

Proposal for a Town Hall on Accessibility

Background: This kind of event, which has been held in other cities, including Saint John and Moncton, creates an opportunity for residents and City staff to address accessibility concerns together. The focus is on addressing solutions for municipal infrastructure such as sidewalks, crosswalks and other potential physical barriers. It is critical that the event involve City staff who are actually able to implement any agreed upon changes, such as moving or adding a crosswalk, or improving the cut in a sidewalk. The emphasis of the event is practical and short term, with acknowledgement that some solutions may take longer.

Suggested Format: A forum with a moderator and interpreters, hosted by HRM's Accessibility Advisory Committee with the support of the Disability Rights Coalition. Light refreshments of coffee/cookies only.

Presenters/Responders: A panel of representatives from relevant city departments and members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The moderator should be a member of the Committee.

Where and When: Bloomfield Centre or another fully accessible location, in spring 2012 – possibly during Disability Awareness Week.

Duration: 1.5 hours

Audience: Members of the disabled communities, representatives of relevant organizations, HRM employees and other members of the public with an interest in issues of access.

Invitations: Once a date has been set and the standard invitation is agreed upon, HRM staff, Disability Rights Coalition volunteers and other representatives will distribute invitations via email. RSVP process to be determined. Please note that a minimum of 1 month notice should be given to enable people to arrange transportation.

Follow Up: Names of attendees should be collected so that HRM can follow up with any progress reports if desired.

Desired Outcomes: The immediate result will be the generation of good will through a sense that HRM is looking for ways to hear and engage members of the disabled communities around their concerns. It is hoped that this can become an annual event and an ongoing means for HRM residents to bring forward their accessibility issues in a forum where the people who can create solutions are present. It has the potential to be a signature event for HRM for Disability Awareness Week in the future.

Note:

Access Awareness Week 2012: May 27 – June 2