

**NORTH WEST TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

Wednesday, March 16, 2005

PRESENT: Mr. Phil Cox, Chair  
Mr. Bill Chaffey  
Mr. Alastair Lawrie  
Mr. Ron McKinnon  
Mr. Troy Mitchell  
Mr. Gunther Seyffarth

ABSENT: Mr. John Merrick (regrets)  
Councillor Brad Johns (regrets)

STAFF: Mr. Edward Robar, Coordinator, Transit Scheduling  
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm in the Charles Fenerty Room, Sackville Library, 636 Sackville Drive.

**2. APPROVAL OF ORDER OF BUSINESS AND ADDITIONS/DELETIONS**

- Additions:
- 7.1 Added Items
    - 7.1.1 Graffiti on Bus Stop Signs, Route 82 Millwood - Mr. Alastair Lawrie
    - 7.1.2 Resignation - Mr. Troy Mitchell
    - 7.1.3 Fare and Pass Information - Mr. Ron McKinnon
    - 7.1.4 Fenerty Road Bus Shelter Repairs - Mr. Gunther Seyffarth

The Committee agreed to the agenda as amended.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - February 16, 2005**

Corrections: For clarification add "off peak hours" on page 4 last bullet - *better service during off peak hours day time.*

**MOVED BY Mr. Gunther Seyffarth, seconded by Mr. Bill Chaffey that the minutes be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES**

- 4.1 Status Sheet Item
  - 4.1.1 Bench for Fenerty Road Bus Shelter

Mr. Robar advised the request for a bench at the Fenerty Road shelter is on the list.

The Committee agreed to deal with item 7.1.4 at this time.

**7. ADDED ITEMS**

- 7.1.4 Fenerty Road Bus Shelter Repairs

Mr. Seyffarth advised there is a hole in the roof of the bus shelter that requires repairs. Mr. Robar will send staff to do repairs.

#### 4.1.2 Snow Removal at Signalized Crosswalk Intersections

An e-mail response was received from staff indicating the intersection in Bedford was reviewed in January. HRM's Transportation and Public Works staff have indicated, during budget deliberations, that snow clearing at signalized intersections and around the pedestrian push buttons will be incorporated into next year's snow removal budget.

Mr. Bill Chaffey requested that all pedestrian push buttons at signalized crosswalks be removed as they give a false sense that if a pedestrian pushes the button, the light will change. In actuality, the light does not change no matter how often you push the button so the push buttons are in fact useless. The light at the Bedford Place Mall intersection will not change unless a car is exiting.

Committee members commented that the following pedestrian push buttons should also be reviewed: Metropolitan Avenue and First Lake Drive in Sackville and the section from the Chicken Burger to the Ultramar in Bedford.

#### 4.1.3 Dockyard Change in Hours

Mr. Robar advised Metro Transit has been watching the situation and there has been no impact on Metro Transit Service due to the change in the work hours at the Dockyard. Some Committee members indicated they have noticed a bit of an increase on certain days near the STP (Sewage Treatment Plant) construction site on Upper Water Street.

Committee members raised concern with the bus stop just before the MacDonald Bridge ramp access and just after the right turn onto Barrington Street. **Mr. Robar advised concern with this stop has been raised before and he will review the statistics for that stop. The Committee also requested information on the procedure to eliminate a bus stop from a route. Mr. Robar will provide information at the next meeting.**

#### 4.1.4 Transit Subsidies

- A draft document entitled METRO TRANSIT BUSES, RIDERS, AND SEATS PER YEAR was before the Committee. A copy is on file in the Municipal Clerk's Office.

Mr. Bill Chaffey circulated a document he had prepared with information received from Mr. Robar regarding statistics on Metro Transit ridership, buses and capacity from 1998 to 2005. This information is to be used as part of the report to the North West Community Council in regards to obtaining transit subsidies from other levels of government.

Committee members were encouraged to forward additional information/suggestions for the report to Mr. Chaffey and the Legislative Assistant.

The Committee suggested the following information be compiled and included in the report:

- Text will be necessary to explain the statistical information and purpose for the report.
- Explain why the seating went down.
- NOTE: the 2005 numbers will not be complete until March 2005.
- Explain statistics: such as the ridership/seat capacity means how many times a seat is used.
- Information shows good increase in ridership but it is bad for capacity. Seating capacity/peak vehicle is dropping dramatically. Less 10%. Does not tell you the picture at peak, just over the year.
- There has been no real promotion for taking transit yet and when that happens these numbers will change.
- Should include future expansion such as the U-Passes.
- Mr. Robar will provide information on load counts at peak periods to help show the number of passengers who are standing. He added he can provide those statistics for specific periods on every route that has 55 passengers or more.
- Objective is more capacity on peak periods. Off peak is not as great a problem except in the Bedford area and anyone using the route 80.
- Show the current situation and include the future growth and potential.
- Mr. Robar advised there are also good statistics on how many passengers were left behind due to buses being too full. The bus drivers reported 2500 people were left behind last year alone. The frequency of this occurrence and the number of people left behind are to be included.
- Suggested the information be narrowed down to the NWCC districts to grab the attention of the area Councillors.
- Include projection of what will happen when the current buses are replaced with low floor buses in regards to standing load and overloads not picking up.
- Include information from other cities of comparable size as well - passengers v. funding per capita. Mr. Robar will provide statistics on per capita across Canada regarding transit subsidies.
- Important to indicate passengers are standing on buses that travel over highways at high speed.
- Look at population growth in Halifax over the last twenty years as well to incorporate the "urban sprawl" which has resulted in the same buses, less frequency but more people and NO funding.
- As every 42 seater bus comes off service, a new 36 seater comes in, you are losing seating capacity. Conventional bus will only have 38 seats, 10 seats are lost for every one bus that is retired - a regular bus has 48 seats.
- Emphasize that Metro Transit wants to promote more transit use but cannot as it does not have the capacity to accommodate the increase.

Mr. Robar advised he is available to meet with Mr. Chaffey at any time to review/compile this information.

**5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - None**

**6. REPORTS - None**

**7. ADDED ITEMS**

7.1 Added Items

7.1.1 Graffiti on Bus Stop Signs, Route 82 Millwood

Mr. Alastair Lawrie advised that some bus stop signs have been spray painted and the numbers are not visible. Mr. Robar will send workers to repair the damage.

7.1.2 Resignation

Mr. Troy Mitchell regretfully announced his resignation from the Committee effective as of June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005 due to work/education and family commitments. The Committee reluctantly accepted Mr. Mitchells resignation. The North West Community Council Councillors will be made aware of the two vacancies on the Committee, one for District 2 and one for District 19.

7.1.3 Fare and Pass - Information

Mr. Ron McKinnon presented a copy of the Toronto bus pass and fare information pamphlet. He suggested HRM consider having a variety of passes such as family passes, event passes, weekend passes, day passes etc. **Mr. Robar advised that Metro Transit is reviewing these options and a report may be ready for the April meeting.** He added Metro Transit recently provided a Convention Transit Pass for a Karate Convention.

The Legislative Assistant advised once the information is received from Metro Transit, that this may be an item that could be forwarded on as report to NWCC requesting they recommend the idea of event passes to Regional Council. This would show that the Committee is active and would bring attention to the fact that there is a North West Transit Advisory Committee that pro-actively reviews transit issues, not just for the North West Community Council districts, but for all transit users.

7.1.4 Fenerty Road Bus Shelter Repairs

This item was dealt with previously. See page 3.

**8. NEXT MEETING DATE** - Wednesday, April 20, 2005

Items to be added to the next agenda:

1. Shelter for MSVU - Mr. Phil Cox
2. BRT update - Mr. Phil Cox
3. Transfer Issue - Mr. Alastair Lawrie
4. Review Metro Transit's Promotional logo "*Where Ever Life Takes You*" - Mr. Ron McKinnon

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm.

Chris Newson  
Legislative Assistant