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Item No. 9.3.2

Transportation Standing Committee
December 3, 2014

TO: Chair and Members of the Transportation Standing Committee

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY:

Lisa Pottie, Chair, Accessibility Advisory Committee

DATE: November 3, 2014

SUBJECT: Accessibility of Municipal Public Engagement Events

ORIGIN

October 20, 2014 Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Terms of Reference of the Accessibility Advisory Committee sets out the objectives of the Committee, including:

- 1.1 To facilitate the full participation of all citizens with disabilities in civic and community affairs by ensuring that policies, programs and services do not impose barriers to such participation.
- 1.3 To work towards the elimination of physical and attitudinal barriers facing persons with disabilities by advising Halifax Regional Council, through the Transportation Standing Committee, on issues and concerns raised by citizens.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report to develop standards and protocol for accessibility at municipal public engagement events, including examination of best practice standards and protocols that are used in other municipalities.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

At the October 20, 2014 meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Committee discussed a community meeting held recently by a municipal department, which was not accessible for a person using a wheelchair who tried to attend.

The Committee discussed what should be the standard for accessibility of public engagement meetings, noting that accessible can mean different things to different people depending on their disability. These could include ensuring the physical location of the meeting has door openers, ramps, and rails for those using wheelchairs, walkers or canes, and ensuring the participation of attendees by offering American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters or real-time captioning for the deaf and hard of hearing. It was noted that some of these services can be expensive and/or challenging to book because of availability, and could be provided upon request.

The Committee approved a motion recommending that the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report to develop standards and protocol for accessibility at municipal public engagement events, including examination of best practice standards and protocols that are used in other municipalities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is comprised of eight volunteer citizen members and two members of Regional Council, plus staff liaison members from a number of HRM business units including Halifax Transit, Operations Support, Human Resources, Recreation Services, and Halifax Regional Police. Meetings are held monthly and are open to the public. Minutes, agendas, reports and other information on the AAC are posted on the HRM website.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

ALTERNATIVES

None identified.

ATTACHMENTS

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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