



**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR ACCESSIBILITY IN HRM
MINUTES
November 21, 2016**

PRESENT: Patricia Gates, Chair
Krista Daley, Vice Chair
Deputy Mayor Steve Craig
Councillor Wayne Mason
Mikiko Terashima
Nancy Beaton
Gerry Post

REGRETS: Sue Uteck
Yvon Clement
Meredith Fillmore

STAFF: Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant, Government Relations & External Affairs
Darren Young, Project Manager, Corporate Facility Design & Construction
Damion Stapledon, Community Recreation Planner
Noreen Guphill, Inclusion and Accessibility Specialist, Parks & Recreation
Heather MacKenzie, Diversity & Accessibility Manager, Halifax Public
Libraries
Liam MacSween, 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/161121aac-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 – September 19, 2016

MOVED by Councillor Waye Mason, seconded by Ms. Mikiko Terashima,

THAT the minutes of September 19, 2016, be approved as circulated.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

MOVED by Ms. Krista Daley, seconded by Ms. Nancy Beaton,

THAT the agenda be approved as Circulated.

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 & PRESENTATIONS

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 Introduction – Noreen Guptill, Inclusion & Accessibility Specialist, Parks & Recreation

Mr. Stapledon introduced Ms. Noreen Guptill. Ms. Guptill has been hired as the Inclusion & Accessibility Specialist. Mr. Stapledon shared his excitement to have her as part of the Parks & Recreation team.

Ms. Guptill informed the Committee that she will be working on the Inclusion & Accessibility Policy over the next six to eight months. She will also be working on initiatives involving newcomers to the province including working on hiring a navigator for families new to the province.

Mr. Stapledon explained that he will no longer be on the Committee, Ms. Guptill will be taking his place.

9.1.2 Accessibility Improvements – Heather MacKenzie, Diversity & Accessibility Manager, Halifax Public Libraries

Ms. MacKenzie provided the following update to the Committee:

-NVDA screen reader has been installed on all public computers at all library branches with the October computer update.

-At the Central Library, Automatic Door Openers will be installed for all of the family washrooms. There are 5, one on each floor. The install has been approved and will be going ahead shortly.

-Hearing Assistive Technology has been installed in Paul O'Regan Hall at the Central Library and it is already in the meeting rooms.

- Some library facilities are going to be a part of accessibility audits that are going to be happening in HRM. Ms. MacKenzie noted that she is looking forward to seeing the results.

-Contrasting colour dots have been put on the clear gates to make them easier to see. The dots will also be placed on some other clear surfaces such as windows.

-Alderney Gate Library was the recipient of the CCTV monitor.

-The library will be partnering with the Blue Nose Ability Film Festival.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Young explained that the elevator buttons in the Central Library have elevated numbers and there is braille on some buttons such as the emergency call button. The elevator buttons are located below the touch screen on the left side as you enter the elevator. The Committee suggested that this information be widely publicized for individuals with low and no vision.

9.1.3 Darren Young, Project Manager, Operations Support – Update

Mr. Young provided the following updates to the Committee:

-Bathroom door levers need to be ordered before the automated door operators can be installed in the Central Library.

-Audits are proposed to happen at the libraries next year. An outside firm will be doing the accessibility audits.

-The YouthLive building on St. Margaret's Bay Road is now accessible.

-Mr. Young is seeking to upgrade some audio-only fire alarms to become audio and visual alarms.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Young noted that the B651 Guidelines work as the guiding factor for all decisions.

The Committee discussed the fact that the Rick Hansen Foundation is developing a full set of accessibility recommendations and will be visiting Halifax next week. When completed, the guidelines will serve as a national standard that rates the accessibility of buildings.

Deputy Mayor Craig arrived at 4:30PM.

9.2. COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

9.2.1 Update on Work Plan – Pat Gates

Deferred to 9.2.5

9.2.2 Discussion 2017 Town Hall Meeting

The Committee requested that the Town Hall Meeting take place on May 8th or 15th and requested that Liam provide options at December meeting.

9.2.3 Active Transportation Advisory Committee – Councillor Mason

Councillor Mason did not attend the meeting.

9.2.4 Taxi & Limousine Liaison Group – Gerry Post

Mr. Post did not attend the meeting.

The Chair shared that the meeting focused mostly on decal that will allow individuals to identify cab numbers easily if any issues will arrive. Unfortunately is not effective for individuals with low or no vision so the industry will be researching what other jurisdictions are doing nationwide.

Casino Taxi has come out with a training video that they will be showing to their drivers. The Chair suggested that the Committee view the video at some point so that the Committee can see the video. The video is not complete. The Committee expressed interest in viewing it.

9.2.5 Work Plan Update – Mikiko Terashima & Gerry Post

A document outlining the four main goals was before the Committee.

A document entitled “Goal Summary Compiled Based on the Work Plan Session Notes and Laughie’s Synthesis” was before the Committee.

Ms. Terashima read through the four main goals of the Committee.

Mr. Post emphasized the goal around realigning and streamlining communication since not all issues discussed at this Committee are transportation-related. He proposed that all new proposals being developed should include “Accessible Implications” as a standard item.

Mr. Post expressed excitement around Council’s proposal to become a leader in accessibility. He is committed to bringing together all interested parties and helping make this happen as he has done in other parts in the world. Mr. Post is planning to have a proposal completed next month and has volunteered to work on this full time for the next year.

Mr. Rutt provided an update on communication. A staff report has been requested in this regard and assigned through the Clerk’s Office with some involvement from Mr. Rutt’s office. The options are to leave the reporting structure the way that it is or have the Committee report to Economic Development. The deadline for the report to be filed is in December.

Mr. Rutt noted that the provincial legislation that was recently passed stated that municipalities with over 10,000 people have to have an Accessibility Committee. He noted that there is a second clause requiring that 50% of that Committee be individuals with disabilities. Mr. Rutt noted that this is restrictive as there are a number of individuals who are relatives and caregivers of individuals with disabilities that could provide valuable input in this regard.

Ms. Terashima noted that challenges exist between what the AAC would like to do and what they are mandated and allowed to do. The question is whether or not the Committee is going to work within the guidelines of its mandate or if it is going to push against the confines. She noted that some of the actions outlined in the table would change the current role of the Committee.

Deputy Mayor Craig expressed his support and the support of the Mayor for the Committee and the work that it does.

Deputy Mayor Craig left the meeting at 5:07PM.

The Committee expressed a number of frustrations around its role and mandate. Mr. Post noted that some of the changes that need to be made will cost time and money and may need to happen outside of the Committee because of its structure and mandate. He referred to the current role of the Committee as a 'Complaints Committee'. The Committee expressed a desire to solve issues by taking a more proactive approach.

The Committee believes that the Business Units that are working to make their services more accessible should be rewarded by the municipality.

Mr. Post will be providing a presentation to the Committee at the December meeting.

The Committee requested that Mr. Liam MacSween determine which of the Actions fall under the Committee's current mandate and which are outside of it.

The Committee requested that the Clerk attend the next AAC Meeting and outline the current mandate of the Committee.

Mr. Rutt discussed challenges that will arise around the prioritization of the development of accessibility policies. There are numerous large, widespread questions and the biggest question will be which ones do you want to do first? Also, if you request feedback from the public how will you prioritize the responses and choose which disabilities will be addressed first?

The Committee expressed support for two changes proposed by Mr. Post:

1. More public notice for Council meetings so individuals with disabilities can attend e.g. 8 days advanced notice
2. Adopt a policy that requires notes and recommendations from city staff to include Accessibility Impacts as a standard section.

The Committee requested that Ms. Tracy Jones-Grant, Manager, Diversity and Inclusion, attend the December AAC meeting.

10. ADDED ITEMS – NONE

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – December 12, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Jenny Benson
Legislative Support