

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
MINUTES**

January 21, 2008

PRESENT:

Mr. Alan Farquhar, Chair
Mr. Gary Russell
Ms. Mary Newcombe
Ms. Rebecca King
Ms. Helen McFadyen
Ms. Helen Cianfaglione
Ms. Sanaz Gerami
Mr. Tom Boyd
Councillor Mary Wile

ABSENT:

Ms. Joanne Coffey (with regrets)
Councillor Patrick Murphy (with regrets)
Mr. Phil Francis, Right of Way Engineering Manager

STAFF:

Superintendent Cliff Falkenham, HRP
Mr. Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant
Ms. Sandra Riley, Legislative Assistant

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by Mr. Gary Russell, Vice-Chair, in the Media Room, 1st Floor, City Hall.

2. **INTRODUCTIONS**

Mr. Russell asked members of the committee to announce their presence for the benefit of visually impaired members.

3. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

MOVED by Ms. McFadyen, seconded by Ms. Cianfaglione that the minutes from November 19, 2007 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

4.1 **Elect Mr. Gary Russell as representative to the Taxi and Limousine Committee**

Mr. Russell clarified that the previous representative was no longer on this committee so he volunteered to be that replacement . He stated that he went to the January meeting and would like to be appointed to the Taxi and Limousine Committee as representative for the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities. Discussion followed regarding status of the Taxi and Limousine Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Wile, seconded by Ms. Newcombe, that Mr. Gary Russell would be the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities' representative to the Taxi and Limousine Committee. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Additions:

- 9.1 **Guide and Service Dog Run for HRM - Proposal**
- 9.2 **Request for Metro Transit to announce all major and requested stops along bus routes**
- 9.3 **Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson**
- 9.4 **Curb-Cuts - Snowplowing and Sidewalk Corners.**

MOVED by Mr. Russell, seconded by Ms. McFadyen that the order of business, as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5. **REPORTS** None

6. **CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS** None

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS

7.1 Hybrid Automobiles

Ms. McFadyen advised that by the end of January there will be a Halifax chapter of *Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians*.

Committee members and Staff remarked that they had not realized the problem(s) involving hybrid automobiles until reading the letter submitted by Mr. John Rae, 1st Vice President of the Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians.

A discussion followed in agreement with Mr. Rae's submission and possible solutions to this issue that concerns persons with and without disabilities. It was pointed out that these vehicles would also be a great risk to children.

Ms. King inquired as to whether the manufacturers of these vehicles have been made aware. Ms. McFadyen responded that many options have been discussed but the public needs to be made more aware of the dangers of the hybrid automobiles to encourage manufacturers to do the necessary adaptations. Mr. Boyd remarked on the dangers for all pedestrians of these automobiles when in reverse. Superintendent Falkenham advised there needs to be manufacturing standards for sound emissions.

Mr. Rutt pointed out that the Mayor submitted Mr. Rae's letter to the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities for the Committee's advice. He added that Council should contact the auto manufacturers to voice concern on behalf of the citizens of Halifax. He stated the decision is to whether the Committee should suggest to the Mayor that Council should be advised that this is a concern of Persons with Disabilities and the manufacturers should be contacted.

Mr. Rutt further advised that this letter to the Mayor and Council should come from the Chair of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities with the recommendation of the Committee.

MOVED by Ms. Newcombe, seconded by Ms. McFadyen, that the Committee Chair will submit a letter to the Mayor and Council requesting a letter to various automobile manufacturers to deal with hybrid vehicles as per the letter submitted by Mr. John Rae. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

8. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES None

9. ADDED ITEMS

9.1 Guide and Service Dog Run for HRM

Mr. Farquhar mentioned that when this concern had been raised in the past, Mr. Phil

Townsend referred it to the 'Off-leash Committee'. Ms. McFadyen advised that Mr. Townsend had requested a re-draft of the proposal as he was worried about certain criteria that was in the original proposal. She stated that she has made the revisions suggested. Councillor Wile suggested Mr. John Charles be contacted regarding this issue. She shared that Mr. Robert Tupper, who has hearing impairments, gave a presentation and requested, on several occasions, a special run for service dogs. She asserted that Mr. Charles is aware of this concern. A discussion ensued covering the concerns and recommendations made in the circulated proposal. Mr. Farquhar advised that he would draft the cover letter for the proposal and have it submitted to Mr. John Charles, Real Property Planning.

9.2 Request to Metro Transit to announce major and requested stops along bus routes.

Mr. Russell suggested Ms. McFadyen submit an email to him (Mr. Russell is Chairperson of the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee for Metro Transit) as he would have a meeting with Metro Transit in the following week. He stated it would go through his Supervisor to regular conventional transit.

The Human Rights issue was raised observing that in Toronto, it has been ruled that all streetcars/buses/subways for Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) announce every stop. Ottawa has the same ruling. It was clarified that the GPS system has been linked to the audio systems on the buses so the driver does not have to announce the stops. Mr. Russell advised that , so far this has only been completed on the Access-a-Buses in the HRM. Ms. McFadyen asserted that whether it is automated or not, the stops need to be announced on Metro Transit.

Mr. Rutt advised that this has been a Human Rights case in other provinces and suggested having someone in Legal Services attend the next meeting and advise on what the nature of those complaints were and how to take preventative measures. It was pointed out that announcing the stops is not only a Human Rights issue for those with disabilities, but a service useful to all.

Another issue raised was that the drivers should have Diversity Training in Customer Relations. Drivers are not educated or knowledgeable regarding adaptability equipment ie. White canes, service dogs, dark glasses and other equipment.

Mr. Farquhar made the motion to request Legal Council.

MOVED by Ms. McFadyen, seconded by Mr. Russell, that the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities request Legal Services for HRM to look into recent Human Rights cases dealing with issues concerning buses. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

9.3 Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

As per the Terms of Reference for the Committee, a new Chairperson and Vice-

Chairperson were elected in this first meeting of the new year. Mr. Farquhar opted not to be re-instated as Chair and offered to stand as Vice-Chair if there were no other nominees.

MOVED by Ms. Helen McFadyen, seconded by Councillor Mary Wile, that Ms. Helen McFadyen be nominated for position of Chair. MOTION PUT AND PASSED .

There were no further nominations. Ms McFadyen was declared Chair for 2008.

MOVED by Ms. Helen Cianfaglione, seconded by Ms. Rebecca King, that Mr. Gary Russell be nominated for the position of Vice-Chair. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Mr. Russell accepted the nomination to retain the position of Vice-Chair of the Committee.

Mr. Russell was declared Vice-Chair for 2008.

9.4 Curb-Cuts - Snow Plowing for Sidewalk Corners.

Discussion followed with observations of not being able to access the sidewalks as a result of snowplows piling snow on sidewalks and not widening a way allowing an accessible path to the sidewalk corners from the street. It was observed that private persons clear their pathways providing curb-cuts while the City clears sidewalks but does not always provide the access through curb-cuts needed for persons with disabilities or with adaptability equipment, such as scooters and wheelchairs. Ms. McFadyen suggested that the committee should write a letter regarding this concern.

Councillor Wile advised that there are different area rates to be paid to have sidewalks cleared in different locations . She clarified that any main thoroughfares are covered by the City. She stated that private contractors will go into 'side streets' and do these sidewalks.

It was decided that the Committee Chair will send a letter to the Staff representative in charge of snow removal, Denis Huck, Manager, Transportation and Public Works, Municipal Operations. In this letter, the representative will be invited to attend the next meeting, which will give the opportunity to offer a report on any progress made over the past month.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities will be February 18, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. in Halifax Hall, 2nd floor, City Hall.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:00pm.

Sandra Riley
Legislative Assistant