

NORTH WEST TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday, February 15, 2006

PRESENT: Mr. Phil Cox, Chair,
Mr. Bill Chaffey, Vice-Chair
Mr. Ron McKinnon
Mr. John Merrick
Mr. Gunther Seyffarth

ABSENT
WITH REGRETS: Councillor Brad Johns
Mr. Alain Bourgeois
Mr. Alastair Lawrie

STAFF AND
OTHERS: Mr. Edward Robar, Metro Transit
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 Nauss Room, Lebrun Centre, Holland Avenue, Bedford.

2. APPROVAL OF ORDER OF BUSINESS AND ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Additions: 7.2.1 Terms of Reference - Review - Mr. Chaffey
7.2.2 Route 84 Outbound - Mr. Cox

The agenda was **approved as amended**.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - January 18, 2006

Approval of the minutes was **deferred** as the minutes were circulated that afternoon and the Committee did not have sufficient time to review the information.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Status Sheet Item

4.1.1 Transit Study Update

Mr. Bill Chaffey commented that he is waiting for the October 2005 data from Metro Transit. Mr. Robar responded that it may take up to six months to obtain that information as there is only one data entry person entering the information. Mr. John Merrick volunteered to do data entry for one day to assist Metro Transit in entering the information.

MOVED BY Mr. John Merrick, seconded by Mr. Bill Chaffey that the statistical data from Metro Transit be received by the March meeting of the North West Transit Advisory Committee.

Mr. Cox suggested that a request be made that the Route 80-87 data be entered first so that the Committee may access that information. Mr. Robar will forward a response through the Legislative Assistant regarding these suggestions.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED BY Mr. Ron McKinnon, seconded by Mr. Gunther Seyffarth that the Northwest Transit Advisory Committee forward a report to the Northwest Community Council

regarding the lack of provincial and federal subsidies for transit services in the Halifax Regional Municipality. The report is to emphasize the fact that other cities receive subsidies for transit services as indicated on the graph that was previously circulated to the Committee (the graph is to be included with the report). Further, the report is to urge the Northwest Community Councillors to take immediate action in obtaining transit subsidies from the provincial and federal government levels in order to address the serious existing service deficiencies within Metro Transit.

The Committee commented that existing service deficiencies (overcrowding on buses, commuters being left standing at the bus stop due to overcrowding, the inability to extend services and the inability to promote transit use due to a lack of resources) must be addressed. The introduction of more U-Passes and the possibility of the Commonwealth Games coming to Halifax are cause for concern as Metro Transit does not have the resources to meet the demand on the transit system. The previously circulated graph indicated that HRM is paying the highest cost recovery from the fare box in the country.

Without a vote being taken on the motion on the floor, the Committee agreed to deal with item 7.2.1 Terms of Reference at this time.

Mr. Chaffey suggested the Committee review their Terms of Reference before proceeding with the motion as an amendment to the Terms of Reference may be required. Mr. Chaffey circulated a revised Terms of Reference for the Committee's consideration. The suggested changes are in relation to expanding the mandate of the Committee to include pedestrian and vehicle issues as they relate to Metro Transit service.

MOVED BY Mr. John Merrick, seconded by Mr. Gunther Seyffarth that the Northwest Transit Advisory Committee approve the revised Terms of Reference and that the revisions be forwarded to the Northwest Community Council for approval. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The Committee resumed its discussion on the Transit Subsidy report and the following motion to forward a report to the Northwest Community Council:

MOVED BY Mr. Ron McKinnon, seconded by Mr. Gunther Seyffarth that the Northwest Transit Advisory Committee forward a report to the Northwest Community Council regarding the lack of provincial and federal subsidies for transit services in the Halifax Regional Municipality. The report is to emphasize the fact that other cities receive subsidies for transit services as indicated on the graph that was previously

circulated to the Committee (the graph is to be included with the report). Further, the report is to urge the Northwest Community Councillors to take immediate action in obtaining transit subsidies from the provincial and federal government levels in order to address the serious existing service deficiencies within Metro Transit.

Mr. Robar advised that he will reference the fact book and will update the graph to show information for approximately five years. In response to a question by the Committee, Mr. Robar advised that the Federal and Provincial governments have provided some funding for Metro Transit which was used for the Transit Showcase (Metro Link).

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4.1.2 MSVU Shelter

Mr. Robar advised the shelter is on order and should arrive in the Fall of 2006.

The Committee agreed to forward a motion to the Northwest Community Council to ensure the request for a shelter is given proper attention and follows process.

MOVED BY Mr. Bill Chaffey, seconded by Mr. Ron McKinnon that the Northwest transit Advisory Committee forward a report to the Northwest Community Council requesting an additional shelter at the Mount St. Vincent University location (outbound). Further, that the shelter be positioned so that the entrance will be facing away from the Bedford Highway to protect commuters from being splashed by passing traffic. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4.1.3 Pedestrian Walkway Sackville Area Near Highway 101

The Committee agreed to move forward with the recommendation as made at the January 18, 2006 meeting with one slight change: add the word "expected" before "due to increase".

MOVED BY Mr. John Merrick, seconded by Mr. Gunther Seyffarth that the Northwest Transit Advisory Committee recommends that the Northwest Community Council request that the appropriate HRM and Provincial Government Departments address the issue of public safety by providing a safe means to traverse the Old Sackville Road/Beaverbank Road/Walker Service Road/Beaverbank On/Off Ramp due to the expected increase in frequency of pedestrians crossing to the new Metro Transit Terminal. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The Committee commented that there is an overpass being built over the highway in Dartmouth from Highfield Park to the Burnside Industrial park due to the high volume of pedestrian traffic at that location. The Committee requested similar consideration be given for the Sackville site for those walking across the highway from the Walker Trailer Park.

4.1.4 Cobequid Community Health Centre

The Committee raised the following comments/concerns during the ensuing discussion:

- Originally the plan was to enter off the Cobequid Road and exit via the other way but the provincial Transportation and Public Works would not permit a road at that location, only a driveway. It is a private street from Cobequid Road into the turning circle.
- There will be a charge of \$1 per hour or \$5 maximum per day to park in the parking lot.
- It is uncertain if there is room for a Metro Transit bus to make the loop (direct access to the door).
- Mr. Robar confirmed that Metro Transit was involved from the planning stage. Mr. Cox added that when Metro Transit was refused access onto Glendale Drive they withdrew.
- Mr. Gunther Seyffarth referred to a pamphlet he received regarding the new Cobequid Community Health Centre in which it describes full transit service to the facility including Community Transit service. Mr. Robar clarified that the services are in the area but not to the door of the facility.
- It was clarified that there are sidewalks from Cobequid Road into the centre.
- It is a long walk from the Cobequid Road into the centre.
- Concern was expressed with the distance a pedestrian would have to travel to get to and from a bus stop on Cobequid Road to the Centre including walking further and backtracking to access the crosswalk.

The Committee requested an update on what action the Northwest Community Council has requested on this matter.

4.1.5 Transportation Committee - Update

No update was available regarding the status of the Transportation Committee. The Legislative Assistant will request an update for the March meeting.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - None

6. **REPORTS - None**

7. **NEW BUSINESS / ADDED ITEMS**

7.1 **NEW BUSINESS**

7.1.1 **Conference - Bringing Transit Home**

Mr. Ron McKinnon and Mr. John Merrick provided a verbal update on the Transit Conference held the weekend of February 9 - 11, 2006 and organized by the Dalhousie School of Planning.

Mr. McKinnon commented that Mr. Ken Silver's (Metro Transit) presentation was informative. Mr. Robar will forward Mr. Silver's presentation to the Committee. Mr. McKinnon further advised that Dalhousie University had a video on transit in which they showed commuters standing. He requested a copy of the video for the Committee.

Mr. Merrick commented that the afternoon session included information from Councillor Sheila Fougere and Mr. Chris Lowe regarding Active Transportation (transportation by any means other than motorized). He indicated that Mr. Todd Litman's presentation was also informative as he spoke on developing communities that would consolidate residential/business districts to compliment each other so that people could walk to work. He commented that there was also an interesting discussion on the rail connection from Windsor Junction to Woodside (a medium speed transit line connecting Burnside to Shearwater to the Woodside Ferry). He added that this initiative would take a lot of traffic off the road through Burnside.

Mr. Chaffey added that he has a copy of the pedestrianization move in Montreal where Mont Royal Avenue is restricted to pedestrian and bus traffic. He added that it would be similar to having Spring Garden Road as pedestrian/buses only.

The Committee thanked Mr. McKinnon and Mr. Merrick for their attendance at the Transit Conference and their informative report.

7.2 **ADDED ITEMS**

7.2.1 **Terms of Reference**

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting. See page 4 under Item 4.1.1 Transit Study Update.

7.2.2 Route 84 - Outbound

Mr. Cox raised a concern with the Route 84 outbound indicating there has been an increase in ridership causing the bus to be very full. The 3:15 pm bus is full before it reaches Barrington Street and the 4:15 pm is also full. Mr. Robar advised that he may be able to address the concern at 3:15 pm but not the 4:15 pm. No further action requested.

Items to be added to the March Agenda:

1. Transit Service - Commonwealth Games

The Committee requested that Mr. Geoff Wright, Metro Transit, be invited to the next Committee meeting to discuss transit service for the Commonwealth Games.

2. Pedestrian Count Down Lights

Mr. John Merrick introduced Pedestrian Count Down Lights that he has seen used in other areas. He indicated that they will be used in St. John, NB and he will gather more information for the Committee on how the lights work (they would count down to show the pedestrian when the next red or green light is coming down).

8. NEXT MEETING DATE - March 8, 2006 (Bedford Library, Program Room).

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Chris Newson
Legislative Assistant