



**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR ACCESSIBILITY IN HRM
MINUTES
October 19, 2015**

PRESENT: Patricia Gates, Chair
Councillor Steve Craig
Nancy Beaton
Yvon Clement
Gerry Post
Troy Nauffts
Mikiko Terashima

REGRETS: Krista Daley, Vice Chair
Councillor Wayne Mason
Meredith Fillmore

STAFF: Supt. Cliff Falkenham, Halifax Regional Police
Laughlin Rutt, Corporate Diversity Consultant, Government Relations &
External Affairs
Darren Young, Project Manager, HRM Planning & Infrastructure
Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant
Jenny Benson, Legislative Support

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to the Committee are available online: <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/access/151019-agenda.php>

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m., and the Committee adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax. Roll call was taken.

The Chair informed the Committee that Supt. Cliff Falkenham is retiring and this is his last meeting with the Committee. She thanked him for his many years of service on the Committee and wished him all the best.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 21, 2015

MOVED by Councillor Steve Craig, seconded by Mr. Yvon Clement,

THAT the minutes of September 21, 2015, be approved as circulated.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Addition:

8.1 Discussion with Special Guest Jonathan Taylor

MOVED by Councillor Steve Craig, seconded by Ms. Mikiko Terashima,

THAT the Order of Business be approved as amended.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – None

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – None

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence – None

6.2 Petitions – None

6.3 Presentation

6.3.1 Request for Feedback on Proposed Accessibility Design Guidelines for the Built Environment – *Doolin O'Reilly, Dalhousie School of Planning*

The following information was before the Committee:

- “Request for Feedback on Proposed Accessible Design Guidelines for the Built Environment” from Doolin O'Reilly.

Ms. Doolin O'Reilly introduced herself and explained that she is a graduate student at the Dalhousie School of Planning, working on a project under the instruction of Committee member Ms. Mikiko Terashima (Dalhousie School of Planning faculty member) on accessible planning in downtown Halifax. Her specific focus is looking at accessibility for wheelchairs on Spring Garden Road between Barrington Street and the Public Gardens. The goal of her project is wheelchair-friendly urban design guidelines.

Ms. O'Reilly asked the Committee to provide feedback on the information circulated.

The Committee debated about the benefits of slotted curb cuts vs. rounded curb cuts. It was noted that this is an ongoing debate between individuals with various disabilities, who find merit in both designs.

Ms. Beaton shared that with regards to street furniture a number of individuals struggle to find places to rest. With an aging population many individuals have needs in this area.

Councillor Craig shared that it would be helpful for a gap analysis to be included, especially if the information were to be put forward to Council. It should include the current practice in the municipality compared to the national standard and the proposed changes with an explanation as to why.

Mr. Young informed Ms. O'Reilly that a significant amount of research has been done in this area. He provided her his card and offered to put her in contact with municipal staff.

Councillor Craig explained that there are areas with bus stops that only have sidewalks on one side of the road. There are no curb cuts on the non-sidewalk side of the street because there are no sidewalks. Councillor Craig explained that this could strand a wheelchair user on the curb and suggested this as a potential area for investigation. Ms. O'Reilly noted that this issue does not exist in the area that she is examining.

Ms. O'Reilly asked for volunteers, both wheelchair users and others, to assist with her with an audit of Spring Garden Road once her guidelines are complete. She asked the Committee to email her if they are interested, or with any further feedback on the project presented.

7. REPORTS/DISCUSSION

7.1. Accessible Parking in the Downtown Core – *Laughie Rutt, Corporate Diversity Consultant*

Mr. Rutt explained that a resident contacted the Mayor's Office to discuss difficulties he was experiencing finding accessible parking in the downtown. Mr. Rutt explained that the individual uses a wheelchair and has a hoist built into his vehicle, which is too tall for operation in parking garages. He is constantly struggling to find on street parking for his vehicle and leaves work throughout the day to add change to parking metres and move his car. Private parking lots are not accessible because the ticket machines are on a pedestal and he cannot reach high enough to get his ticket. Mr. Rutt indicated that last year the gentleman had received over 140 parking tickets, most of which were thrown out in court.

Mr. Dave McCusker, Manager of Transportation Planning, explained that he is working on the parking portfolio while a new position is being created. Mr. McCusker explained that there used to be a significant amount of off-street, surface parking but it is now scarce as many of the lots are being developed. Mr. Rutt added that the need for accessible parking exceeds the supply.

The Committee remarked that this individual made a choice in terms of the mode of transportation that best suits his needs, and is making an effort to integrate within the workforce. It was suggested that individuals in such a circumstance should be able to apply for accommodations, such as a special parking permit by fee.

The Committee agreed to allow Ryan Delehanty from Accessible Media Inc. to contribute to the discussion. He explained that some of the parking lots on Lower Water Street have begun tracking the license plates of individuals with monthly passes which would take away the issues around height of the ticket machines. He explained there may be lots on Dresden Row and by the Citadel that operate in this same way.

Mr. Post explained that there are not many cases like this, perhaps 4 or 5 individuals, who would require a special permit. There could even be a fee because even with a fee the frustration of having to return to his vehicle throughout his workday would be lessened.

Mr. Jim Donovan, Manager, Municipal Compliance, informed the Committee that in order for the Municipality to issue special permits there will need to be By-law amendments to By-laws P-500 and P-1000, which would take some time.

MOVED by Councillor Craig, seconded by Nancy Beaton,

THAT the Accessibility Advisory Committee recommend that the Transportation Standing Committee request staff, within the current parking by permit review underway, consider options toward the possibility of creating parking by permit for accessible vehicles at parking metres.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7.2. Update - Planning for 2015 Town Hall Meeting on Accessibility

Ms. Weagle updated the Committee on the status of planning for the Town Hall Meeting on Accessibility, which will be held on Monday, November 9th from 6:30pm-8:30pm in the Common Room (bingo hall) at the Dartmouth Sportsplex.

A number of Halifax staff will be on the panel this year including Mr. Darren Young, Mr. Damion Stapledon, Mr. Taso Koutroulakis, Mr. Ahmad Kidwai, Mr. Jim Donovan, and Ms. Jane Young. While Mr. Natalino has resigned, Ms. Weagle is still hoping that someone from Winter Operations will participate.

Staff have been asked to provide an update on what has happened in the last year and also upcoming projects.

Ms. Weagle explained that there were sound issues at this location in the past so a professional AV company has been contracted so ensure that the sound quality is good. She added that CART closed captioning, as well as ASL Interpreters will be provided.

Ms. Weagle requested that Committee members volunteer to help guide and assist attendees. Ms. Nancy Beaton offered to help if she can arrange transportation for her scooter. Mr. Rutt also offered.

The Chair requested that Committee members attend.

7.3. Update – Accessibility Assessment HRM Owned/Operated Buildings

Mr. Young reported that the work on community centres is 20-25% completed and continuing.

A consultant has been hired for the design work for the Cole Harbour outdoor pool and tennis courts which will include accessible washrooms and snack bar.

The consultants will start shortly on the audits for this year which will be focused on administration buildings that will shape the budget for next year.

Renovations are being done on the Youth Live building in Timberlea. This may become a recycling centre in 2016 so they are making the washrooms and entrance accessible for individuals dropping off recycling.

7.4 Committee Member Updates

7.4.1 Active Transportation Advisory Committee – Councillor Mason

Councillor Mason was absent from the meeting, the update was deferred until next month.

- **Appointment of an AAC representative to ATAC**

Ms. Beaton asked about the Committee's Terms of Reference, Ms. Weagle will email them to her following the meeting.

7.4.2 Taxi & Limousine Liaison Group – *Pat Gates*

- **Appointment of an AAC representative to TLLG**

Mr. Post expressed interest in being appointed to the Taxi and Limousine Liaison Group.

MOVED by Councillor Steve Craig, seconded by Mr. Yvon Clement,

THAT Mr. Gerry Post be appointed as Accessibility Advisory Committee representative to the Taxi and Limousine Liaison Group.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

An observer to the meeting expressed difficulties with accessible. The Committee thanked her for coming and expressing her point of view.

7.4.3 Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee – *Krista Daley*

In Ms. Daley's absence, Councillor Craig informed the Committee that Crosswalk Safety Awareness Day will be taking place on November 4th. There will be events at a number of crosswalks around Halifax as well as a celebration at Parade Square.

7.5 Discussion – “Low Hanging Fruit”/Easily Achievable Fixes

No items were brought forward.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Discussion with Special Guest Jonathan Taylor

The Chair introduced Mr. Taylor, a young man who is blind and has been traveling the world backpacking alone.

Mr. Taylor explained that a few years ago he discovered that no blind individual had backpacked independently before. He explained the popularity of backpacking with the sighted community and the lack of resources available for the blind community. Canada is Mr. Taylor's 22nd country in two years. In each country he visits, Mr. Taylor speaks with groups about the need to develop resources that would allow for non-sighted individuals to backpack. His intention is to develop resources for blind children that will help them to better prepare for these kinds of adventures.

Mr. Taylor commented that critical thinking and social skills are his main focus. While mobility and planning skills are very important, the critical thinking and social skills are of the greatest assistance when one is dropped into a location that they are unfamiliar with. Networking and contacts throughout the world are also very important.

In response to Committee questions, Mr. Taylor explained that Halifax was fairly easy to navigate especially when compared to Eastern Europe where he most recently was. He also described Halifax as friendly and quaint – a mixture of the bustle of a big city with small town feel. Chicago and Venice were challenging for Mr. Taylor to navigate.

The Chair expressed her interest in Mr. Taylor's ideas around critical thinking and agreed that it is going to be a very good approach that will help with the fear and trepidation that often accompany vision loss.

Mr. Nauffts asked what Mr. Taylor travels with. Mr. Taylor stated that he travels with a white cane, his iPhone and a backpack of clothes.

The Committee thanked Mr. Taylor for sharing.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday, November 16, 2015 4:00-6:00 p.m., Halifax Hall, main floor, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Jenny Benson
Legislative Support