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1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair asked members of the committee to announce their presence for the benefit of visually impaired members.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOVED by Mr. Russell, seconded by Ms. King, that the minutes from June 18th, 2007 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

MOVED by Ms. Newcombe, seconded by Mr. Bulley, that the order of business be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. REPORTS

5.1 Accessibility Issues in HRM- Presentation by Mr. Allan Ruffman, Geomarine Associates

- A letter dated June 20, 2007 from Mr. Ruffman was before the committee.

Mr. Ruffman, HRM Resident was in attendance to address the Committee regarding various accessibility issues in HRM. He advised:

- Each time a development is proposed, a HRM staff person should be assigned to address accessibility questions and issues,
- The wheelchair ramp at the Lord Nelson Hotel is not easy to manoeuver,
- Wheelchair accessibility is poor on the Macdonald Bridge, especially on the Barrington Street harbour side as half the sidewalk is gravel,
- The east side of Barrington Street is hard travel through,
- The Barrington Street Superstore has no sidewalk and is dangerous for persons in wheelchairs and who are visually impaired,
- A large puddle/pot hole in front of the West End Mall makes it difficult to travel through the parking lot. Mr. Ruffman advised that because the West End Mall is private property, HRM is not responsible for this repair. He encouraged the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities to write a letter to the

- management of the West End Mall to address the problem,
- The placement of large construction signs on sidewalks makes it very difficult for persons with disabilities to manoeuvre,
- There is no markings or ramp at the south end of Robie and Coburg Streets,
- No crosswalk at the foot of Prince Street,
- HRM buses are accessible, but the information on the buses (pamphlets, schedules) is not,
- Public telephones are not accessible,
- Salter Street right-of-way to the waterfront is no longer accessible since the sewer outfall repair.

Committee Members provided comments on Mr. Ruffman's presentation, advising:

Ms. McFadyen expressed concern regarding the distance between the bus stops and large chain stores in shopping venues like Bayer's Lake. She noted that the large size of the parking lots make it very difficult for visually impaired persons to access the stores safely.

Mr. Russell advised that Access- A- bus will stop in front of any requested retail store. He noted that an additional Access-A-Bus route will be created for the Bayer's Lake area before Christmas.

Councillor Meade advised that development in Bayer's Lake is as- of- right, and HRM can not enforce accessibility regulations.

Mr. Ruffman advised that public relations should be a part of the development agreement process to advise how to retrofit big business development to address the legislative changes that need to occur to make private property comply with accessibility regulations. He further advised that accessibility should be implemented into the development agreement process before the development is created. He noted that most buildings are accessible, but the route to get to the building is not.

Mr. Russell advised that most private businesses do not lay sidewalks because they do not want to have to replace them if another business decides to develop next door. Most big businesses wait until an entire development is complete before they lay sidewalks, and this could take years.

MOVED by Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor Meade, that there be comment back from staff on the items addressed in Mr. Ruffman's letter dated June 20, 2007 by the September 2007 meeting. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Ms. McFadyen, seconded by Ms. Newcombe, that HRM staff initiate a study to address accessibility issues in the main shopping complexes, and coordinate relations with business owners to educate them on the accessibility needs. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5.2 Sandwich Boards

- A document titled “ By-Law Number S-800 -Respecting Requirements for the Licencing of Temporary Signs” was circulated.
- A pamphlet titled “ A Guide to the Temporary Sign By-law” was before the committee.

Ms. Sharon Bond, Manager, Subdivision and Land Use Compliance provided an overview on the above noted, advising:

- The By- law S-800 requires all sandwich boards on private and public property to acquire a licence at an \$80.00 fee,
- A criteria determines who can acquire a licence,
- Business improvement districts have been notified of the licencing requirement and they are responsible to inform businesses within their districts,
- The administration of the by-law has recently begun,
- Business owners must display a sticker so that citizens can see that the area is properly licenced,
- Five Community Standards Officers will administer and enforce the By-law
- The focus has been on temporary sign complaints,
- In the next three weeks, Community Standards Officers will go door to door to provide an information package for those who are not complying. Offenders will then be given the chance to licence,
- The goal is to educate and then enforce,
- Public Liability Insurance is a necessity if a sandwich board is in a HRM right of way,
- The licence is revokable,
- Fines range from \$250.00 to \$10,000,
- Safety issues are given preference in enforcement.

Councillor Murphy questioned what regulation HRM has over free newspaper boxes. Ms. Bond advised that Mr. Phil Francis, Manager, Right of Way could respond.

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

6.1 Accessibility Audit- list of recommended areas that need work

Mr. Rutt advised that he has been in contact with Mr. Phil Townsend to discuss some information received from Councillor Meade regarding a list of wheelchair accessible facilities.

The Committee made suggestions regarding a accessibility audit, noting:

- HRM does not have a proper inventory of its real estate,
- A tool should be created so that people can search the HRM website for accessible facilities,
- Staff could conduct research following a template of criteria to outline particular amenities found in HRM facilities (i.e. wheelchair accessible bathrooms, elevators). This could be done by conducting a review of HRM owned properties,
- A check list giving dimensions for accessibility should be created,
- More information must be provided so that people can make safe and appropriate decisions before venturing out,
- Construction announcements should announced on the website to inform persons with disabilities of any changes to the site,
- Reference stakeholders databases (i.e Canadian Paraplegic Association) to help mold the template and criteria,
- A summer student could be hired on a grant to do the measuring and inventory,

MOVED by Mr. Bulley, seconded by Ms. Newcombe, that the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities create a check list/template outlining accessible amenities in HRM facilities. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Rutt advised that he would contact the Canadian Institute for the Blind and other stakeholders to gain their perspective on this initiative.

The Committee suggested inviting Mr. Phillip Townsend, Manager, Capital Projects to the September meeting to discuss options and budget.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS

7.1 Crosswalk Safety Task Force submission

Mr. Rutt advised that he will be meeting with Ms. McFadyen and Mr. Farquhar to draft the written submission to the Crosswalk Safety Task Force. He noted that the submission should be complete by the August 20th, 2007 meeting for review by the committee.

7.2 Memo re: Ped Ramps at Duke and Argyle Street

- A Memorandum dated July 5, 2007 from Mr. Dave Hubley, Manager, Design and Construction was before the committee.

Mr. Rutt advised that he is pleased to see that Operations Staff will be adjusting Ped Ramps on Duke and Argyle street on the Committee's suggestion.

8. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

8.1 Wheelchair Simulation update

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES 7 July 16, 2007

Mr. Rutt advised that the simulation had to be cancelled due to a scheduling conflict with a last minute Committee of the Whole Council session. He noted that the simulation will be postponed until September.

9. **ADDED ITEMS**- None

10. **NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities will be August 20, 2007 from 4:00-6:00 p.m. in Halifax hall, 2nd floor, City Hall.

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Chrissy White
Legislative Assistant