

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**MINUTES**

**November 21, 2005**

**PRESENT:**

Patrick Harrington, Chair  
Councillor Gary Meade  
Joeanne Coffey  
Mary Newcombe  
Jen Powley  
Councillor Patrick Murphy  
Meredith Hutchings  
Terry Myer  
Mary Wallworth  
Lynn DeMont

**REGRETS**

Gus "Warren" Reed, Vice Chair  
Betty Macdonald  
Jeff Wall  
Nancy Mann(Absent)

**STAFF:**

Ms. Charla Williams, Diversity Coordinator  
Ms. Holly Richardson, Community Coordinator, Recreation,  
Tourism and Culture  
Mr. Phil Townsend, Manager, Capital Projects, Real Property &  
Asset Management  
Ms. Stephanie Parsons, Legislative Assistant

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:06.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - August 15, 2005**

**MOVED BY Ms. Coffey, seconded by Councillor Meade, that the minutes of the August 15, 2005 meeting be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

Deletions

6.2.2 Regional Plan Update

**Moved by Ms. Coffey, seconded by Councillor Meade that item 6.2.1 be moved to the first order of business and item 4.1.2 the second order of business. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**MOVED BY Ms. Coffey, seconded by Ms. Newcombe, that the agenda be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**6.3.1 Cultural Plan Update**

C A document entitled HRM Cultural Plan dated November 21, 2005 was circulated to the Committee for information.

Ms. Holly Richardson, Community Developer, Recreation Tourism and Culture introduced herself to the Committee and advised that she will forward the draft policy document for the Committee's information.

She advised the Committee that staff has been working with community and stakeholders to develop the HRM Cultural Plan. Halifax Regional Council has asked for a focused cultural policy as they have been investing in cultural programs and facilities without a strategic policy. Staff has been working with community and stakeholders during the past six months to obtain input as to what HRM citizens value regarding culture. It has been determined that the cultural pillars of the plan will include the following:

C Arts, heritage, life long learning, diversity, economic development, community character and design.

The cultural pillars will allow the Cultural Plan to develop from a community perspective and maintain global competitiveness.

Five strategic directions have been identified:

1. Focused Service Delivery and Partnerships - The focus is on collaboration between the private sector and community. It involves integrating HRM's long term strategies into the Cultural Plan. This direction also will look at a multi-tiered funding model in order to support community organizations and to provide a more equitable approach in service delivery. The plan will include an investment strategy with deliverables, performance measurement and evaluation criteria.
2. Cultural Access and Equity - This direction involves ensuring the fair delivery of programs and ensuring that programs, services and infrastructure are accessible. One recommendation is to invest in a public art program to showcase local art and diversity.
3. Promote and Reinforce Community Character - This direction focuses on the development of a creative community strategy by identifying what makes HRM unique in order to promote and reinforce community character, including an integrated heritage strategy.
4. Life Long Learning and Creative Development - This direction has been identified as a top priority of the community. It is of the opinion that art's development for children and youth needs to be available in the public school system.
6. Investment and Promotion - The Cultural Plan is a ten-year plan with a multi sector strategy.

In response to questions from the Committee Ms. Richardson clarified that:

- C The policy document is a 10-year plan.
- C The plan does not specifically define culture, it identified seven pillars which will form the scope of the plan.
- C The Cultural Plan is being developed in consultation with other HRM business units and Committees. The Regional Plan and Immigration Action Plan have a cultural component.

The Cultural Plan is not an urban plan, and it recognizes suburban and rural communities. Although the Capital District is an important factor of the plan and there is a need for facilities, she will review the Cultural Plan and ensure that it does not reflect an urban plan.

In response to Councillor Murphy, Ms. Richardson advised that there has been a low participation rate of persons with disabilities at the Cultural Cafes. Councillor Murphy suggested that she hold specific workshops for persons with disabilities. Ms. Richardson advised that she was in touch with the Canadian Paraplegic Association who has provided a lot of input. Staff recognizes that they are missing input from a variety of groups and would like to increase participation but are restrained by available resources.

Ms. Coffey advised that the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Society may provide a variety of perspectives and suggested that she contact Betty Macdonald.

#### **4.1.2 Accessibility City Hall**

Mr. Phil Townsend, Manager, Capital Projects, Real Property and Asset Management introduced himself to the Committee. He advised the Committee of the following:

- C All new HRM facilities are accessible and meet building code requirements. New facilities with more than one storey are required to have an elevator as part of the design.
- C The challenge is trying to bring old buildings up to current accessible standards. There are limitations due to the structure of the buildings. There are additional restrictions with City Hall because it is a national historic site.
- C It is to his understanding that the size of the elevator and size of washrooms are issues. The cost of addressing the washroom issues is approximately \$20,000. It will form part of his proposed budget for 2006-2007. He advised that although accessibility is important there may be other competing priorities such as repair and maintenance which is required to make the facilities functional.
- C He advised that City Hall has more access compared to most buildings. However, due to its wood frame there are construction limitations to make the washrooms and elevators larger. He asked the Committee if there is an alternative such as having a courtesy wheelchair available for those whose scooters are too large for the existing elevators or washroom, he understands that this is an imposition but may help overcome some of the barriers. He commented that he would like to have all buildings equally accessible however there are other considerations such as restrictions on heritage buildings, cost, capacity and the structure of the building.

Ms. Coffey commented that she would like to have an official accessibility audit by an outside consultant of City Hall and suggested that Mr. Townsend contact Cynthia Street.

Mr. Townsend advised that he will contact her to determine what would be involved in conducting an audit of HRM's older facilities. He further advised that if his current budget has the capacity to conduct an audit this year he will do so. Otherwise he will recommend that an audit of HRM's facilities be done in the next budget year with City Hall being a priority, bearing in mind that the audit must be balanced against other competing resources.

Mr. Myer suggested that rather than spend \$ 20,000 on replacing doors that it maybe more cost effective to build another washroom. Mr. Townsend advised that could be an option. However, it does not appear to be available space. Councillor Murphy concurred that it maybe better to build a new washroom.

Councillor Meade advised that the elevator meets the Department of Labor's regulations. It cost approximately \$200,000 to upgrade the elevators in 1985 and would cost approximately \$500,000 to upgrade them today. One of the issues is that the scooters and wheelchairs are being made larger.

Ms. Williams commented that there is a requirement for more visible signage and a braille sign. She further advised that even if a ramp is made in front of City Hall that she is not sure if large wheelchairs and scooters can fit through the gate. She commented that a professional consultant should be contacted before doing any work.

#### **4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES/STATUS SHEET ITEMS**

##### **4.1 Status Sheet**

##### **4.1.1 Terms of References**

**MOVED BY Ms. Coffey, seconded by Ms. Newcombe that the motion of August 18 is withdrawn: That the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities recommends that Regional Council amend the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities Terms of Reference to set the quorum for regular meetings at six (6). MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**MOVED BY Ms. Coffey, seconded by Mr. Myer that the Advisory Committees for Persons with Disabilities recommend that Regional Council amend the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities Terms of Reference to set the membership to eight residents and two councillors for a maximum of 10 members. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS**

**5.1 Accessibility - Donut Machine**

This item was deferred as Ms. Powley left the meeting.

**6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS**

**6.1 Correspondence - None**

**6.2 Petitions - None**

**6.3 Presentations**

**6.3.1 Cultural Plan Update - See page 3**

**6.3.2 Regional Plan Update - This item was deferred.**

**2. REPORTS**

**7.1 Advisory Committee for persons with Disabilities Annual Report of Council**

The Chair advised that the report is not ready at this time.

**7.2 Meeting Schedule 2006**

The Committee accepted the meeting schedule for 2006-2007.

**7.3 Meeting Locations**

Ms. Coffey suggested that the Committee reconsider meeting in Halifax Hall. After a brief discussion the Committee agreed to continue meeting in City Hall.

**7.4 Appointment to Taxi Committee**

The Committee agreed to defer this item until the appointment of new members to the Committee.

8. **ADDED ITEMS**

9. **NEXT MEETING DATE** - January 16, 2006.

**MOVED BY Ms. Coffey seconded by Councillor Meade that the meeting of December 19, 2005 be cancelled. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

10. **ADJOURNMENT** - The meeting was adjourned at 5.46 p.m.

Stephanie Parsons  
Legislative Assistant