

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES  
MINUTES**

**August 17, 2009**

**PRESENT:** Ms. Helen McFadyen, Chair  
Mr. Tom Boyd, Vice Chair  
Mr. Gary Russell  
Ms. Theresa Horwill  
Councillor Mary Wile

**ABSENT:** Councillor Jerry Blumenthal (regrets)  
Joeanne Coffey (regrets)  
Mary Newcombe (regrets)  
Johanne Caron (regrets)  
Mr. Sid Sodhi

**STAFF:** Mr. Laughlin Rutt, HRM Diversity Consultant, Human Resources  
Ms. Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant

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**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. in the Human Resources Training Room, 4<sup>th</sup>. Floor, Duke Tower, without a quorum present.

The Chair advised that without a quorum, the minutes and agenda items cannot be approved, and the Committee would not be able to pass motions. She noted that there were two invited guests from Conserve Nova Scotia to speak about a pilot project, and suggested that rather than cancelling the meeting, the Committee hold an informal session to discuss ideas for a work plan and to hear the presentation on the pilot project.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - July 20, 2009**

Deferred due to lack of quorum.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS - ADDITIONS/DELETIONS: None**

**4. BUSINESS ARISING/DEFERRED ITEMS:**

**4.1 Update on Disbursement Funds - Phil Townsend**

This item was deferred.

**4.2 2009 Work Plan**

The Committee held a discussion on developing a Work Plan and the following ideas were put forward:

ACPD's previous recommendations to Regional Council (determine status)  
Accessible Taxis (provide concrete recommendation to Regional Council on  
the matter)

Inclusion of the Guide as part of Taxi Driver Testing

Invitation to Staff to attend a meeting to discuss the change in timing of  
pedestrian traffic signals over the past few years (it has decreased) and the  
new pedestrian audible signals (no public education in advance of the  
installation)

Invite representative of VISTA to attend same meeting.

The Chair advised that she would draft a Work Plan and circulate for the September agenda package.

**4.3 Accessibility Seating at Commons Concert (*deferred from July 20<sup>th</sup>. meeting*)**

Councillor Wile advised that she had contacted staff for response about the Committee's concern of accessibility seating at events like the concerts on the Common, however, she was still waiting to hear back. She added that she had heard that the situation with the KISS concert was better than at the Paul McCartney concert.

Councillor Wile advised that she would continue to follow up to determine if HRM has a required accessibility criteria for events such as concerts on the Common, Tall Ships, Buskers, etc. She indicated that she would also be in Toronto on municipal business in the future and advised that she would talk to one of the Hamilton Councillors about this, as at the last meeting it was noted that the City of Hamilton has a criteria checklist in regard to accessibility for events such as outdoor concerts.

**4.5 Sidewalk Closures and Obstructions: Impact for Persons with Disabilities**  
*(follow-up from July 20<sup>th</sup> meeting - Councillor Wile)*

Councillor Wile advised that she contacted several business units regarding this matter and had some brief discussions staff, but was still waiting for a reply. She noted that staff are aware that sometime's they do not give out enough advance notice.

The Chair suggested that staff be questioned if they could provide a system of an e-mail alert on sidewalk closures, in a similar manner to what the Bridge Commission does.

The Chair indicated that she may follow up with Daya Pillay, Manager, HRM E-commerce and Web Services.

**4.4 Memo to Chair of Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee** *(follow-up from July 20<sup>th</sup> meeting - Councillor Wile)*

Councillor Wile provided an update in regard to the distribution of the Information Guide for Taxi Drivers that the Committee prepared. She advised that she contacted the major taxi companies and they indicated they were either dispersing the Guide currently or would be pleased to do so if provided a copy.

The Chair advised that she was hoping to hear back from Councillor Adams as to his thoughts on a long term distribution plan for the Guide, and on second and third language variations of the Guide. She noted that when she presented the Guide to the Taxi Advisory Committee it was her understanding they were endorsing it and were going to help with the distribution and ongoing promotion of the Guide.

The Chair advised that she would like to see the Guide eventually get into the testing of taxi drivers. She noted that this could be part of the Work Plan around the issue of Accessible Taxi's.

The Committee dealt agenda item 7 at this time:

**7. REPORTS:** None

**7.1 Active Transportation Advisory Committee**

At the request of the Chair, Mr. Boyd provided a report on the Active Transportation Advisory Committee.

Mr. Boyd advised that the last meeting was in June and the next meeting is in September.

He noted that he raised the issue of traffic lights and the impact on pedestrians, and that he feels there should be a representative from Metro Transit sit on the Committee. He noted, for the information of the Committee, the Bicycle Trail on the Bedford Highway is now open.

## **7.2 Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee**

Mr. Russell advised that the last meeting of the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee was in July, and a major concern raised was the issue of zones.

The Chair advised that she has increasingly noticed that when she calls for a cab and they find out she has a guide dog there will be several cars that will pass on her call before a cab arrives. She noted that cab drivers are not permitted to refuse a call if someone has a guide dog, but she felt that some cab drivers were getting around this by choosing to 'pass' on her call, which they are permitted to do. She asked Mr. Russell to raise this issue at the next meeting of the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee.

5. **NEW BUSINESS:** None

6. **CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:**

6.1 **Correspondence:** None

6.2 **Petitions:** None

6.3 **Presentations:**

6.3.1 **Conserve Nova Scotia (Josh McLean and Nadine MacKay) - RE: Pilot Project to Allow More Small Efficient Vehicles in the Taxi Industry**

The Chair advised that Ms. Nadine MacKay and Mr. Josh McLean were from Conserve Nova Scotia to provide a brief presentation to the Committee in regard to their Fuel Efficient Taxi Pilot Project.

Ms. MacKay thanked the Committee for the invitation and noted that she had received information from the Legislative Assistant of the five main issues the Committee has with the quieter cars. Ms. MacKay circulated a copy her presentation. A copy was submitted for the official file. Some highlights of her remarks are as follows:

Conserve Nova Scotia is working with the Nova Scotia Auto Dealers Association on the prospect of a pilot project that would encourage the introduction of fuel efficient models into the taxi fleet. This project is dependent on HRM Council's approval of a bylaw change regarding specifications of taxi vehicles and Provincial funding approval for the financial incentive. She expects to hear something in regard to the bylaw change by in September.

the proposed approach for the Fuel Efficient Taxi Pilot Project is to establish

a test fleet of fuel efficient taxis across HRM through funding a total of six fuel efficient vehicles with a purchase incentive of \$2,500 towards the purchase of or lease of a new, fuel efficient vehicle that meets specific performance standards. An important aspect of the project is data collection requirements to ensure measurability of results.

six fuel efficient vehicles are proposed with at least three of the six to be hybrids.

if the requested change to the bylaw is approved it would allow fuel efficient vehicles such as the Toyota Prius, Volkswagen Jetta, Ford Fusion and Ford Escape Hybrids into the taxi services. The size change is not expected to interfere with accessibility.

Conserve Nova Scotia has performed a jurisdictional scan, which suggests that fuel efficient vehicles including hybrids are safe.

A discussion ensued and the following points were noted:

the fuel efficient cars tend to be very quiet and pose a safety concern for blind individuals; the issue of sound emissions needs to be addressed by a higher level of government.

it was noted that some doors on smaller vehicles pose a problem in trying to fit a wheelchair in the back seat. It was also noted that there are varying sizes of wheelchairs.

Ms. MacKay advised that she would contact her federal counterparts to see if they have dealt with the issue of accessibility. Mr. Rutt also suggested that there must be information in regard to 'best practices' by which trunk size was determined.

Councillor Wile suggested that the representatives get further information from other cities who are using hybrids on any issues or complaints they've dealt with.

Ms. MacKay advised that she would look into the issues raised this afternoon in regard to trunk space, sound emissions, best practices and any complaints in other jurisdictions that have arisen and provide a response to the Legislative Assistant in time for the next meeting.

7. **ADDED ITEMS:** None.
8. **NEXT MEETING DATE:** September 21, 2009
9. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m.