

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
MINUTES
April 19, 2010**

PRESENT: Mr. Tom Boyd, Chair
Ms. Theresa Horwill, Vice Chair
Councillor Mary Wile
Councillor Jerry Blumenthal
Ms. Helen McFadyen
Mr. Troy Nauffts

REGRETS: Ms. Mary Newcombe
Mr. Gary Russell

STAFF: Mr. Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant
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 4:02 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - March 22, 2010

MOVED by Ms. Helen McFadyen, seconded by Mr. Troy Nauffts, that the minutes of March 22, 2010, be approved, as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS - ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Deletions:

6.3 Presentations

6.3.1 Derek Mathers, Taxi Broker and Member of the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee, re: Accessibility Taxi Concerns (*verbal update*)

It was noted that Mr. Mathers was unable to attend the April meeting due to a scheduling conflict. Mr. Mathers has indicated that he is available to attend the May meeting.

Ms. McFadyen suggested Mr. Mathers provide a written response to list of questions/concerns raised by the Committee during previous meetings, to be distributed for the May meeting.

Additions:

8.1 Troy Nauffts - HRM's Pole Mounted Garbage Cans

8.2 2010 Work Plan

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

4. BUSINESS ARISING/DEFERRED ITEMS

4.1 Green Taxis Update (*verbal update from Chair*)

Mr. Boyd provided an update to the Committee regarding hybrid taxis, noting that he and Theresa Horwill attended a hybrid vehicle launch put on by Conserve Nova Scotia that was held in Grand Parade on March 30, 2010.

Ms. Horwill commented that the hybrid's engine generates a low noise from the motor running.

Ms. McFadyen raised concern regarding the level of noise and asked whether hearing impaired or visually impaired persons would be able to hear hybrid vehicles approaching with surrounding traffic noise.

Ms. Boyd expressed concern as to whether taxi drivers would be willing to purchase

hybrid vehicles. Ms. Horwill commented that many taxi drivers do not purchase new vehicles and many share their vehicles with one another.

Ms. Horwill noted that there is plenty of trunk space and taxi drivers that are presently using hybrids have indicated that the trunks can accommodate both a wheelchair and luggage. Mr. Boyd indicated that former Committee member, Joanne Coffey, attended the hybrid launch and was pleased with the size of the trunks.

Mr. Boyd commented that Toyota offers buyers the ability to purchase a noise accessory for their hybrid vehicle.

Ms. McFadyen expressed concern that there has been no response to the Committee regarding Council's approved recommendation that the Mayor, on behalf of Regional Council, write to manufacturers and trade associations within the automobile industry, urging them to adopt a standard for the emission of sound from all hybrid vehicles. Mr. Townsend noted that a letter could have been written but not copied to the Committee.

The Committee requested the Clerk confirm the status of the letter(s) to the manufacturers and trade associations.

4.2 Visually-Impaired Safe Travel Association (VISTA) - Request to Attend a Committee Meeting

- (i) Extract of March 22, 2010 Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities Minutes
- (ii) March 16, 2010 letter from VISTA
 - Correspondence from VISTA dated April 19, 2010 was circulated to the Committee.

It was noted that Metro Transit staff will be attending the Committee's May meeting.

Committee members expressed concern regarding HRM's Five Year Plan for transit, noting that the plan covers items such as cameras on buses and the expansion of services but does not address enough on accessibility.

Ms. McFadyen raised concern regarding how visually impaired persons will identify the bus model at the new bridge terminal being built in Dartmouth. She commented that buses have a traditional stopping location but how would the bus be identified for a visually impaired person if it stopped further up or down from its regular stop. Mr. Townsend indicated that there will be designated areas for buses to stop at the terminal.

It was noted that Mr. Pat Meagher, Accessible Transit Manager, Metro Transit, Transportation and Public Works, will be attending the May meeting and could provide an update on the new bridge terminal.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Nauffts regarding elevators at the new bridge terminal, Mr. Townsend confirmed that there will be an elevator. He further noted that residents can access the terminal from the Dartmouth Sportsplex from street level.

MOVED by Mr. Troy Nauffts, seconded by Ms. Theresa, that the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities forward the correspondence from the Visually-Impaired Safe Travel Association (VISTA) to staff for review and comments, to be provided at the next Committee meeting. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4.3 Councillor Wile - Harlington Crescent Wheelchair Ramp *(verbal update)*

- Photographs of the proposed location for the Harlington Crescent wheelchair ramp was circulated to the Committee.

Councillor Wile provided an update to the Committee regarding the proposed Harlington Crescent wheelchair ramp. She noted that she has been speaking with staff and Killam Properties Inc., property owners of the private pathway and the buildings located at 85 and 127 Harlington Crescent, where the curb cut would be installed to accommodate a wheelchair ramp onto the pathway. The following points were noted:

- a curb cut will allow a person in a wheelchair the ability to access the street from a private pathway that leads to the sidewalk/street on Harlington Crescent
- the pathway is privately owned but has been used by residents within the area
- Harlington Crescent is a quiet street with minimal traffic
- the property owners have no objections with residents crossing on their property to access the sidewalk from the private pathway

Councillor Wile read from correspondence she received from Killam Properties Inc. Mr. Dan Sampson, Director of Killam Properties, has advised that he has no issue with this work taking place, provided that all costs are covered by HRM and that the walkway and any grassed area is returned to the previous condition after the work is completed.

- people in wheelchairs and other residents of the area presently travel to the Willett Street crosswalk, then travel approximately 1 kilometre either down Dunbrack Street or Lacewood Drive and cross at the major intersection, then head south to get to the Northcliff Arena across the street
- staff indicated they have a concern with liability for residents crossing the road from the driveway, where there is no crosswalk in place

Mr. Townsend noted that his understanding is that if the curb cut were to be installed, a crosswalk must also be installed due to risk of liability. By installing a curb cut, HRM would be seen as directing residents out into the street and must ensure that there is a safe location to cross. However, a crosswalk can only be installed in areas where there is an adequate volume of traffic/pedestrians. Staff has advised that the area does not warrant a crosswalk to be installed and therefore, will not approve the installation of a curb cut.

Councillor Wile commented that there is an area on Lacewood Drive that has two wheelchair ramps without a crosswalk.

Ms. McFadyen asked whether an exception could be made given the unique circumstances and that denying a curb cut could be seen as creating a hardship for individuals in wheelchairs. Mr. Townsend expressed concern with setting a precedent.

Mr. Boyd suggested having staff attend a Committee meeting to discuss issues regarding active transportation matters.

Mr. Rutt noted that a crosswalk is in the best interest of the citizens within the area and commented that there should be a variance in place to allow a curb cut.

Councillor Wile noted that she will continue to follow up with staff and report back to the Committee. She further noted that she has an email response from staff regarding the curb cut that she will forward to the Committee for review.

5. NEW BUSINESS - NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:

6.1 Correspondence - None

6.2 Petitions - None

6.3 Presentations

6.3.1 Derek Mathers, Taxi Broker and Member of the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee, re: Accessibility Taxi Concerns *(verbal update)*

This item was removed from the agenda, see page 3.

7. REPORTS - NONE

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Troy Nauffts - HRM's Pole Mounted Garbage Cans

Mr. Nauffts raised concern regarding pole mounted garbage cans within HRM and asked whether there is a standard procedure for installing them, such as minimum/maximum height and location. He commented that at the corner of Astral Drive and Cole Harbour Road there is a pole mounted garbage can and that he is only able to reach the bottom of the can. He further commented that there is a two foot wall that people could climb to reach the top of the can.

Several Committee members commented that there is usually a standard height for pole mounted garbage cans.

Mr. Nauffts advised that he had reported his concern to HRM's Help Line and was advised that staff would be in contact with him. He commented that there should be a standard height and location so people who are in wheelchairs and are visually impaired can access the cans.

Ms. McFadyen commented that she has put in three requests with HRM for a pole mounted garbage can to be installed near her bus stop and asked if staff could explain

what the criteria is for installing them.

During the ensuing discussion, the Committee expressed concerns with the capacity and durability of pole mounted garbage cans.

Mr. Nauffts asked whether the Committee could write a policy/procedure for installing pole mounted garbage cans within HRM and forward it to Regional Council for their review. Ms. McFadyen noted that recommendations to Council require staff's involvement/input.

Mr. Nauffts asked whether the Committee could access complaints received from HRM's Call Centre. Councillor Wile commented that the complaints used to be forwarded to the Councillors; however, this process has stopped. She further commented that there should be a record of the complaints made by citizens to HRM. Mr. Nauffts suggested the Committee obtain the information relating to disability issues from HRM's Call Centre. It was noted that it would difficult for the Call Centre to identify disability related issues unless the complaint is very specific.

Mr. Boyd suggested the Clerk contact staff and invite a member to attend a Committee meeting, to identify what the standards are for pole mounted garbage cans.

Mr. Nauffts commented that HRM staff uses what is call the "red book", which is a manual that identifies various building standards/codes. He requested the Clerk follow up with staff to obtain a copy of the book.

8.2 2010 Work Plan

Mr. Townsend provided an update of the 2010 Work Plan to the Committee. The following points were noted:

- yellow lines have been painted on the front steps of City Hall to provide better visibility of the risers
- accessibility upgrades will be made to the Spryfield Lions Arena, including door operators and accessible washrooms
- a wheelchair ramp cannot be installed on the City Hall side of Argyle Street because accessible buses are only allowed to pick up on the right hand side; there is also a concern with liability because a crosswalk would have to be installed on Argyle Street; there is already a crosswalk on Duke Street, making it too close to install one on Argyle Street

Mr. McFadyen expressed concern with the frequency and duration of the Halifax ferry terminal's announcement, noting that the repetition needs to be increased. Mr. Nauffts commented that he arrived late and had to rely on someone to tell him that the ferry was boarding.

Mr. Townsend noted his understanding is that the announcements would be automatic, continuously running and linked to the light signal. He indicated that he would follow up with staff to see if the announcement could be increase the frequency.

Ms. McFadyen suggested having a different tone to identify the Woodside and Alderney Ferry. Mr. Townsend indicated that there can only be a tone or a voice.

Ms. McFadyen advised that the North-South audio pedestrian signal, at the corner of Spring Garden Road and Barrington Street, has not worked for a few months and that she had contacted HRM to have this repaired. The Committee requested the Clerk follow up with staff to confirm Ms. McFadyen's request is registered with HRM.

In response to a question raised by Ms. McFadyen, Mr. Townsend advised that there is approximately \$260,000 available in the budget.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE - May 17, 2010

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

Krista Tidgwell
Legislative Assistant

INFORMATION ITEMS
April 19, 2010

1. Correspondence from J. Lawrence Aucoin to Minister Estabrooks, Minister of Transportation, dated December 4, 2009 re: Accessible Parking