributing ridership that is currently taking transit into taking the ferry.
- C Given the current traffic gridlock in the Mill Cove area, with a ferry site in this area redirecting people to Mill Cove, this will only create problems.
- C A Metro Link from the R.I.M. site, going into the City by way of the Bicentennial Highway would be a great opportunity and suggested that the travel times would be somewhat comparable to the ferry.
- C Environmental concerns with the ferry project need to be considered.
- C The issue of getting people to the hospitals and universities needs to be addressed as well.

Councillor McInroy was requested once again to clarify his motion. Councillor McInroy advised that it is the same as the previous motion approved by Council last August, but it is prefaced with wording to say that Council is reaffirming the motion.

Councillor Johns advised that he supports the idea in principle but he does not support doing

this project within the next year or two. He added that he would not vote in favour of the motion because he believed the intent of the motion infers that the project will happen within the next couple of years.

Mr. English pointed that when and if the project proceeds, it will only happen when Council approves it and it will be dependent on funding. He added that there is nothing implied in the motion that it will happen in the next couple of years.

Councillor Fougere requested that, when the staff report is brought forward, it include a timeline of regular progress updates to Council, so that Council does not go another year before it receives a status report.

Councillor Sloane pointed out that in London, transit commuters can purchase a card which would enable the person to use various modes of public transit and she suggested that staff consider this idea, in going forward.

The Chair called for the question on the motion.

MOVED by Councillor McInroy, seconded by Councillor Mosher that Regional Council re-affirm its commitment to proceed with the Fast Ferry Service Project, as approved by Regional Council on August 8, 2006 and as outlined in the July 28, 2006 staff report. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. GRAFFITI MANAGEMENT PLAN AND DRAFT GRAFFITI BY-LAW

Deferred due to time constraints.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE - GRAFFITI TASK FORCE

Deferred due to time constraints.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:17 p.m.

Jan Gibson
Municipal Clerk