

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
MINUTES**

June 18, 2007

PRESENT:

- Mr. Alan Farquhar
- Mr. Gary Russell
- Mr. Kevin Bulley
- Ms. Sanaz Gerami
- Ms. Rebecca King
- Ms. Helen McFadyen
- Councillor Gary Meade

REGRETS:

- Councillor Patrick Murphy
- Ms. Mary Newcombe
- Ms. Helen Cianfaglione
- Superintendent Cliff Falkenham

STAFF:

- Mr. Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant
- Ms. Jan Gibson, Municipal Clerk
- Ms. Chrissy White, Legislative Assistant

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CALL TO ORDER	3
2.	INTRODUCTIONS	3
3.	APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - May 28, 2007	3
4.	APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS	3
5.	REPORTS	3
5.1	Urban Design and Accessibility- Andy Fillmore	4
5.2	Accessibility Audit- Phil Townsend	4
6.	CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS	5
6.1	Verbal Update re: Metro Transit Priority Seating and Etiquette- Paul Beauchamp/Paul McDaniel	5
7.	CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS	6
7.1	Response to letter by Mr. Alan Ruffman re: Harbour Solutions Project and Accessibility- Brad Angusih	7
8.	BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES	7
8.1	Sidewalk Café Update re: Spring Garden Road and Robie Street- Phil Francis	7
8.2	Wheel Chair Simulation update- Laughlin Rutt	8
9.	ADDED ITEMS	8
10.	NEXT MEETING DATE - July 16, 2007	8
11.	ADJOURNMENT	8

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. in Halifax Hall, 2nd floor, City Hall.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

Committee Members announced their attendance for the benefit of visually impaired members.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOVED by Councillor Meade, seconded by Mr. Russell, that the minutes from May 28, 2007 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

Additions:

5. Terms of Reference recommendation to Regional Council- Ms. Jan Gibson, Municipal Clerk

9.1 Discussion re: Task Force on Cross Walk Safety submission.

MOVED by Mr. Bulley, Seconded by Ms. King, that the order of business be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. REPORTS

Terms of Reference Recommendation to Regional Council- May 28, 2007

Ms. Jan Gibson, Municipal Clerk provided clarification regarding the recommendation to Regional Council to amend the terms of reference to include no less than six meetings per year. She advised that the terms allow the committee to meet as many times during the year as necessary, noting that the four meeting suggestion is an open ended guideline that is consistent with other committees in HRM. She recommended that the committee move a motion that would accommodate the members for their term, but will not put the stipulation on future committees.

MOVED by Ms. Gerami, seconded by Mr. Bulley, that the sitting members of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities meet at least 6 times per year including the summer months. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5.1 Urban Design and Accessibility

- A document titled “What is HRMbyDesign” was circulated
- A document titled “ Urban Design Vision Statement” was circulated

Mr. Andy Fillmore, Project Manager, Urban Design provided an overview on above noted:

- The urban design project stemmed from a recommendation out of the Regional Plan,
- Urban Design will foster high quality, sustainable and predictable development,
- The project will provide a clear vision of what the city will look like,
- The project aims to create compelling public spaces,
- Urban Design will create incentives for quality design,
- The project is largely guided by the Urban Design Task Force which is a volunteer Committee of Council,
- The Task Force is the voice to Regional Council regarding Urban Design,
- The study area is the “Regional Centre” which is a geographic boundary outlined in the Regional Plan,
- Council has adopted the phase 1 outcomes,
- The urban design project will consist of 6-7 phases,
- The vision statement outlines the mandate of the project,
- The importance of accessibility and movement is outlined in the vision statement where it states “ The Regional Centre, in all ways, should be conducive to, and supportive of, active transportation movement. It should provide people with choices that are viable alternatives to driving.” The vision statement continues by stating “All streets should present an inviting barrier-free environment that considers the comfort, convenience, safety and visual interest of pedestrians.”
- Public realm design is the focus.

Mr. Rutt, Diversity Consultant advised that he is very pleased to see accessibility highlighted in the vision statement and the overall plans.

5.2 Accessibility Audit

Mr. Phillip Townsend, Manager, Capital Projects, Transportation and Public Works was in attendance to address questions on the above noted.

Mr. Townsend advised that he has worked with the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities in the past to conduct an accessibility audit on City Hall. He noted that this task was accomplished by hiring a consultant.

Mr. Townsend further advised:

- Accessibility was re-worked in the washrooms and throughout City Hall,
- Due to the historical nature of City Hall, the elevator does not permit all motorized vehicles. This project would be financially and structurally difficult to accomplish,
- Park and playground construction and renovations fall under the Capital Projects business unit,
- Building Codes and By-laws mandate accessibility, and staff accommodate those regulations wherever possible,
- HRM owns and operates 250 buildings where the majority pre-date accessibility upgrading codes,
- Some buildings are extremely difficult to modify,
- Staff make every effort to accommodate accessibility for HRM facilities that house a high level of public traffic,

Mr. Townsend advised that he would like the Committee to outline specific areas throughout HRM that need improvements and provide Capital Projects with a list.

Committee Members provided their comments on the above noted.

- In response to Councillor Meads suggestion to implement more accessible playgrounds in HRM, Mr. Townsend advised that Capital Projects is investigating options to implement more accessible playgrounds that would mimic the design of the Westmount playground project.
- Mr. Farquhar advised that there needs to be a priority list created to outline facilities that need improvements. He noted that this should be a discussion item on the next agenda.
- Mr. Rutt advised that he had received requests regarding what buildings in HRM are accessible and suggested that a list be created for public information.
- Mr. Townsend suggested renting an Access-A-Bus and taking a tour of the city to outline what buildings need improvements. He noted that the Building Code is a difficult standard that is hard to meet for older buildings.
- Ms. McFadyen advised that she would like a chart system that outlines what accessibilities are available to persons with disabilities before they venture out.
- Mr. Townsend advised that the Corporate Call Centre could be provided with information regarding street closures. He suggested engaging a consultant to determine what small accessible upgrades could be performed, and to help identify and determine the degrees of accessibility in HRM buildings,
- Councillor Meade advised of some areas in HRM that have been made accessible,
- Mr. Townsend advised that very few of HRM trails are accessible, but some of these areas have accessible features. He suggested creating a database to outline problem areas and rate them from most important to least important.
- Mr. Townsend advised that highly public buildings do take accessibility into consideration when creating a focus for signage, renovations and moving.

The Committee agreed to re-visit this issue at the July 16th, 2007 meeting to

brainstorm and make a recommendation to staff.

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

6.1 Verbal Update re: Metro Transit Priority Seating and Etiquette

Mr. Paul McDaniel, General Manager, Transit Services provided an overview on the above noted. He advised:

- Ridership has increased by 9%,
- HRM does not have the ability to meet the dynamic growth as the demand would double the budget,
- The region faces challenges regarding expectation as Metro Transit is only now meeting the 1998 service levels,
- 600,000 service hours were clocked in 2006
- Every time a bus route is extended, the service hours are extended,
- Metro Transit drivers do not enforce policies determining disability due to safety concerns,
- Persons with disabilities must follow the same rules as people without disabilities,
- Employees will not physically move anyone out of their seats,
- Metro Transit is moving toward a 100% accessible fleet,
- Transit will need an additional \$ 20 million to meet the 2007 suggested requirements,
- No customer should be treated poorly by a Transit operator,
- Existing drivers do not get training due to funding issues and replacement of drivers; six new positions would have to be created to accommodate the service for training,
- A program is being developed for remedial training,

Committee Members provided comments on the above noted, advising of the following:

- Some transit drivers have no training in the recognition of canes and proper etiquette regarding persons with disabilities,
- Low floor buses are a great service and the Committee should promote their benefits,

In response to questions raised by Committee Members, Mr. McDaniel advised:

- Metro transit will implement signs that threaten prosecution for violating laws regarding violent behavior,
- A consultant could be engaged to review criteria improvements,
- Access-A-Bus now services dialysis patients and alternatives are being explored to accommodate the increased need,
- Lunch and learn workshops may be an option,

Mr, McDaniel advised that he would like the Committee to provide suggestions regarding options for increasing etiquette and training of Metro Transit drivers.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS

7.1 Response to letter by Mr. Alan Ruffman re: Harbour Solutions Project and Accessibility

- A Letter from Mr. Ruffman, Geomarine Associates was before the Committee.
- A PowerPoint presentation was before the Committee.

Mr. Craig Campbell, Harbour Solutions provided an overview on the above noted where the following points were made:

- The Harbour Solutions project will cost \$265 million in capital funds,
- The project encompasses the site from the McKay Bridge to Woodside,
- The corner of Inglis Street and Barrington Street is a huge challenge ranging \$3 million in cost,
- The work started three years ago when the hose main was installed on Barrington street through Inglis and South Street,
- The work around the intersection (Inglis and Barrington) consists of a new pumping station and a combined specialty sewer overflow,
- The project also consists of diversion piping and the re-configuration of the intersection.

Mr. Deveaux, Consultant, Harbour Solutions used a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate areas that are causing accessibility problems. The pictures illustrated the calibre of the construction and the remedy to the problem. He noted that the sidewalk has been reinstated at the corner of Barrington and Inglis Street.

Mr. Campbell advised that all projects are required to follow HRM standards, and Harbour solutions is required to provide accessibility wherever possible.

Committee Members provided comments on the above noted where the following points were made:

Ms. McFadyen suggested implementing a standard to make an individual available to assist persons with disabilities when manoeuvring around Harbour Solutions sites.

Mr. Campbell advised that HRM has spoken with the developer (Dexter), and they advised that they do assist people when necessary.

It was noted that temporary asphalt would be better for temporary sidewalks.

The Committee thanked the Harbour Solutions staff for their presentation.

8. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

8.1 Sidewalk Café Update re: Spring Garden Road and Robie Street

Mr. Phil Francis, Manager, Right-of-Way Services advised that the Lord Nelson property houses three private cafes; MacDonald's, Gatsby's and Spring Garden News. He noted that after analysing the site, the cafes comply with regulations.

8.2 Wheel Chair Simulation Update

- A document titled "Evaluation Form" was before the Committee.
- A document titled "Rules and Regulations" was before the Committee.
- A document titled "Public Relations Briefing" was before the Committee.

Mr. Rutt advised that the Wheelchair Simulation will take place on June 26th, 2007 from 10 a.m to 3 p.m outside of City Hall. He advised that Corporate Communications has been contacted to help with media relations.

9. ADDED ITEMS

9.1 Crosswalk Safety Task Force Submission

This item was deferred to the July 16th 2007 meeting.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities will be July 16, 2007 at 4:00 p.m. in Halifax Hall, 2nd Floor, City Hall.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Chrissy White
Legislative Assistant