

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

February 18, 2013

PRESENT:

Lisa Pottie, Chair
Theresa Horwill, Vice-Chair
Councillor Jennifer Watts
Tom Boyd
Patricia Gates
Yvon Clement
Bob Hayter

REGRETS:

Marie Aitken
Cynthia Bryant
Krista Daley
Mark MacKenzie

STAFF:

Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant, HRM Human Resources
Supt. Cliff Falkenham, Halifax Regional Police
Patrick Meagher, Accessible Transit Manager, Metro Transit
Darren Young, Project Manager, HRM Planning & Infrastructure
Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant
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 Halifax Hall on the Main Floor of City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The Legislative Assistant called for nominations for Chair.

MOVED by Mr. Tom Boyd, seconded by Ms. Theresa Horwill, that Lisa Pottie be elected for the position of Chair of the Advisory Committee for Accessibility in HRM for 2013. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The Legislative Assistant called three times for any further nominations; there being none, she declared Ms. Lisa Pottie as Chair of the Advisory Committee for Accessibility in HRM.

Ms. Lisa Pottie assumed the Chair and the Legislative Assistant called for nominations for Vice Chair of the Advisory Committee for Accessibility in HRM for 2013.

MOVED by Ms. Lisa Pottie, seconded by Mr. Bob Hayter, that Theresa Horwill be elected for the position of Vice Chair of the Advisory Committee for Accessibility in HRM for 2013. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The Legislative Assistant called three times for any further nominations; there being none, she declared Ms. Theresa Horwill as Vice Chair of the Advisory Committee for Accessibility in HRM for 2013.

It was agreed by the Committee that they would wait to consider who would be appointed to the other groups and committees that the Accessibility Committee has representatives on. This would allow for more members to be present and for all Committee members to have a better understanding of what each role will involve.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – January 21, 2013

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Ms. Theresa Horwill, that the minutes of January 21, 2013 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Additions:

- 8.1 Public Libraries Universal Access Report
- 8.2 Access 2 Entertainment Card

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Ms. Theresa Horwill, that the agenda be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Roundtable introductions here provided.

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

5.1 Development of a Five Year Plan

Councillor Watts proposed that at the next meeting the Committee invite HRM Volunteer Services to work with the Committee in developing a strategic plan. She thought that it would be productive to have a staff-led meeting to begin mapping out what the Committee would like the next five years to look like. Staff will send out questions in advance of the meeting for Committee members to think about.

The Councillor noted that this meeting may take more time than usual and the Committee agreed to an extended meeting time of 3:45-6:45 pm for the March 18th meeting. A few Committee members brought up the fact that the Committee has a Terms of Reference (TOR) and that the Strategic Plan would have to take the TOR into consideration. Councillor Watts suggested that the TOR also be circulated in advance of the meeting and noted that they could ask Council to amend them if needed.

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

6.1 Disability Awareness Training – *Mr. Laughlin Rutt, HRM Diversity Consultant*

Training materials were circulated to the Committee.

Mr. Rutt noted that electronic copies of the training materials are available upon request. He stated that his presentation would focus on proper etiquette and using appropriate terminology.

Mr. Rutt reviewed the Disability Etiquette sheet with the Committee.

The Committee discussed the difficulties around numerous hidden disabilities that can create huge challenges for individuals carrying out everyday tasks but are not visible to others.

Mr. Rutt reviewed the Words with Dignity sheet with the Committee.

Mr. Rutt noted that the appropriate words to use change with time. When it comes to current appropriate terminology you should always put the word 'person' first so that everything is described from a person-first perspective. For example, a person who uses a wheelchair.

Mr. Rutt stated that it is very important for Committee members to set an example, use appropriate terminology and proper etiquette because Committee members are role models.

The Committee thanked Mr. Rutt for his presentation.

Councillor Watts suggested that perhaps “being a role model” should be considered in the Five Year Strategic Plan. She also suggested that the Committee have a discussion around the best ways for Committee members to relate to each other.

7. REPORTS /DISCUSSION

7.1 Update on accessibility assessment of HRM owned/operated buildings

7.1.1 Staff Update

Mr. Young reported to the Committee that they have installed over 54 door operators in the last year and that they are now installing them in the Sackville Arena and Spryfield Arena. He is also working on a standing offer for fire alarms that are visual and audible. He noted that the project at Mooseland discussed at last month’s meeting is under way.

Mr. Young asked for the Committee’s thoughts around a request for funding that came in from the Canada Games Centre for accessible fitness equipment. The Committee decided that Mr. Young should inform the Canada Games Centre that they are currently examining the best ways to allocate the accessibility funds and will discuss whether or not this request would qualify once that has been established. Councillor Watts suggested that they could look to some grants committees and the capital funds of the Councillor in their district and Mr. Boyd noted that the Sackville Sportsplex may have some accessible equipment to spare.

Mr. Rutt shared with the Committee that he was doing training at the Sackville Sports Stadium last week and a staff member approached him to say how much they appreciate the door operators that were installed. She said that they have six clients that come to the facility every day that require the use of the door operators, and they have made a big difference to these clients.

Mr. Young asked that the Facility Priority List be distributed to all of the new Committee members suggested that the Committee begin to look at some new projects. The Committee had a discussion around how they should go about deciding which projects to choose. A number of ideas were raised including which were the busiest, which were in the greatest need and which would involve altering work spaces that would allow for more individuals with accessibility challenges to be hired.

Ms. Gates brought up the CNIB document “Clearing Your Path” as a great reference document which addresses all aspects of potential challenges for individuals with visual impairments. Mr. Young shared that he uses the national version of this resource.

The Chair stated that she would like to have a more systematic way of establishing which buildings the Committee is going fund. Committee members agreed that they would discuss this further at the April meeting. The Chair requested that the full list of buildings be circulated to Committee members so that members can provide feedback.

7.1.2 Committee Member Update

Deferred to next meeting.

7.2 Committee Member Updates

7.2.1 Active Transportation Advisory Committee – *Cindy Bryant*

Ms. Bryant was not present at the meeting. Councillor Watts, who also attends the Committee, noted that there is going to be public consultation around the Active Transportation Plan review with meetings as well as discussion around how bike paths will be stretching across the peninsula.

7.2.2 Taxi & Limousine Liaison Group – *Tom Boyd*

Mr. Boyd reported that the Taxi & Limousine Liaison Group has not met but will be meeting on Thursday morning. He noted that there has been some publicity around taxi drivers not being represented appropriately at this Group and that the taxi drivers who are supposed to be the representatives on the Committee do not usually attend their meetings. He shared with the Committee that a number of the issues that have been publicized are going to be discussed at the meeting on Thursday.

Ms. Gates noted that she is very interested in issues surrounding cab drivers and guide dogs and a number of Committee members expressed concern around a lack of access to the meetings.

7.2.3 Pedestrian Safety Campaign – *Spt. Cliff Falkenham, HRP*

The Pedestrian Safety sheet was circulated to the Committee.

Spt. Falkenham reported to the Committee that the Halifax Regional Police have recently started a traffic safety campaign. They have decided to use the HRP/RCMP integrated traffic unit for this initiative and have identified six areas to focus on that have had a high volume of accidents over the last six years. Police officers will be stopping drivers and pedestrians in the specified areas and focussing on the educational aspect of the exercise. They are setup on Twitter @HfxRegPolice @HRPTrafficCop and on Facebook under HalifaxRegionalPolice and HRPTrafficCop.

Committee members expressed a number of concerns around both pedestrian and driver safety in HRM

Mr. Clement raised the issue that there are a number of intersections around HRM where he cannot tell when the light is green because there is no beeper installed. The three intersections he noted were the corner by the Girl Guide Club in Shearwater, by Tim Hortons in Fairview, the lights by the Woodside Ferry and the intersection by the Joseph Howe Superstore. The Committee asked that Traffic and Right-of-Way staff look into having the beeper installed at the intersections listed and report back to the Committee.

7.2.4 Emera Oval Permanent Building (*public engagement meeting Feb. 13/13*)

Ms. Horwill said that the biggest issue that was raised at the public engagement meeting was that there is no first aid room on the grounds. There will be another meeting held on April 17th where designs may be presented. It was confirmed for the Committee that the individuals who work at the Oval have First Aid training.

Another issue that was raised for Committee members was the fact that the architects that have been hired to design the oval are the same ones that designed the Canada Games Centre which has a number of accessibility challenges.

7.2.5 Redesign of Intersections on North Park Street (*public engagement meeting Feb. 27/13*)

Ms. Horwill advised that Traffic and Right-of-Way staff have requested a meeting with Mr. Boyd and Ms. Horwill to discuss several accessibility questions. That meeting will be taking place on Thursday.

Ms. Horwill noted that the Special Events Coordinator for HRM has also requested a meeting with Accessibility Committee representatives and noted that it seems the word is getting out about the Accessibility Committee and the value of consulting with the group.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Public Libraries Universal Access Report

Councillor Watts circulated the Halifax Public Libraries Universal Access sheet and requested that it be distributed to Committee members for the next meeting.

8.2 Access 2 Entertainment Card

The Access 2 Entertainment Card New Applicant Form was circulated to the Committee.

The Access 2 Entertainment Card allows individuals with disabilities to be accompanied to movies and other forms of entertainment by a support person for free.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE – March 18, 2013

The next meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee is scheduled for Monday, March 18, 2013 at 3:45 to 6:45 p.m. in Halifax Hall, main floor, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:02 pm.

Jenny Benson
Legislative Support

INFORMATION ITEMS

1. The Halifax Regional Municipality Building/Facility Profile Questionnaire was before the Committee.