

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
MINUTES
MARCH 22, 2010**

PRESENT: Mr. Tom Boyd, Chair
Ms. Theresa Horwill, Vice Chair
Councillor Mary Wile
Councillor Jerry Blumenthal
Mr. Gary Russell
Ms. Mary Newcombe
Mr. Troy Nauffts

REGRETS: Ms. Helen McFadyen
Mr. Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant

STAFF: Mr. Phillip Townsend, Director, Infrastructure and Asset
Management
Supt. Cliff Falkenham, HRP
Ms. Krista Tidgwell, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:57 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - February 22, 2010

MOVED by Councillor Jerry Blumenthal, seconded by Ms. Theresa Horwill, that the minutes of February 22, 2010, as presented, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Additions:

- 8.1 Troy Nauffts - Visually-Impaired Safe Travel Advocates (VISTA) Committee re: Request to Participate in a Meeting of Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities

MOVED by Ms. Mary Newcombe, seconded by Councillor Mary Wile, that the Order of Business, as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING/DEFERRED ITEMS

4.1 Committee Representative Appointment to the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee

During a brief discussion, the Committee agreed to discuss Items 4.1 and 4.2 under one item and vote on the following motions:

The following motion was deferred from the February 22, 2010 meeting:

MOVED by Ms. Theresa Horwill, seconded by Ms. Helen McFadyen, that the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities extend Mr. Gary Russell's term as a Committee Representative to the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee for the 2010 term. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The following motion was deferred from the February 22, 2010 meeting:

MOVED by Ms. Theresa Horwill, seconded by Ms. Helen McFadyen, that the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities extend Mr. Tom Boyd's term as a Committee Representative to the Active Transportation Advisory Committee for the 2010 term. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4.1.1 Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule & Terms of Reference

During the February 22, 2010 meeting, the Committee requested a copy of the Taxi and

Limousine Advisory Committee's meeting schedule and Terms of Reference. Copies of the documents were before the Committee for review.

4.1.2 Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee - Update from the Committee's March 11, 2010 Meeting

- A memo from Gary Russell re: Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee March 11, 2010 meeting, was before the Committee as an information update.

4.1.3 Review of Questions raised by the Committee re: Taxi Concerns

- A draft list of the Committee's taxi concerns and questions was before the Committee for review.

Following a brief discussion, it was **MOVED by Ms. Mary Newcombe, seconded by Councillor Jerry Blumenthal, that the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities forward the list of the Committee's taxi concerns and questions to Derek Mathers, Taxi Broker and Member of the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee, to provide his comments for the Committee's April meeting.**

In response to a clarification question raised by Councillor Wile, Mr. Russell advised that there is no limit to the number of taxi licenses for accessible taxis; however, this does not apply to regular taxi licenses. Accessible taxis are limited to only accessible fares and are not permitted to pick up regular fares. Mr. Russell noted that he had spoken with a taxi operator who had indicated that there is a difference in cost of approximately \$6,000 to upgrade to an accessible taxi. He commented that there was a \$5,000 to \$6,000 grant available two years ago to individuals who wanted to upgrade their taxi to an accessible taxi; however, he could not confirm if this is still available and indicated that this would be a good question to ask Mr. Mathers during the April meeting.

Superintendent Falkenham and Mr. Russell suggested an option of having sponsors for accessible taxis.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4.2 Committee Representative Appointment to the Active Transportation Advisory Committee

Discussed under Item 4.1, see page 3.

4.2.1 Active Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule & Terms of Reference

During the February 22, 2010 meeting, the Committee requested a copy of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee's meeting schedule and Terms of Reference. Copies of the documents were before the Committee for review.

4.3 2010 Work Plan (*verbal update from staff*)

- The 2010 Committee of Council Annual Work Plan for the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities was before the Committee.

Phillip Townsend, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management, provided an update to the Committee, noting that at the end of the fiscal year items that have been completed will be removed from the list. Highlights were as follows:

- accessible door operators have been installed at the entrance of Acadia School; costs were paid out through HRM's operating, which has no impact on the Committee's funds
- Staff are reviewing the possibility of installing door operators on the lower parking lot of Alderney Gate
- a Noland Lift was ordered in January 2010 for Bedford Lions Pool and is awaiting delivery
- the Bowls Arena accessibility work is complete
- the Cole Harbour lift is complete
- the Creighton Community Centre's new steps, railings and disability parking upgrades were to be completed January 2010
- the Creighton Community Centre doors and ramps are complete
- the George Dixon Centre accessibility upgrades to the doors is complete
- the Fairbanks accessibility work is complete
- the Halifax/Dartmouth Ferry Terminals' audio signals have been installed and the length of the time and message is looped and adjustable; the message is set for every 15 seconds as requested by Metro Transit Ferry Operations and repeats approximately 8 times; on the Halifax side the message indicates which ferry is leaving (Alderney or Woodside) to avoid confusion
- the Point Pleasant Park accessible washroom upgrades have commenced effective March 1, 2010
- the Service Dog Park has been completed
- \$50,000 worth of upgrades will be done to the Spryfield Lions Arena; wheelchair accessible washrooms are in the design phase and the drawings have been approved; a Request for Proposal will be sent out April 1st; upgrades include: washrooms, ramps, a viewing area for spectators and parking lot

Gary Russell asked whether door operators have been installed in the Spryfield Lions Arena. Mr. Townsend indicated that he was not sure and would look into this and report back at the next meeting.

Mr. Townsend indicated that he is in receipt of a request submitted by Councillor Wile from the Centennial Arena for \$1,853.20, taxes included, to install a wheelchair ramp with a handrail to make the building more accessible.

MOVED by Councillor Jerry Blumenthal, seconded by Ms. Theresa Horwill, that the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities provide \$1,853.20 to the

Centennial Arena to install a wheel chair ramp with a handrail. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Mr. Townsend advised that the Committee has approximately \$150,000 to \$160,000 available in the budget.

Mr. Townsend indicated that staff has been in contact with Councillor Blumenthal in regard to long term plans for the Needham Centre. Once staff has determined what is in the facility master plan, then discussions can start regarding the facility's accessibility.

Mr. Boyd commented that City Hall needs to acquire better doors to access the building.

Mr. Russell asked whether the metal lip on the door could be rounded on the City Hall Argyle Street door. He requested a curb cut out by the main door to City Hall, noting that staff had already indicated this was not possible due to loss of sidewalk. He noted that there is a curb cut across the street from City Hall on Argyle Street. He commented that the sidewalk should not be affected and would only lose four rows of bricks. He expressed concern that in the winter time the portion of the sidewalk is not cleared and the only access to City Hall is the driveway. Mr. Townsend advised that he thought staff's concern was putting a curb cut too close to the corner of Argyle Street. He advised that he would review this option again and report back to the Committee at the next meeting.

Mr. Boyd suggested the Committee continue to encourage residents to bring forward their concerns and suggestions regarding accessibility issues.

Mr. Nauffts noted that he is the president of the Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians (AEBBC) and he had asked the members of the organization if they had any suggestions. It was suggested that HRM could paint yellow lines on the edge of steps to the main entrance of City Hall to provide better depth perception for visually impaired persons.

MOVED by Mr. Troy Nauffts, seconded by Ms. Theresa Horwill, that the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities request staff's consideration regarding painting yellow lines on the edge of the steps of the main entrance of City Hall to provide better depth perception for visually impaired persons and report back to the Committee. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Mr. Townsend advised that he would look into this and see if there are any issues around painting yellow lines on the City Hall steps.

Councillor Wile raised concern with respect to a request she had made to put in a curb cut to allow people in wheelchairs to access a private path that leads to the main crosswalk on Dunbrack Street. Traffic Authority has indicated that they would accommodate a curb cut; however, Transportation and Public Works advised that it could not be put in because the path is on private property. Mr. Townsend suggested Councillor Wile forward him an email and he will forward her request to the appropriate

staff to see if there are any regulation challenges.

Mr. Russell asked whether an accessible wheel chair stop could be painted on the curb cut on the left hand side of Argyle Street to allow the Access-A-Bus to get closer to City Hall. He commented that vehicles are parking along the left hand side of Argyle Street and the Access-A-Bus has to park on the right hand side of the street near the World Trade Centre to drop off and pick up people in wheelchairs. Mr. Townsend advised that he would look into this.

Ms. Newcombe asked who is responsible for accessibility issues regarding schools. Mr. Townsend advised that the Halifax Regional School Board is responsible for issues regarding accessibility to schools. HRM maintains some school playgrounds but does not manage the buildings. Ms. Newcombe raised concern that the Tallahassee Community School has removed the accessible door buttons due to children playing with the buttons and breaking them. Mr. Townsend indicated that he would look into this matter.

Mr. Boyd advised that the Committee has assisted with a number of accessibility upgrades throughout HRM but is not seeing enough credit for their efforts with respect to media releases and getting the word out to the public.

The Committee made reference to a suggestion made during their February meeting of using Eastlink Television to publicize the various work the Committee has been involved with regarding accessibility.

Shaune MacKinlay, Manager, Public Affairs, External & Corporate Affairs, indicated that if the Committee were to put out a press release with an update of all the Committee's work it may not get picked up as a news story; however, she noted that the Committee should be looking to utilize existing opportunities. Ms. MacKinlay suggested the following:

- a news story may not be picked up based on the entire list of the Committee's accomplishments; however, some of the key accomplishments could be picked up as possible news features and the Committee could then promote other topics within those news releases
- HRM has a social marketing program, Good Neighbours Great Neighbourhoods, where residents could learn about the accessibility accomplishments the Committee has been making within their communities; this program is presently online
- HRM has publications that are distributed quarterly to all households, as well as, community newspapers to reach a particular community

Ms. MacKinlay indicated that she would be happy to review the Committee's 2010 Work Plan.

Jennifer Church, Managing Director of External & Corporate Affairs, External & Corporate Affairs, advised that the Committee also has the option to post good news stories on the Good Neighbours Great Neighbourhoods website.

Ms. MacKinlay commented that the Halifax/Dartmouth Ferry Terminals' audio signals should be unique enough item to be picked up as a news feature.

Mr. Russell reiterated the option of having an information session broadcasted on Eastlink Television. He noted that people could speak on accessibility topics and have residents call in with questions. Ms. MacKinlay indicated that she would have to confirm HRM's contractual relationship with Eastlink. A significant amount of resources would have to be provided by the Committee to fund the advertising. She indicated that it could be beneficial to invite a representative from Eastlink to a Committee meeting to discuss advertising options with them.

Ms. MacKinlay noted the Committee could also review an option to contact the CBC radio show, Maritime Noon, which offers residents the ability to call in and discuss topics.

It was noted that Ms. Church would provide the contact information of the Good Neighbours Great Neighbourhood to the Legislative Assistant.

The Committee requested a copy of the list of outstanding/complete work identified during the meeting be forwarded to Ms. Church.

5. NEW BUSINESS - NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:

6.1 Correspondence - None

6.2 Petitions - None

6.3 Presentations

6.3.1 Betty Lou Killen of HRM's Community Development re: Overview of HRM's Recreation Facilities - Accessibility Issues

Betty Lou Killen, Coordinator, Client Services, Community Development, delivered an overview of the Community Facility Master Plan to the Committee. Highlights were as follows:

- most of HRM's recreation facilities are older facilities; with the age comes accessibility barriers; during the 1940's-1970's when many of the facilities were built, there were different building codes and the level of understanding for accessibility was very different
- staff has been making a series of attempts to make the facilities more accessible
- HRM's new facilities all have enhanced provincial and national buildings codes
- the East Dartmouth, Prospect and Gordon R. Snow in Fall River Recreation Centres have all benefited in regard to accessibility upgrades because of the focus groups and comments from HRM's committees

Ms. Killen read from an email from Margaret Soley, Coordinator, Infrastructure

Partnerships, Facility Development, regarding the Canada Games Centre. The following points were noted:

- all aspects of the facility will conform to the requirements to both local and national building codes
- items such as barrier free parking areas, entrances and path/travel access to all indoor facilities; height requirements to publicly accessible light switches, phones, counters and drinking fountains, as well as, barrier free washrooms, shower design and chair lift will be integrated into the design
- the facility will be barrier free on the second level and main floor, which includes an elevator
- features such as changes in floor texture, rail signage and audio warnings will be implemented to assist those with disabilities
- the field house will be designated to accommodate many different functions and will include plenty of clear floor area adjacent to the playing surface to allow for a variety of user types

Ms. Killen provided an update to the Committee regarding the 4 Pad Arena, noting that the facility will be completely barrier free and will include a special sport feature for Sledge Hockey, complete with viewing panels in the boards around the hockey arena, to allow athletes on the bench to observe the field during play.

Ms. Killen indicated that HRM is in the process of doing three studies within the Community Facility Master Plan:

1. Peninsula, Halifax area

- all recreation facilities in the Peninsula area are older facilities
- the study is being lead by Ms. Killen and a Steering Committee
- the Committee recently developed a consultation process, which will be distributed to the community; the Committee will also be hosting approximately 35 meeting with community groups
- information will be listed in the newspaper directing people to call and sign up for a meeting, answer a survey online or send an email with their suggestions and comments
- the study will include the Needham Centre, George Dixon, Saint Andrews, Halifax Form, Citadel High School and Community Centre
- the Committee's objective is to develop a strategy to assist with building new facilities in the future and ensure effective decision making can be made around capital spending to keep the new/older facilities operational, as well as, enhancing them
- HRM is not in a position to close older facilities unless a newer facility can be built in its place

2. Dartmouth Sportsplex, Dartmouth

- the facility opened in 1982; different building codes and accessibility standards; very limited accessibility access

Ms. Killen indicated that the Committee will have an opportunity to participate in the focus groups for those two studies. She noted that the Chair of the Committee will receive an invitation to attend one of the focus group meetings.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Wile, Ms. Killen advised that the Citadel High School is part of the study because the study addresses how HRM delivers its services. When the Citadel Community Centre was built, it was built with the opportunity to expand into a second level on the community side. HRM has the space available; however, staff needs to identify the community needs.

Mr. Boyd asked whether the cushion floor on the indoor track of the Canada Games Centre could prohibit people in wheelchairs from using the track. He commented that wheelchairs may not move as quickly around the track with a cushion floor. Mr. Townsend commented that the track is a shock absorber floor to prevent damage on an athlete's joints. He anticipates that paralympic athletes will train on the same type of track. Ms. Killen commented that the track is a hard rubber flooring. Mr. Townsend further noted that staff anticipate that the Canada Games track will be used at the elite level and the surface of the floor should not affect the athlete's times.

Ms. Killen noted further points regarding the Facility Master Plan Steering Committee meetings:

- advertisements will be placed in the newspaper
- information packages will be sent out to all HRM facilities
- staff has created a database from resident's emails collected during three open house meetings held in the Fall of 2009; there are approximately 600 emails
- there is a link on HRM's website, which provides a list of all the studies, information on each study, as well as, surveys; residents can also email their comments
- residents can also call 490-5713 to fill out the survey or provide their comments

Ms. Killen will forward the link to the Legislative Assistant.

Mr. Nauffts suggested Ms. Killen could contact VoicePrint, a non-profit organization, which is an accessible channel also known as TACtv. The accessible channel has subscribe video for the visually impaired and often issues public service announcements. Ms. Killen indicated that she was not aware of this organization and requested the Legislative Assistant forward her their contact information.

Ms. Killen advised that the third study within the Community Facility Master Plan is the Long Term Arena Strategy. The study focuses on HRM arenas, which will include the Spryfield and Centennial Arenas.

7. REPORTS - NONE

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Troy Nauffts - Visually-Impaired Safe Travel Advocates (VISTA) Committee re: Request to Participate in a Meeting of Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities

- A copy of correspondence from Barbara LeGay, member of the Visually-Impaired Safe Travel Advocates (VISTA) Committee, dated March 16, 2010 regarding a request to attend a Committee meeting was distributed to the Committee.

Mr. Nauffts advised VISTA would like to attend a Committee meeting. He commented that VISTA has concerns that issues regarding safe transit for visually impaired residents will not be considered in Metro Transit's Five Year Plan.

It was noted that VISTA could attend the Committee's meeting in May when they will be discussing Metro Transit concerns.

Mr. Townsend suggested the Committee forward the March 16th correspondence to staff at Transportation and Public Works for their review and comments.

Following a brief discussion, it was **MOVED by Mr. Troy Nauffts, seconded by, Ms. Theresa Horwill, that the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities forward the correspondence from the Visually-Impaired Safe Travel Advocates (VISTA) Committee dated March 16, 2010 to HRM staff for their review.**

Mr. Nauffts suggested sending the letter back to VISTA to give them an opportunity to add any additional comments.

Mr. Townsend indicated that unless the nature of the letter would change, he suggested the Committee forward the correspondence as is, on behalf of VISTA.

Mr. Nauffts requested the motion be amended to include VISTA's approval. The motion now reads:

MOVED by Mr. Troy Nauffts, seconded by, Ms. Theresa Horwill, that the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities forward the correspondence from the Visually-Impaired Safe Travel Advocates (VISTA) Committee dated March 16, 2010 to HRM staff for their review with the approval of VISTA.

The Committee noted that should VISTA have any additions or deletions to the March 16th correspondence, it would come back to the Committee for review at their April meeting, prior to being forwarded to staff.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE - April 19, 2010

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

Krista Tidgwell
Legislative Assistant

INFORMATION ITEMS
March 22, 2010

1. Email from Kelly Marney, Webmaster, E-Commerce & Web Services, dated February 18, 2010 re: BrowseAloud License update