

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

July 16, 2012

PRESENT: Theresa Horwill, Chair
Tom Boyd, Vice Chair
Mary Newcombe
Brian Aird
Cynthia Bryant
Lisa Pottie
Councillor Mary Wile
Councillor Jerry Blumenthal

ABSENT: Troy Nauffts

STAFF: Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant, Human Resources
Supt. Cliff Falkenham, Halifax Regional Police
Darren Young, Project Manager, Infrastructure & Asset
Management
Patrick Meagher, Accessible Transit Manager, Metro Transit
Jenny Benson, Legislative Support

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. in the 3rd Floor of Duke Tower, 5251 Duke Street, Halifax.

The Chair thanked Mr. Patrick Meagher for joining the Committee.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 18th, 2012 (Regular) and June 20th, 2012 (Town Hall)

The following amendment was noted to the June 18, 2012 minutes:

- The reference to “police” section 7.1.2 be changed to “fire department”.

Mr. Boyd noted that in the minutes from June 18th he committed to writing two letters, which were combined into one letter to the Transportation Standing Committee. The letter requested that a staff member from Metro Transit be appointed to the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and noted concerns with regard to the staff position taken on announcement of transit stops. Mr. Boyd updated that this letter was circulated to Committee members for review before being sent to the Transportation Standing Committee for discussion at their July 5th meeting.

MOVED by Councillor Wile, seconded by Ms. Mary Newcombe, that the minutes of July 28th, 2012 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The following amendments were noted to the July 20, 2012 minutes:

- Councillor Mary Wile chaired the meeting, not Theresa Horwill.
- Brian Aird was not present.
- On page 9, paragraph 5 Mr. Stapledon should be changed to Mr. Meagher.

MOVED by Mr. Tom Boyd, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal, that the minutes of July 20th, 2012 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Wile reported to the Committee that she followed up with Ms. McKenna and clarified that there is a lift at the pool in the Canada Games Centre. However, Ms. McKenna’s daughter has a disability which does not allow her to use the lift because she cannot sit up by herself. There is also a dressing room that is specifically for individuals with disabilities but again this cannot accommodate Ms. McKenna’s daughter. The Councillor has been in contact with the Canada Games Centre to investigate whether or not something can be done to assist Ms. McKenna and her daughter further. They are looking into the option of installing a Hoyer Lift.

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

The agenda was approved as circulated.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Town Hall Meeting Recap

Ms. Pottie shared with the Committee that she was very impressed with the meeting and the number of individuals who attended. She credited having the interpreters there as one of the reasons why the meeting was such a success, allowing individuals with hearing impairments to attend. She felt individuals came with a sense of good will and provided constructive criticism. Councillor Wile and the Chair both agreed that the town hall was a success and shared that they had received positive feedback.

Ms. Bryant shared that it would be very useful to follow up on the request that came to have signage on HRM buildings stating the level of accessibility a building has. Mr. Young stated that it would be difficult and would require funding. The Committee discussed the process that such a request would have to go through, which would involve a recommendation to the Transportation Standing Committee and then to Council. This became a broader discussion around the fact that Nova Scotia does not have an Accessibility Act like Ontario or even a strategy similar to New Brunswick.

Mr. Aird asked whether or not there was a similar Committee at the provincial level that the Accessibility Committee could connect with. Ms. Pottie suggested that the Disabled Persons Commission would probably be the comparable group at the provincial level, however, she noted that they are more of a liaison than a group that lobbies the government. The Disabled Strategy Group fills that role.

Mr. Rutt expressed that he was pleased with how well prepared HRM staff was at the Town Hall Meeting and how it was chaired. He commented on the positive and productive tone of the dialogue. The session was very informative and many of the individuals in attendance learned about HRM initiatives regarding accessibility that they were unaware of but can have access to. Mr. Rutt suggested that the Committee put on another Town Hall Meeting at some point, Ms. Bryant noted that there was a discussion around this meeting occurring annually from now on.

Mr. Meagher thought that the Town Hall Meeting was a huge success. He thought that it was great that the individuals in attendance got to hear from a wide range of HRM areas.

4.2 Committee Membership – Vacant Member Appointment and Metro Transit Appointment

Mr. Patrick Meagher has been appointed to the Accessibility Committee from Metro Transit.

Membership terms for Ms. Mary Newcombe and Mr. Tom Boyd will expire in November 2012. Councillor Blumenthal will no longer be with the Committee as he is not running in the upcoming municipal election.

Ms. Jennifer Weagle will be attending the next meeting to discuss membership.

4.3 Metro Transit Universal Accessibility Plan

The Universal Accessibility Plan Supplementary Report dated April 13, 2012 was before the Committee.

The Chair was given an opportunity to speak to the Transportation Standing Committee. She requested better lines of communication between the Standing Committee and the Accessibility Committee, and the Standing Committee recommended that a Metro Transit staff member be appointed to the Accessibility Committee. The Standing Committee requested that an update be provided to the Standing Committee and Accessibility Committee on the AVL and annunciation systems.

Councillor Blumenthal noted disappointment with the information report because the request he had submitted was not to have all bus stops announced by the bus drivers, but that bus drivers should be able to take care of a visually impaired individual by announcing their stop. Mr. Meagher and Mr. Young noted that it is considered a safety issue for bus drivers if they are having to remember which stop an individual is getting off at. Ms. Newcombe asked if the bus drivers could write down which stop an individual with accessibility issues is getting off at until the annunciation system is put in place. Mr. Meagher said many drivers do announce the stops and do everything in their capacity to ensure that individuals with disabilities have their needs met.

Ms. Bryant asked whether or not the issue of human rights was brought up in the discussion with Council around annunciation. The Chair stated that it was in the letter to the Standing Committee.

4.4 Disability Training (Continued) – *Laughlin Rutt, HRM Diversity Consultant*

The Etiquette Fact Sheet (Blind or Visually Impaired) was before the Committee.

Mr. Nauffts wanted to discuss terminology around disabilities but he was not present at the meeting that discussion was postponed until Mr. Nauffts can be present.

Mr. Rutt circulated the Etiquette Fact Sheet (Blind or Visually Impaired) for the Committee to read through and discuss. Mr. Rutt reviewed the fact sheet, followed by discussion by the Committee.

Mr. Aird raised his concerns about the sandwich boards that are everywhere in the city. Supt. Falkenham noted that he believes the by-law involving signage is still being

redrafted at this point. Mr. Aird suggested that it would be good for this Committee to work with shop owners and educate them and the Chamber of Commerce around the accessibility issues that the signs cause. Councillor Wile thought that it would be good to contact the Business Improvement Districts because they are in regular contact with business owners.

5. NEW BUSINESS

The Chair distributed an updated phone list to the Committee, including Mr. Patrick Meagher's contact information.

The Chair, Mr. Boyd and Mr. Young have been working with Mr. Barry Manuel from EMO to combine the lists that our Committee and Mr. Manuel's group have on facilities. She distributed the Halifax Regional Municipality Building/Facility Profile Questionnaire and requested input from the Committee via email by next Monday, July 23, 2012. The Chair also noted that Mr. Manuel would like photos of the facilities that the Committee inspects.

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & PRESENTATIONS – None

7. REPORTS

7.1 Update on HRM Owned/Operated Buildings

7.1.1 Staff Update

Mr. Young shared with the Committee that the signage has gone up in the Needham Centre and he received a call during the meeting stating that one lift is in the facility now waiting to be installed, however the pool lift is still delayed until the end of the summer. All door operators are functioning with the exception of two which are being looked into. The only outstanding project is parking which Mr. Young's team will be looking into shortly. Mr. Young also noted that he has been looking into various types of Hoyer Lifts and whether or not one can be installed in Needham Centre.

With regard to the Oval, Mr. Young informed the Committee that the hardscape is the only thing that will be installed this year, there will be no new buildings. Mr. John Henry and his team are looking for Accessibility Committee members to assist them with the tender that will be going out on August 15th. Mr. Boyd, Ms. Newcombe, Mr. Meagher and the Chair offered to sit on a sub-committee for the Oval. Staff are also investigating parking options. Mr. Boyd stated that the landing pad for the #6 bus has to be installed so that individuals with accessibility issues can get off the bus. The bus stop is a mud patch at this time.

Ms. Bryant asked whether or not the Committee had been provided a new list of facilities to investigate and Mr. Young said that he would provide a new list to the Committee.

7.1.2 Committee Member Update – None

8. ADDED ITEMS – None

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

Councillor Blumenthal requested that the September meeting date be changed, since it will be his last meeting and it will fall on Rosh Hashanah and he will be unable to attend.

MOVED by Councillor Blumenthal, and seconded by Mr. Aird, that September's meeting be changed from September 17th to September 10th. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Jenny Benson
Legislative Support