



**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR ACCESSIBILITY IN HRM
MINUTES
September 19, 2016**

PRESENT:

Krista Daley, Vice Chair
Councillor Steve Craig
Councillor Wayne Mason
Yvon Clement
Patricia Gates, Chair
Mikiko Terashima
Nancy Beaton
Gerry Post

REGRETS:

Sue Uteck

STAFF:

Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant, Government Relations & External Affairs
Darren Young, Project Manager, Corporate Facility Design & Construction
Glen Banon, Manager, Halifax Transit
Mr. Dave McCusker, Manager, Strategic Transportation Planning
Cathy Collett, 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/160919aac-agenda.php>

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m., and the Committee adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax. Roll call was taken.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 18, 2016

Amendments:

1. Under item 9.1.1. the name of the Ardmore Service Dog Park is misspelled.
2. Under item 9.2.3 the word 'sited' should be 'sighted'.

MOVED by Ms. Meredith Fillmore, seconded by Ms. Mikiko Terashima,

THAT the minutes of July 18, 2016, be approved as amended.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

- 10.1 Update on Metro Transit Stop Annunciation System
- 10.2 Update on Access-A-Bus Restraints
- 10.3 Update on Access-A-Bus and Accessible Taxis

MOVED by Councillor Waye Mason, seconded by Councillor Steve Craig,

THAT the agenda be approved as Amended.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - NONE
5. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST - NONE
6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - NONE
7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS
 - 7.1 Correspondence - None
 - 7.2 Petitions – None
 - 7.3 Presentations - None
8. INFORMATION ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD – NONE
9. REPORTS/DISCUSSION
 - 9.1. STAFF

9.1.1 Darren Young, Project Manager, Operations Support – Update

Mr. Young provided the following update to the Committee:

- Ardmore Dog Park work is complete. Mr. Clement asked for a large sign to be put up at the park like there was at the old dog park.
- Accessibility railings have been put up in Scotiabank Centre, Mr. Young's team is looking at additional spaces where railings would be useful.
- Working on accessibility features at Central Library such as door operators in all family washrooms. Ms. Gates requested that a railing be put into Paul O'Regan Hall. Mr. Young
- Cole Harbour outdoor pool completed with good results.
- Working out in rural centers such as Sackville Heights, there are a number of projects moving along.
- Mr. Young is investigating products that may assist in increased delineation of the stairs at the Acadia Centre.
- Councillor Mason shared a good news story regarding Parks Staff providing a paved loop and accessible picnic table at Inglis Street School to allow a student in a wheelchair the ability to access the playground. This work happened within a 45 day period.

9.1.2 Mr. Trevor Harvey – Winter Works

Mr. Harvey provided the following update to the Committee:

- Over the summer Mr. Harvey's unit began putting accessible ramps on various streets throughout HRM.
- Construction has started to improve access to some crosswalk buttons, making it easier for individuals to reach the buttons now and in the winter. Mr. Post noted that when the area around a crosswalk button is dug up, the construction needs to be completed quickly. Construction made it so that Mr. Post was unable to cross at a particular crosswalk for a month.
- Mr. Harvey has begun to gather pictures of sidewalks, streets and intersections that pose accessibility challenges.
- An Educational Awareness Program has been created around accessibility and it is going to be rolling out to all of the sidewalk officers. This program will assist these officers in making sidewalks more accessible. All winter operators are also going to be going through the awareness training and discovering how their work impacts individuals with accessibility challenges.
- A number of Mr. Harvey's staff will be spending a day at the Nova Scotia Rehabilitation Centre on October 3rd to learn more about accessibility challenges that individuals face throughout HRM.
- Mr. Harvey requested the Committee's feedback on project Lift the Blade. The Committee expressed that when a sidewalk is clear at the beginning they expect the entire sidewalk to be clear. A sudden impediment could create challenges and dangerous situations. The Committee also noted that it was their understanding that individuals should be clearing their own sidewalks. There were a number of comments around the fact that the city needs to be very clear around what they expect from residents after a snowfall, perhaps through a Public Service Announcement campaign.

9.1.3 Presentation Regarding Integrated Mobility Plan – Mr. David McCusker, Manager, Strategic Transportation Planning

Mr. McCusker provided an update on the Integrated Mobility Plan:

-Public Engagement is being initiated over the next few weeks with eight workshop and information sharing sessions scheduled in four locations. This round of sessions will be focused on visioning and bold moves, finding out what residents are looking for.

-A draft plan should be available in February-March 2017

-Pilot projects will be introduced shortly.

-Mr. Post noted that a developer currently working on Spring Garden is using the ambient temperature of grey water to melt snow and ice in the winter. He suggested that Mr. McCusker investigate this for his project. He also noted that Mr. McCusker's team should be taking into account the increased use of autonomous vehicles over the next few years.

-Mr. Clement expressed concerns around the width of sidewalks, Mr. McCusker noted that they will be reviewing standards as part of this process.

-Mr. Clement raised concerns about car dealerships parking cars too close to the sidewalk creating a dangerous situation for individuals with low or no vision who can unknowingly walk into a hitch. Mr. McCusker informed the Committee that he would look into this issue.

9.2. Committee Member Updates

9.2.1 Active Transportation Committee – Councillor Mason

Councillor Mason was unable to attend the meeting.

9.2.2 Taxi & Limousine Liaison Group – Gerry Post

Mr. Post was unable to attend the meeting but informed the Committee that Casino Taxi has initiated a training program for all of their drivers that includes accessibility challenges as well as sexual assault. Mr. Post applauded this initiative.

The Committee decided to discuss Agenda Item 10. Added Items before discussing the Work Plan.

10. ADDED ITEMS

10.1. Metro Transit Annunciation System

Mr. Bannon provided an update on the Annunciation System.

-Halifax Transit has spent the last few months completing the database of all of the bus stops in HRM so the technology and the buses now knows where they are.

-The system has been tested extensively with the final test scheduled for next week. Once the final test has occurred the Accessibility Committee will be invited to come for a ride on one of the buses.

-Mr. Bannon noted that he is currently working on having visual screens at the back of the bus to accommodate any rear-facing passengers.

- Councillor Mason mentioned that it would be nice to have larger signs and also have more at-height bus schedules at key stops like terminals, near the hospitals, near the universities and near shopping districts.

-The Chair noted that not everyone who is blind reads brail so having raised tactile can be very helpful.

-Ms. Beaton suggested that it would be very useful if there were more options for individuals to sit while waiting for the bus. Mr. Bannon noted that his number one priority is making all of the bus stops accessible.

10.2. Access-A-Bus Restraints

-Mr. Bannon noted that the majority of busses currently have the 4-point tie down system but the city was moving towards a passive restraint system to provide more independence to users. These systems were designed with assumptions about the way residents' wheelchairs were designed.

-Many of the issues seem to be around wheelchair users having something on the back of their wheelchair before the passive restraint is used.

-Metro Transit is currently examining the passive restraint and will be piloting the new quantum system in December. The Quantum Securement Station allows users to back their chair into position and then a user-operated arm comes down so that users can steer their chair into place. The Quantum System allows a wide range of mobility systems including scooters. This will provide more independence for those who can use it. Operators will still be available for any required assistance.

-Mr. Post noted that with the current passive system drivers often ask him how to use it.

10.3. Access-A-Bus and Accessible Taxis

Mr. Bannon shared with the Committee that a report is currently being put together based on an Request for Expression of Interest (RFEOI) for the Accessibility Committee and Council. This report will discuss possible augmentation of the accessible services provided by Halifax Transit and Access-A-Bus.

Mr. Bannon noted that unfortunately there was a low level of interest and there does not seem to be capacity in HRM with accessible taxis or other options. The findings from this will be going into the larger strategic review that will be going to Council as an information report later this year.

Mr. Post suggested that Halifax Transit deal directly with the Taxi & Limousine Liaison Group and noted that he believes that the wrong approach was taken regarding engagement.

Mr. Bannon noted that the Strategic Review is going to be addressing how to maximize the current assets that are available. For example evaluating the scheduling requirements of Access-A-Bus and whether or not they maximize vehicle usage.

9.2.3 Work Plan – Mikiko Terashima and Gerry Post

A document entitled "Goal Summary" and a document detailing the Committee's four main goals was before the Committee.

Ms. Terashima read through the four main goals of the Committee. The Committee agreed that these goals would be the focus at the workshop.

The Committee agreed that the next meeting, taking place on November 21st, would solely be focused on the Work Plan.

9.2.4 Town Hall Spring 2017 – Discussion

The Committee is postponing their Town Hall Meeting until the spring. A date will be chosen at the November meeting.

9.2.5 Other Business - NONE

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – November 21, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Jenny Benson
Legislative Support