

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MINUTES September 20, 2010

PRESENT: Mr. Thomas Boyd, Chair
Ms. Theresa Horwill, Vice Chair
Councillor Mary Wile
Councillor Jerry Blumenthal
Mr. Troy Nauffts
Mr. Brian Aird
Ms. Helen McFadyen
Mr. Jack Jones

REGRETS: Mr. Gary Russell
Ms. Mary Newcombe

STAFF: Mr. Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant
Superintendent Cliff Falkenham, HRP
Mr. Phillip Townsend, Director, Infrastructure and Asset
Management
Ms. Krista Tidgwell, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

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

Mr. Boyd noted that in the September 20th Globe and Mail there is an article entitled: Texting allows the deaf to communication on their own terms.

Mr. Boyd led the Committee in round table introductions.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – August 16, 2010

Ms. McFadyen noted the following corrections:

- Page 4 - option of launching a human rights complaint regarding accessibility on transit routes should be changed to *option of launching a human rights complaint regarding Metro Transit accessibility, specifically the absence of bus stop announcement on transit routes*
- Page 4 - bus drivers should be announcing major stops should be changed to *bus drivers should consistently be announcing all major stops*
- Page 5 - (ie. orientation to the building and where a service dog will be on the pool deck while their handler is swimming) should be changed to *and where a service dog will safely remain on the pool deck*
- Page 8 – the “e” on the end of Holly Barlett’s name should be removed; *Bartlett* not Bartlette

MOVED by Councillor Jerry Blumenthal, seconded by Ms. Helen McFadyen, that the minutes of August 16, 2010 be approved, as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

Addition:

8.1 Discussion re: Sidewalk Safety

MOVED by Ms. Helen McFadyen, seconded by Mr. Brian Aird, that the Order of Business be approved, as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING/DEFERRED BUSINESS

4.1 Discussion re: New Dartmouth Bridge Terminal

An architectural scale model of the new Dartmouth Bridge Terminal site was before the Committee for review.

Mr. Darren Young, Project Manager, Infrastructure and Asset Management, Mr. Troy Scott and Mr. Steven Outerbridge, Project Architects from Sperry & Partners, provided an overview of architectural scale model of the new Dartmouth Bridge Terminal.

The following points and clarification was provided:

- the architectural scale of the model is one inch equal to thirty feet; the model is three feet wide and spans the area of Nantucket Avenue to Thistle Street
- the length of the island where the bus bays will be located is approximately 700 feet
- there will be sixteen bus bays; eight bays on either side of the facility
- there will be pathways (islands) around the facility with trees and benches along the centre part of the islands
- the facility will be approximately 200 feet long
- the facility has been designed with high visibility colour changes in the floor patterns; a bright yellow strip will run along the bus stop bays
- conduits will be installed to accommodate a future announcement system
- buses will be assigned to a designated bus bay
- the bus bays are designed in a saw tooth pattern, which allows buses to pull in/out of the bays without having to reverse and gives enough space for a second bus to pull in behind the first bus
- the curbs are designed to allow Accessible Low Floor (ALF) buses to deploy their ramps
- the exterior islands have been designed to allow two wheelchairs to pass one another
- pole mounted bus stop signs will be aligned along the pathway at the start of the saw tooth pattern of the bus bays; the signs will have some form of textile design; the height level of the signs and other aspects are still being determined
- there will be an information desk within the facility that is attended during business hours; security will be present during non-business hours
- there will be textural differences along the saw tooth pattern of the bus bays to distinguish between the main pathway and each of the bus bays

Mr. Phillip Townsend, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management, commented that staff will insure that the bus stop signs are mounted in safe locations and are at the appropriate height level.

In response to a question raised by Ms. McFadyen, Mr. Townsend noted that the building has been designed to accommodate the various audible/visual technologies being installed by Metro Transit. As well, to accommodate new technologies as they become available.

Ms. McFadyen expressed concern respecting how a visually impaired person will receive accurate bus schedule information (ie. arrival/departure times) until the

technology becomes available. Mr. Townsend advised that these issues will be addressed by Metro Transit.

Further points and clarification noted:

- monitors with bus schedule information will be installed at the facility
- tactile and braille signs will be placed throughout the terminal

Ms. McFadyen commented that audio annunciation touch screens would benefit a wider audience as opposed to just those who are visually impaired (ie. persons with low reading skills).

- the bus stop sign's pole is sixteen inches in diameter and attached to a secure base
- presently the buses are designed to enter the terminal off Nantucket Avenue and exit onto Thistle Street; Metro Transit will determine the scheduling and where each bus will be located within the terminal

Mr. Nauffts suggested that as a bus changes its route information, that those routes be located within the same bus bay. As well, those two routes would be located on the same bus stop sign.

- there will be two washrooms within the facility, one men's and one women's; there will be no family washroom; however, each washroom will have an infant changing table
- the washrooms are accessible and set back from the doors to minimize the fumes from buses
- bus drivers will have their own washroom
- there will be no drinking fountains; kiosks will be available for people to purchase refreshments
- hot and cold water will be available in the washrooms
- there will be textural differences in the floor pattern of the washrooms

Mr. Townsend suggested having a couple members of the Committee meet with staff as needed to discuss concerns/suggestions for the new terminal and provide updates to the Committee as the project progresses.

Following a brief discussion, the Committee agreed that Councillor Wile, Ms. Horwill and Mr. Nauffts would meet with staff to provide their input on the new terminal on behalf of the Committee and update the Committee as needed.

Mr. Rutt noted that should any of the Committee members not be able to meet with staff due to a scheduling conflict, he would attend the meeting on their behalf.

4.2 Draft Report to Regional Council re: Metro Transit Accessibility

A draft Committee report to Regional Council dated August 10, 2010 was before the Committee for review and discussion.

The Committee reviewed and approved by consensus the August 10, 2010 Committee report with the following amendments to Page 2 of the Background and Discussion section:

- the first bullet of the fifth paragraph should read as follows: *Metro Transit schedule information on the HRM website*
- the last paragraph should read as follows: that the May 17, 2010 motion does not reflect a key element to improving Metro Transit's accessibility regarding *the installation/implementation of an automated audio/visual bus stop announcement system* on Metro Transit's buses

4.3 2010 Work Plan (verbal update)

Mr. Phillip Townsend, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management, provided an update to the Committee. Highlights were as follows:

- manufactures and staff are reviewing the Alderney Gate doors respecting the installation of the door operators; there is concern regarding the height of the door and ceiling
- the accessibility upgrades to the Spryfield Lions Arena has been sent to tender
- there is \$350,000 in available funds from the Committee's budget; funding must be put towards HRM owned assets/facilities; staff will bring forward recommendations for the Committee's consideration
- HRM Public Libraries have their own funding budgets
- the Point Pleasant Park accessible washrooms upgrades will be completed by October 2010

Councillor Wile commented that the Point Pleasant Park gates are being updated in addition to the washrooms. She asked whether washrooms were being installed in the information centre or whether the article in the newspaper was referring to the gatekeeper's house. Mr. Townsend indicated that he could not confirm at this time but would look into this and report back to the Committee.

Several members of the Committee expressed concern regarding the ferry terminals' announcement systems. There is a lack of consistency in the length of the announcements. The announcement at the Dartmouth ferry terminal is not being made.

Mr. Townsend indicated that he has spoken with staff respecting the ferry terminal's announcement systems. Staff confirmed that transit staff does not have the ability to

turn the announcements on or off. Staff advised that the announcement is tied into the sensor light of each terminal.

Ms. McFadyen commented that that number of persons with disabilities that use the ferries is increasing. She questioned staff's knowledge and whether there is evacuation/safety protocol for staff when assisting persons with disabilities. Mr. Townsend advised that he could not speak to this matter and noted that staff from Transportation and Public Works (TPW) could verify.

The Committee requested the Clerk invite TPW staff to a Committee meeting to discuss this matter further.

The Committee entered into a discussion respecting the new sledge hockey rink at the 4-Pad Arena. Concern was raised respecting how players would see over the boards and how the boards would be swapped between hockey and sledge hockey games. Mr. Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant, advised that he would follow up with the staff representative that has done work with the Vancouver Special Olympics and Canada Games.

Councillor Wile and Mr. Rutt exited the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

5. NEW BUSINESS – NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS – NONE

7. REPORTS – NONE

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Discussion re: Sidewalk Safety

Mr. Tory Nauffts expressed concern regarding sidewalk safety for visually impaired persons and other HRM residents. He provided an example respecting green bins being placed on sidewalks and blocking pedestrian's pathways. He suggested forwarding this concern to staff for review.

Following a brief discussion, the Committee noted that similar concerns have been raised during previous Committee meeting and encouraged Mr. Nauffts and other concerned residents to contact the HRM Call Centre and report these types of concerns.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE – October 18, 2010

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Krista Tidgwell
Legislative Assistant

INFORMATION ITEMS - NONE