

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

MINUTES

April 18, 2005

PRESENT:

Patrick Harrington, Chair
Councillor Gary Meade
Councillor Patrick Murphy
Meredith Hutchings
Joeanne Coffey
Terry Myer
Jen Powley
Gus "Warren" Reed
Mary Wallworth
Betty MacDonald

REGRETS

Lynn DeMont
Cathy (*Robertson*) Cranidge
Jeff Wall
Nancy Mann
Derek Mathers
Daniel McLellan
Mary Newcombe

STAFF & OTHERS:

Ms. Charla Williams, Co-ordinator, Diversity Program
Ms. Tatjana Zatezalo, Diversity Consultant
Supt. Cliff Falkenham, Halifax Regional Police
Ms. Jana Delaney, Interpreter
Ms. Karina Burris, Interpreter

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Call to Order	3
2.	Introductions	3
3.	Approval of Minutes - April 18, 2005	3
4.	Approval of the Order of Business and Approval of Additions and Deletions	3
5.	Business Arising Out of the Minutes	4
5.1	Status Sheet Items	4
5.1.1	Full Service Gas Pumps	4
5.1.2	Amendment to By- Law T-108	5
5.1.3	Accessible Playgrounds Update	5
6.	Consideration of Deferred Business	5
7.	Correspondence, Petitions and Delegations	5
8.	Reports	5
9.	Added Items/New Business	5
9.1	New Business	6
9.1.1	Accessibility of Tim Horton's	6
9.1.2	Self Management & Decision Making Workshop	6
9.1.3	Committee for Inclusive Transportation	7
9.1.4	Impact Training Session May 27 th 2005	7
9.1.5	Opportunity for new members to speak Guide Dogs	8
9.2	Added Items	9
9.2.1	Update on Barrier Free Building Code	9
9.2.2	LED Traffic Signals Report	9
9.2.3	Metro Center Announcement Update	9
9.2.4	Stop Sign Location	9
10.	Next Meeting Date	9
11.	Adjournment	9

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

The Committee Members introduced themselves.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - February 21, 2005

Corrections:

- Mr. Terry Myer last name is spelled "Myer not Myers"
- Ms. Joanne Coffey requested that the minutes indicate that Mr. Warren Reed was elected.
- The words " universal design" on page 6 should be capitalized.

MOVED BY Ms. Mary Wall, seconded by Ms. Joanne Coffey that the minutes of February 21, 2005 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

Added Items:

- 9.2.1 Update on Barrier Free Building Code Advisory Committee Submission/Accessible Housing - Joanne Coffey
- 9.2.2 LED Traffic Signals Report - Patrick Harrington
- 9.2.3 Metro Center Announcements Update - Betty MacDonald
- 9.2.4 Stop sign location - Mary Wall

The Chair requested that the Legislative Assistant contact Mr. Paul Burgess, Design Engineer, for an update on the tactile warning tile, as he was to provide a report to the Committee this spring.

MOVED by Ms. Joanne Coffey, seconded by Councillor Murphy that the agenda be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

5.1 Status Sheet Items

5.1.1 Full Service Gas Pumps

- A copy of the correspondence dated March 1, 2005 from the NS Utility and Review Board was before the Committee.
- A copy of the correspondence dated February 20, 2005 to the NS Utility and Review Board from the Municipal Clerk was before the Committee.

The Chair noted that the correspondence from the NS Utility and Review Board does not indicate who is responsible for the regulation of gas stations. Councillor Murphy agreed that the letter was non responsive.

Ms. Jen Powley commented that most gas stations are more than willing to assist, if there are two or more attendants working.

Mr. Gus Reed commented that he has received full service assistance in a self serve lane, at self service prices. He also commented that the response from the NS Utility and Review Board could have been more helpful.

Ms. Mary Wallworth raised concern for those who cannot speak and ask for help. Mr. Patrick Harrington, Chair commented that for the most part persons with disabilities are able to locate services that are accessible.

Ms. Charla Williams asked if there was an association of gas operators, that the Committee could voice their concerns to. Mr. Terry Myer commented that there was a retailer association and that it would be a good idea to contact them.

Ms. Meredith Hutchings commented that it may be a matter of awareness and that cards in the window, and training of attendants are ideas that could be included in a letter.

Ms. Mary Wall suggested a vehicle permit that indicated you were disabled. Ms. Charla Williams commented that it may not be visible. The issue is that people with disabilities have access to gas services. People should not have to adapt, as the population gets older more people will have difficulty. There is an opportunity to address this before it becomes a problem. Mr. Terry Myer commented that advertising that you have a disability is a step backwards, and suggested that the Committee look at what other Municipalities are doing before suggestions are made to the retailers association.

Ms. Jen Powley asked for clarification on the issue. The Chair commented that there are an increased number of gas stations that do not offer full gas services.

Ms. Charla Williams advised that as an Advisory Committee of Council that the letter should come from Council.

MOVED by Councillor Meade, seconded by Mr. Terry Myer that the Legislative Assistant determine who the appropriate organizations are and write a letter expressing the Committees' concern, and copy Regional Council. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5.1.2 Amendment to By-Law T-108

The Chair requested that the Legislative Assistant contact Mr. Kevin Hindle to find out when By-Law T108 will be up for review and report back to the Committee.

5.1.3 Accessible Playground Update

Mr. Gus Reed advised the Committee that the first meeting of the design committee was very positive and a substantial amount of money has been allocated. The playground should be completed by fall.

Councillor Meade commented that the playground will be located at the Westmount School and advised that it will be a regional facility, the monies allocated is between \$200,000 - \$250,000 which has come from HRM and other organizations. There will also be additional fund-raising. In March, Regional Council approved another accessible playground, this is one of many to come.

The Chair commented that parents of disabled kids and other stakeholders are putting in a great team effort and contributing lots of ideas. The school has been identified as a good location for the playground because it has a higher concentration of students with disabilities.

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - None

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS None

8. REPORTS - None

9. ADDED ITEMS/NEW BUSINESS

9.1. New Business

9.1.1 Accessibility of Tim Horton's

Ms. Mary Wallworth raised concern over the accessibility of Tim Hortons on Portland Street. Ms. Charla Williams commented that the Municipality has no regulatory role over any private business in the Municipality, all that HRM and the Committee can do is recommend that they be good corporate citizens.

Ms. Joanne Coffey asked for clarification as to why the Committee is writing letters in regards to gas stations. Ms. Charla Williams commented that most Tim Hortons are accessible. She advised the Committee that the new building regulation only applies to new buildings or change of use.

Ms. Mary Wallworth commented that the owner indicated he could not make changes without permission from headquarters in Toronto. Ms. Charla Williams commented that they must be in compliance with all By-Laws that are in effect, no matter where they are located.

Councillor Murphy commented that he has brought the Universal Design of franchises to the Regional Planning Committees attention. The Chair commented that the problem is the change of use clause, as an older building can become another coffee shop and not be required to be accessible, the By-Law should be change of occupancy. Ms. Charla Williams advised that this could be brought forth for inclusion in the By-Law.

Mr. Terry Myer commented that Tim Hortons is not the only coffee shop that is not accessible and feels that Tim Hortons would respond favorably if a letter expressing the Committees concerns was sent.

Mr. Gus Reed indicated that HRM does issue building permits for most changes that they make. The American Disabilities Act requires business to spend a certain percentage of monies to make the business more accessible. Councillor Meade commented that HRM cannot force a business to do something before a regulation is in place. The Chair advised the Committee that it is US Federal Legislation that we do not have in Canada.

Ms. Meredith Hutchings commented that she did some research on what Committees in Ontario are doing. There is a precedent in Ontario that allows Municipalities to stipulate accessibility requirements when granting business licences. The Chair commented that the Committee had a working day with the NS Disabled Commission and nothing went forward.

Ms. Joanne Coffey suggested that Ms. Mary Wile write a letter to Tim Hortons and advise the Committee of any response she gets.

9.1.2 Self Management and Decision Making Workshop

Ms. Jen Powley advised the Committee that the Kendric Report Coalition received funding for a research project on what the best practices would be for self managed and supportive decision making services. The research is still continuing and they are conducting Town Halls in Sydney, Pictou, Wolfville and Yarmouth. There will be a final report and literature review. They are trying to get a model as to what kind of support is required.

9.1.3 Committee for Inclusive Transportation

Ms. Joanne Coffey commented that Lynn Demont and Jen Powley attended the forum last week. Mr. Dave McCusker and Mr. Larry Hilton were there to answer questions from the audience. There will be further meetings and followup. The Committee is also looking at sidewalks, snow removal and accessible taxis.

9.1.4 Impact Training Session May 27th 2005f

The Chair informed the Committee that the Canadian National Institute for the Blind provided an Impact Training Session to Transportation Services and Human Resource Services. The participants are blindfolded and taken out on the sidewalk to enable them to gain insight to the problems a blind person encounters while walking down the streets of HRM.

The Chair advised that he would like to send an invitation on behalf of the Committee to the Councillors and the Mayor. He asked for volunteers to assist in the redesigning of the workshop to include other disabilities. Joanne Coffey and Jen Powley volunteered.

A discussion ensued and it was suggested by Ms. Charla Williams that Committee Members advocate to get people to participate in the event, that the May 27 session be used as a pilot project, and that Council be invited to attend at a later date. She also suggested that HRM Diversity week is a good opportunity to invite Council.

Councillor Meade suggested that the workshop be held on a Tuesday to ensure a higher participation rate from Councillors. Councillor Murphy also advised that holding it on Tuesday would provide media coverage.

Councillor Meade suggested that the Councillors go outside in a wheelchair. The Chair and Ms. Charla Williams raised concern over providing wheelchairs due to potential harm.

Mr. Terry Myer asked for clarification as to what the session is trying to accomplish. The Chair commented that the original purpose is to make the Councillors aware of the problems and obstacles that persons with disabilities have and to provide a better understanding of why certain designs do not work. The point of including the Councillors is that Transportation Services is budget driven, when improvements and recommendations come before Council they will have a better understanding of the issue.

Councillor Mead commented that there are a lot of obstacles that HRM was not aware of such as curb cuts. At first there were no regulations for sidewalk cafes, which prevented wheelchair users from using sidewalks, because they were either not wide enough or there were no ramps.

Ms. Charla Williams commented that impact training does have a major impact. Halifax Regional Municipality does not want to be responsible for adding new barriers for persons with disabilities. The goal is to eliminate barriers.

Mr. Gus Reed suggested that the Chair invite Professor Kirby from Dalhousie University, who could bring some trained spotters for wheel chair activity, so that people would not get hurt. He also suggested that the Committee sponsor the workshop.

Committee members asked if the session was only to address blind people and wheelchair users as there are other types of disabilities. Mr. Patrick Harrington indicated that he was open to suggestions on obstacles that face other persons with disabilities and that the workshop has been a pedestrian travel session, and that he doesn't want the scope to be too broad. Mr. Terry Myer commented that it is a great opportunity to create awareness of many disabilities.

Ms. Charla Williams suggested a series of modules to address different issues. Councillor Meade also suggested that the media be invited to participate.

9.1.5 Opportunity for new members to speak

The Chair advised Committee members that it is important to contact the Legislative Assistant or himself at least one week prior to the next meeting if they have any questions or concerns that they would like to be addressed.

Ms. Meredith Baxter advised the Committee that some Municipalities have created an audit tool to determine how accessible an organization is, urban braille guidelines, and a procurement checklist for barrier free items.

The Chair advised the Committee that this has been suggested for HRM Business Units and it was not received favorably and suggested that the Committee explore this further.

Ms. Charla Williams requested that the website addresses be provided to the Legislative Assistant to circulate to the Committee.

9.2 ADDED ITEMS

9.2.1 Building barrier free building codes

Ms. Joanne Coffey advised the Committee that the subcommittee recommended that ten percent of all new public housing be accessible. The Building Code Advisory Committee was recommending five percent. Mr. Ed Thornhill had indicated that he was going to take the recommendation to the Building Code Advisory Committee.

Ms. Jen Powley advised that they are still waiting for it to go through the legislature and that they are recommending five percent.

Councillor Meade advised that the Province must pass the legislation before HRM can do anything. HRM can go above 5%, but they cannot go below it.

9.2.2 Led Traffic Signals

No discussion.

9.2.3 Metro Center Announcements

Ms. Betty MacDonald asked for an update on the concerns that the Committee had put forth in regards to the Metro Center providing a visual of announcements.

It was agreed that the Legislative Assistant will contact Scott Ferguson, Metro Center and get an update.

9.2.4 Stop Signs

Ms. Mary Wallworth raised concern over the placement of stop signs and asked why there were no crossing guards for the elderly. Ms Charla Williams advised that there must be a certain number of pedestrians and vehicles in order to justify the placement of a stop sign. Citizens can call the HRM call center at 490-4000 or speak to their Councillor. If it has been determined to be a problem area a stop sign would be placed. Crossing guards are provided for children and only during school hours.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting will be held on Monday, May 16, 2005, Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m..

Stephanie Parsons
Legislative Assistant