

TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE
MINUTES

November 24, 2011

MEMBERS
PRESENT:

Councillor Reg Rankin, Chair
Councillor Jennifer Watts, Vice-Chair
Councillor David Hendsbee
Councillor Debbie Hum
Councillor Jerry Blumenthal
Councillor Jackie Barkhouse
Councillor Bob Harvey

ALSO
PRESENT:

Councillor Barry Dalrymple
Councillor Tim Outhit

REGRETS:

Councillor Darren Fisher

STAFF:

Mr. Ken Reashor, Director, Transportation & Public Works
Ms. Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 3rd Floor, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None

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

Additions:

8.1 Councillor Watts – Five Big Moves for Transit – Information Report

The Committee agreed to address this item as the first order of business.

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Harvey, that the Transportation Advisory Committee approve the order of business as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & PRESENTATIONS

4.1 Correspondence - None

4.2 Petitions - None

4.3 Presentations - None

8.1 Councillor Watts – Five Big Moves for Transit – Information Report

An information report dated November 7, 2011 was before the Committee.

Mr. Dave Reage, Manager, Service Development, Metro Transit, reviewed several significant projects currently underway by Metro Transit:

- Bridge Terminal
- Woodside Ferry
- Airport / Fall River Metro X

Mr. Reage reviewed details of the following key projects that were identified by staff that Metro Transit should implement to increase ridership and provide improved service:

- Big Move #1 - High Frequency Corridors
- Big Move #2 – Investing in Service Quality and Reliability
- Big Move #3 – Focus on Cost Effective & High Ridership Service

- Big Move #4 – Urban Express
- Big Move #5 – Burnside/Dartmouth Crossing Realignment

Mr. Reage and Mr. Dave Robar, Director, Metro Transit, responded to questions from members at this time.

The Committee discussed the opportunity to bring forward priorities for the upcoming budget year.

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Hum, that the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report outlining the budget implications for implementation of all or part of the “Five Big Moves” outlined in the November 7, 2011 information report, including the impact on current capital and operating budgets and alternatives, for the next Transportation Standing Committee meeting, if possible.

Mr. Reage and Mr. Robar responded to further questions.

Councillor Barkhouse requested for the record that she is glad to see the Eastern Passage/Cow Bay community transit identified, which will be key to ensuring the success of the new Woodside ferry.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

6.1 Commuter Rail Feasibility Analysis

This item was deferred from the October 27, 2011 meeting.

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Hum, that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council direct staff to engage a consultant through a Request for Proposals for a full feasibility analysis of Commuter Rail in the Halifax to Windsor Junction and Enfield Corridor. This study would include compensation to CN in return for their participation in the study effort.

The Chair acknowledged the presence of Councillors Dalrymple and Outhit.

Mr. Dave Reage, Acting Manager Service Development, Metro Transit, clarified at the request of members that the study would cost approximately \$250,000.

Councillor Harvey submitted files on the subject of commuter rail to staff for their review and consideration, dating back to 1993. He noted that reports have been prepared in

the past concluding with concerns about having the population base to support commuter rail, having destinations within walking distance of the train stops, costs associated with paying for use and upgrades to the tracks, building stations, and subsidizing service.

Councillor Blumenthal left the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

Councillor Barkhouse indicated that by moving this forward, she hopes it does not impact or delay the community transit initiative for Lawrencetown/Cow Bay/Eastern Passage.

Councillor Hum suggested that prior to this going to an RFP, staff should gather and analyze information that is already out there to use what information is still valid, and to help determine what needs to be captured in a new study.

Mr. Reage indicated that the January 10, 2011 information report outlined previous reports and information compiled over the years, and tried to condense and apply this information to today. Some aspects of previous research have changed, including track conditions, track speeds, and population.

The Committee agreed to allow Councillor Outhit to speak on this matter.

Councillor Outhit discussed the cost savings of commuter rail over the fast ferry, noting that much of the infrastructure needed for the commuter rail option already exists. He suggested that HRM could approach CN with the option of having CN operate the commuter rail system. Councillor Outhit suggested that moving forward with this study will finally settle whether commuter rail would be a viable option for HRM or not. He further suggested that funding for the study should come out of the strategic growth reserve.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7. REPORTS

7.1 STAFF - None

7.2 MATTERS REFERRED FROM REGIONAL COUNCIL - None

7.3 MATTERS REFERRED FROM STANDING COMMITTEES - None

7.4 MATTERS REFERRED FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL - None

7.5 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

7.5.1 Update from Councillor Watts (verbal)

Councillor Watts provided and updated on stakeholder consultations underway with regard to the Active Transportation Corridor.

7.6 ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

7.6.1 Update from Councillor Blumenthal (verbal)

No update was provided.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Councillor Watts – Five Big Moves for Transit – Information Report

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting. Refer to page 3.

9. NEXT MEETING – December 22, 2011

Following a discussion regarding the December 22nd meeting date, it was requested that this meeting be moved to December 6th at 10:30 a.m.

10. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Barkhouse, that Councillor Rankin be nominated as Chair of the Transportation Standing Committee for 2012. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

There were no further nominations, and Councillor Rankin was declared Chair.

MOVED by Councillor Harvey, seconded by Councillor Barkhouse that Councillor Watts be nominated as Vice Chair of the Transportation Standing Committee for 2012. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

There were no further nominations, and Councillor Watts was declared Vice Chair.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Jennifer Weagle
Legislative Assistant

INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Five Big Moves for Transit (information report dated November 7, 2011)