

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MINUTES

April 21, 2008

PRESENT: Ms. Helen McFadyen, Chair
Mr. Gary Russell, Vice-Chair
Ms. Rebecca King
Ms. Helen Cianfaglione
Mr. Tom Boyd
Councillor Patrick Murphy
Ms. Joanne Coffey
Mr. Alan Farquhar
Councillor Mary Wile

ABSENT: Ms. Sanaz Gerami (with regrets)
Ms. Mary Newcombe (with regrets)

STAFF: Superintendent Cliff Falkenham, HRP
Ms. Barbara Coleman, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:10 p.m. by Ms. Helen McFadyen, Chair, in Halifax Hall, City Hall.

Ms. McFadyen asked members of the committee to announce their presence for the benefit of visually impaired members. She also requested each person identify her/himself, audibly, when making a motion or voting, for clarification.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOVED BY Ms. Joanne Coffey, seconded by Ms. Helen Cianfaglione that the minutes from February 18, 2008 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

The order of the agenda was changed to reflect the following:

- | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|-----|---|
| 7.2 | will become | 4.1 | Lori Patterson, Acting General Manager, Public Affairs - Metro Transit, Transportation and Public Works |
| 5.5 | | 4.2 | Review of Presentation given by Mr. Larry Hilton, Supervisor, Special Services |
| 4.1 & 7.3 | | 4.3 | Ms. Tanya Phillips, Manager - Bylaw Services, Halifax Regional Police |
| 4.2 | | 4.4 | Recommendation to HRM Mayor and Council re: Hybrid cars - Meeting with Mr. Stephen King, Manager, Environmental Performance (Air & Land) (update) |

MOVED BY Councillor Wile and seconded by Councillor Murphy that the order of business, as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS

4.1 Ms. Lori Patterson, Acting General Manager, Public Affairs - Metro Transit, Transportation and Public Works

Ms. Patterson thanked the group for inviting her to speak. Also in attendance were Mr. Randolph Kinghorn, Municipal Solicitor and Mr. Larry Hilton, Supervisor, Access-A-Bus to answer any questions or concerns that the group may have on the bus stop enunciations policy

that is coming out of the ruling of the *Ontario Human Rights Act* back in July 2007.

Ms. Patterson advised the group that it was her intent to advise the group what Metro Transit's policy is, where Metro Transit plans to go with it, and answer any questions the group may have.

The following points were noted:

- operators are to provide reasonable assistance to all riders of Metro Transit whether or not a disability involved
- Metro Transit has worked in conjunction for many years with several organizations concerned with Disabilities
- Metro Transit's policy is that Operators are requested to clearly announce a bus stop *when requested*
- Metro Transit has been working hard over the years to accommodate its riders by introducing such things as *lowfloor buses, buses themselves with wheel chair ramps, yellow stripping on the stairs, large font on destination curtains, etc.*
- Metro Transit has a longstanding relationship with CNIB to better understand the needs of people with visual impairment.

Ms. Patterson further advised that *Go Time System*, which allows people to access information on the departures, has been revamped. This new system will now be done in real time. This is part of a larger project and should be completed in August 2008. Once this part of the project is complete it has the capabilities of an automatic bus stop enunciation which will eliminate most of the problems that are being incurred.

In response to a question concerning drivers training around proper procedures and protocols in dealing with person's with disabilities, both Ms. Patterson and Mr. Hilton advised that Metro Transit has a six-week training program for all its drivers and there are periodic refreshment notices given out to their operators. Following this training, new operators do a two-week Access-A-Bus training which would deal exclusively with procedures and protocols of this nature. Policy and protocols are also located in the Operators Manual.

Ms. Helen McFadyen alerted Ms. Patterson to the concerns that she personally had within the last 35 bus rides that she has taken. Ms. Patterson advised that although she was aware of Ms. McFadyen's concerns she was not aware of that many operators not doing as they are mandated to do. Ms. Patterson indicated that the formal reporting system is 490-4000, but that perhaps it is time to revisit braille packages for the visually impaired.

It was noted that the free pass at this time is only for the visually impaired and may need to be revisited as to who should receive the pass. Ms. Patterson noted that it has only been the last five years that persons in wheelchairs have been able to access a bus. There are more implications which may have a cost factor for a wheel chair access.

4.2 Review of Presentation given by Mr. Larry Hilton, Supervisor, Special Services

Mr. Hilton spoke to the group noting the following:

- even though Access-A-Bus has been given monies for new buses, most of the money has gone into replacing the fleet that is already in service as opposed to obtaining more buses.
- it is hard to provide equality of service to all of the people that would use this service
- 50 % of the use of the Access-A-Bus must be kept for repeater service and the other 50% for casual riders
- Metro Transit is beginning to re-examine their criteria for people taking the Access-A-Bus
- once the forms for Access-A-Bus service have been filled out and there has been a number issued it will be strongly suggested in the new application process that it does not need to be done again.
- the elderly and the workshops are spiking the requests for services
- the group looking at the new criteria for rider-ship on the Access-A-Bus is not only made up of HRM personnel, it is made up from interested parties of the general public and should take a year to complete.

Mr. Laughie Rutt wanted it noted for the record that Mr. Hilton is always very helpful when he comes in and always brings in useful information.

Mr. Gary Russel retired from the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

4.3 Ms. Tanya Phillips, Manager - Bylaw Services, Halifax Regional Police

This was not a formal presentation but rather Ms. Phillips was there to answer any questions and/or concerns of the Committee. Ms. Phillips agreed to look into garbage collection day with regards to putting the cans back off the sidewalk. There is a complaint number and should be called when needed. Should there be a complaint that crosses the boundaries of one or more by-law departments, a joint inspection can be done.

4.4 Recommendation to HRM Mayor and Council re: Hybrid cars - Meeting with Mr. Stephen King, Manager, Environmental Performance (Air & Land) (update)

The revised report was read to the Committee by Mr. Rutt.

MOVED BY Councillor Murphy and seconded by Mr. Farquhar that this report be sent to Regional Council to recommend that the Mayor on behalf of Halifax Regional Council write to the Manufacturers and Trade Associations with the Automobile Industry urging them to adopt a standard for the emissions of sound. MOTION PUT AND PASSED

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

5.1 From November 2007 - Mr. Rutt to report on discussion with Mr. Paul Euloth, Regional Trails Coordinator regarding accessibility of trails

This item was not addressed at this time.

5.2 November 2007- Update re: Doors on Sackville Sports Stadium - Mr. Rutt

This item was not addressed at this time.

5.3 October 2007 - Invitation to Ms. Jen Powley to discuss Accessible Taxi Service - Mr. Russell

This item was not addressed at this time.

5.4 October 2007 - Mr. Farquhar re: "Kids With Disabilities". E-mail and oral update.

This item was not addressed at this time.

5.5 March 2007 - Review of presentation given by Mr. Larry Hilton, Supervisor, Special Services

See item 4.2

6. NEW BUSINESS - None

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS

7.1 Email from Mr. John Charles, Real Property Planning, Infrastructure & Asset Management HRM to Chair

This item was not addressed at this time.

7.2 Submitted by Ms. McFadyen to Lori Patterson, Manager, Public Affairs - Metro Transit, Transportation & Public Works

See Item 4.1

7.3 Invitation issued by the Chair to Ms. Tanya Phillips, Manager - Bylaw Services, Halifax Regional Police

See item 4.3

8. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - None

9. ADDED ITEMS - None

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities will be May 26, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. in Halifax Hall, 2nd floor, City Hall. Ms. Sandra Riley will make all the necessary arrangements and advise people of the change in date.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:22pm.

Barbara Coleman
Legislative Assistant