

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

November 21, 2011

PRESENT: Theresa Horwill, Chair
Troy Nauffts
Mary Newcombe
Brian Aird
Cynthia Bryant
David MacLean
Councillor Mary Wile
Councillor Jerry Blumenthal

REGRETS: Tom Boyd, Vice Chair

STAFF: Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant, Human Resources
Supt. Cliff Falkenham, Halifax Regional Police
Darren Young, Project Manager, Planning & Infrastructure
Damion Stapledon, Community Recreation Planner, Community
& Recreation Services
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 the Media Room, 1st Floor, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

The Committee agreed to move the Election of Chair and Vice Chair as the first order of business.

10. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

The Chair turned the meeting over to the Legislative Assistant.

The Legislative Assistant called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Advisory Committee for Accessibility in HRM.

MOVED by Mary Newcombe, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal that Ms. Theresa Horwill be nominated Chair of the Advisory Committee for Accessibility in HRM.

The Legislative Assistant called three times for further nominations. Hearing none, **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Ms. Theresa Horwill then assumed the Chair. The Legislative Assistant called for nominations for the position of Vice Chair of the Advisory Committee for Accessibility in HRM.

MOVED by Councillor Blumenthal, seconded Ms. Newcombe, that Mr. Tom Boyd be nominated Vice Chair of the Advisory Committee for Accessibility in HRM.

The Legislative Assistant called three times for further nominations. Hearing none, **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

The Legislative Assistant will contact Mr. Boyd, who had forwarded regrets for this meeting, and confirm his willingness to assume the role of Vice Chair.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 17, 2011

MOVED by Mary Newcombe, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal, that the minutes of October 17, 2011 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Additions:

- 8.1 Troy Nauffts – Accessibility Pilot Project

Deletions:

7.1.2 Needham Centre (deferred to January meeting)

MOVED by Councillor Wile, seconded by David MacLean, that the agenda be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Educational Awareness

4.1.1 HRM website accessibility – Kelly Marney, HRM Web Master

The Policy Statement for Inclusion on the Website was before the Committee.

This item was deferred to the January 2012 meeting.

4.1.2 Public Service Announcements/Awareness Campaigns – Shaune MacKinley, Manager, HRM Communications

Ms. MacKinley began her time with the Committee meeting by opening up the floor to questions. She informed committee members that HRM Communications uses every form of media available to them, including the recent addition of Twitter. Councillor Blumenthal expressed concerns regarding communications reaching elderly individuals who may not have computers and suggested that HRM Communications send out their messaging to the Manors.

Ms. MacKinley informed the Committee that her department is currently working on more direct stakeholder outreach at this time and she would be happy to send the information out if she was provided with a list.

Mr. Aird was concerned about the time gap between when a release is sent to media and when it is actually aired. Ms. MacKinley informed the Committee that it gets aired on the same day and is often within the hour.

The idea was raised to promote Information Radio as a good information source which is something that HRM only does if there is a pending emergency.

When asked about whether or not television could be used more often, Ms. MacKinley informed the committee that television is currently used for marketing campaigns such as the Tree Lighting Ceremony or Natal Day but they are extremely costly.

There was a discussion around whether or not the Eastlink channel could be used to play public service announcements, however, Ms. MacKinley believed there would be a significant cost attached that the Communications budget would not be able to support.

Councillors Blumenthal and Wile suggested the idea to use some of the time that is used for Council advertising to be used for Accessibility Committee messaging.

Mr. Nauffts brought up the need to spread messaging around potential hazards for individuals with disabilities throughout HRM communities (e.g. individuals leaving their garbage bags in the middle of the sidewalks posing a hazard to individuals with visual impairments). Ms. MacKinley suggested that the committee utilize a new online newsletter that will be going out as an effective way of relaying this information. She also thought that they might be able to put together an awareness campaign in this regard through their marketing division and agreed to investigate who might have the capacity to do this in their budget. Mr. Nauffts emphasized that getting these messages out into the communities will make HRM a better place to live and walk in.

Ms. MacKinley suggested that the Committee may also be able to spread this messaging through an HRM publication entitled Naturally Green which talks about environmental issues. It has a focus on appropriate waste disposal and would be a valuable tool to inform individuals about how to put out their waste in a way that will not impede individuals with disabilities.

Ms. MacKinley suggested that the Committee set communications priorities and inform her of them so that her staff can investigate the best ways to begin addressing them.

4.2 Disability Training for the Committee

Mr. Rutt is going to take a small portion of each meeting for the next few meetings to conduct disability training. The Committee agreed that there were not enough committee members present for the training to be effective at this meeting, however, he will begin on the January agenda.

4.3 Tactile Signage examples

Mr. Young presented tactile signage samples to the Committee that are up to the current standard for perusal. Mr. Nauffts had a strong preference towards the font that was used on the women's washroom sign compared to the lettering on the other signs. Mr. Young made the point that the Canada Games Centre will have signage similar to the one that Mr. Nauffts prefers. He also noted that HRM has a three year standing contract with the company that created the signs presented and after that it will have to go out to tender.

Mr. Aird asked whether or not the signs had been tested and recognized by individuals with disabilities. Mr. Young said that these signs had not been tested due to the fact that they were chosen a few years ago when there was no universally recognized format. HRM is attempting consistency instead by continuing on the same signage that has been in buildings when the buildings and signs are updated.

The idea was raised that perhaps HRM should consult with the company who they are using for universal signs due to the fact that they are an international company who may have knowledge in this area.

Mr. Young will confirm which font is going to be used in buildings for the January meeting.

Councillors Wile and Blumenthal left the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

5. NEW BUSINESS

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & PRESENTATIONS

6.1 Correspondence - None

6.2 Petitions - None

6.3 Presentation – None

7. REPORTS

7.1 Update on accessibility assessment of HRM owned/operated buildings

7.1.1 Staff Update

Mr. Young informed the Committee that the Eastern Shore Recreation Centre washroom has been completed and door operators are going to be installed beginning on Wednesday (November 23rd, 2011).

Three door operators are being added to Halifax Civic Arena and a viewing panel is also being added so that individuals can observe the ice from above.

Construction is under way at the North Woodside Community Centre on their barrier free washroom, however, there is no finalized completion date due to issues that arose once the work began.

Mr. Young is not sure how he is going to address the issues experienced in the accessibility stall in the men's washroom at the Metro Centre but is considering options around this. One option is to prevent the door from opening after a certain point.

7.1.2 Committee Member Update

Skating Oval

The Chair noted that a few Committee members attended the public meeting on the skating oval. She noted that the third lane parking close to the oval will be removed and

replaced with a bus stop and handicapped bus stop. It was announced at the meeting that the permanent slab for the access-a-bus stop has been poured.

It was not apparent to Committee members present that arrangements had been made for handicap parking close to the Oval, which was one of the major issues they brought to the attention of Community Recreation Services when they presented to the Accessibility Committee in October. The Committee noted that individuals with disabilities will find it very difficult to utilize any of the accessibility features of the Oval without accessible parking close to the skating oval. Supt. Falkenham will check on the status of the accessible parking spots around the Common. It was also noted that the vendors need to be accessible by wheelchairs.

At the meeting the Oval organizers presented a number of alterations that have been made to their plans based on the feedback that they have received. Committee members inquired a number of questions at the meeting around where individuals will be able to access sledges and whether or not there will be a lift along or wheelchair storage.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Mr. Nauffts' Pilot Project

Mr. Nauffts is starting a small pilot project to make recreational services more accessible and he is beginning his project by making a walking trail accessible to visually impaired.

There is a grant that Mr. Nauffts would like to apply for which requires him to identify a host and partners who can be municipal or non-profit organizations. He requested that the Committee to be a host, however, after consulting with Ms. Sherryll Murphy, Deputy Clerk, it was confirmed that the Committee cannot act as a host for Mr. Nauffts' project. He asked if the Committee could alternatively act as a partner and requested that it be investigated.

Mr. Stapledon offered to work with Mr. Nauffts outside of the Committee to find a host in their large database of non-profit organizations that HRM is currently working with.

8.2 Hearing Assistance System

The Committee discussed the need to have a hearing assistance system put in place for meetings for Ms. Bryant. It was suggested that a voice to written text system may work better than a voice amplification system, for Mr. Bryant's needs.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE – January 16th, 2012

9.1 Approval of the 2012 Meeting Schedule

MOVED by Mary Newcombe, seconded by Brian Aird that the meeting schedule for 2012 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

10. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting. See page 3.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Jenny Benson
Legislative Support