

NORTH WEST TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

MAY 21, 2003

THOSE PRESENT: Phillip Cox, Chair
Troy Mitchell
Alastair Lawrie

ALSO PRESENT: Eddie Robar, Transit Services
Sandra Shute, Legislative Assistant

Regrets: Gunther Seyffarth
Ron McKinnon
Bill Chaffey
Councillor Johns

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Charles Fenerty Room, Sackville Library, 636 Sackville Drive, Lower Sackville.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOVED by Troy Mitchell, seconded by Alastair Lawrie to approve the Minutes of meeting held on March 19, 2003 as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Troy Mitchell, seconded by Alastair Lawrie to approve the Minutes of meeting held on April 16, 2003 as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

The Agenda was approved with the addition of items as agreed during the meeting.

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

4.1 **Commuter Rail Committee Update**

Regional Council has asked for an update. A report should be available in the near future.

4.2 **Transit Service to Halifax International Airport**

Committee members were provided with a copy of the Information Report dated May 2, 2003 which went to Regional Council in this regard.

Ron McKinnon, having expressed regrets for this meeting, sent information regarding Winnipeg's airport. The distance from Winnipeg airport to downtown Winnipeg is about 15 km. It is about 25 km. from Halifax airport to downtown Halifax. Winnipeg Transit told Mr. McKinnon that they use a regular bus for their airport service - no luggage racks or special configuration to bus. They run more frequently during morning and afternoon peak hours.

Eddie Robar indicated that any proposed service to Halifax International Airport would be a long term proposal although the Airport has expressed some interest in it. The Airport, however, selects its carrier providing bus service through a tender process for a five-year ground transportation agreement. A new agreement will commence this fall.

It was agreed to leave this issue on the Agenda as a long range item and to deal with it further when Ron McKinnon is in attendance. In the interim, Eddie Robar will try to get additional information from Winnipeg Transit.

With regard to the Utility and Review Board's requirements, however, Eddie Robar advised that Nova Scotia's regulations are more stringent than other provinces. Transit Services staff have been trying to get the URB to revamp their legislation but this is on going.

There followed discussion on the URB's requirements, how much the low floor buses are used on accessible routes and the requirement for retrofitting of Metro Transit's low floors because of the URB's requirements. It was subsequently decided to write a letter to the Utility and Review Board indicating the following:

- The Committee understands that Nova Scotia is the only jurisdiction in Canada that has the requirement for access to both front and back doors and it is an issue because of seating capacity and comfort of passengers. Would like to know what the justification is for this requirement.
- The Committee is not against wheelchair access but requests that the URB look at the reasonableness and capacity of bus.

4.3 Transit Service to Bayers Lake Business Park

Staff had provided information on journey to work trips from Sackville to Bayers Lake Business Park for 2001. This included the Upper, Lower and Middle Sackville areas.

On a question from Alastair Lawrie regarding the possibility of a Park and Ride in Bayers Lake Park, Eddie Robar provided information on long range plans for the Lacewood/Bayers Lake Park area which could incorporate a Park and Ride. He added that the new Route 52 has already shown signs of success after being in operation only this week.

Question then arose as to how to take transit from Sackville to Bayers Lake. Eddie Robar agreed to provide information on a proposal to get from Sackville to Bayers Lake for the next meeting.

4.4 Traffic Problems - Intersection of Spring Garden Road and Barrington Street and Spring Garden Road and Summer Street

Eddie Robar advised that the survey results have been received and do indicate that there are problems. The survey gives a more localized time frame of where the problems are and the biggest problem is between 4:45 p.m. and 5:15 p.m. when the buses experience the biggest loss of time. He indicated the study was based on actual counts and some of the problems

were: lighting sequence, too much traffic, gridlock and left hand turns onto Barrington Street. The survey also looked at problems at the Summer Street intersection.

Phillip Cox stated that one of the problems was pedestrian flow at Barrington and Spring Garden and provided information on discussions which took place with David McCusker regarding a box intersection crossing where all pedestrians walk at the same time.

Eddie Robar advised that staff would be meeting with the Director of Transportation and Public Works in the near future and he would bring up the possibility of a box intersection at that time. For the August pick, he would be looking at the timing of the buses to see if some of the loss of time can be squeezed into the schedule.

The survey will be available for the next meeting.

4.5 **Route 87 - Capacity and Frequency**

Route 87 will be picking up and dropping off everywhere which means that buses will pick up through Dartmouth. One reason for this is abuse of operators. At peak hours, however, the 87 will not go into the terminal which means there is no change in this regard. The Riders' Guide is being amended to reflect the change.

The capacity and frequency report requested at the last meeting should be available for the next meeting.

4.6 **Route 80 on Sundays**

Eddie Robar advised that Fleet Services had been requested to put on more regular buses on Sunday, rather than low floors. With the change in service with the elimination of Route 12, there could be changes in service for Route 80 effective with the next pick in August.

4.7 **Park and Rides**

4.7.1 **Cobequid Park and Ride Congestion**

Phillip Cox advised he saw a new stop sign in the area which would mean that when the apartments are built, traffic from the apartments would have the right of way over buses.

The Clerk was requested to find out when the apartment buildings were going to be built.

4.7.2 **Beaver Bank Park and Ride**

Any proposal is contingent on the Showcase proposal being approved. If not, there is a possibility that there could be provision in the next fiscal year's budget.

E-mail correspondence from Tom Crouse with attachments was provided regarding the possibility of land owned by Department of Transportation for a park and ride.

4.7.3 Upper Sackville Park and Ride

The former Middle Sackville School location has not been visited yet.

4.7.4 Downsview Park and Ride

Eddie Robar advised it appeared the Park and Ride at Downsview would have to stay in its present location because there was a Wendy's being built. Staff went out and met with mall representatives and there should be more information for the next meeting. As well, he would find out about signage required and location of signage.

Committee members expressed concern that there would be sufficient lighting of the Park and Ride. Eddie Robar agreed to check on this as well.

4.7.5 Other Park and Rides

Eddie Robar advised that staff was looking into the problems with both the Mumford Terminal and Bayers Road. He did not have an update otherwise.

4.8 **Long Range Issues**

4.8.1 Status of Beaver Bank Bypass

No new information.

4.8.2 Future Service for New Cobequid Multi-Service Facility

Kenny Silver will be meeting with representatives for this facility next week; therefore, information should be available for the next meeting.

4.8.3 New Use for Present Cobequid Multi-Service Centre

Eddie Robar advised there would be problems with bus access in this location and it was unknown what the use would be for the building, after the Multi-Service Facility relocates. As well, he did not know the actual state of the building structure.

Phillip Cox agreed to try to find out what the plans are for the facility.

4.8.4 Future Service for New Northwood Facility in Bedford

The Clerk was asked to find out the plans for the area from Councillor Goucher.

4.8.5 Future Service for new Community College in Woodside

Once an official announcement is made, Transit Services will be looking at potential service.

4.9 Call Centre Route Information

Phillip Cox referred to the item from the last meeting where a member of the public in Sackville was given incorrect routing advice from the Call Centre to get from Sackville to Dartmouth. He did not want to lose sight of the fact that this can happen and hoped that Call Centre agents have been provided with correct information from Transit Services.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

5.1 **Route 82 - 15 Minute Service**

Phillip Cox asked if it would be possible for Transit Services to look at 15 minute service for the 82 during rush hour to enable people to get to the terminal to get other buses. He also stated there still was not adequate service on Saturdays and to hook into the 84 or 80 means a 25 minute wait.

Eddie Robar indicated that to provide additional service on the 82 would mean taking from somewhere else but there might be the ability to accommodate a couple of extra trips in the morning but definitely not the afternoon. This could be considered for the August schedule.

5.2 **Bus Suspension Mechanical Failure**

Troy Mitchell outlined the safety concerns as per his e-mail sent on April 29, 2003 with regard to a swaying bus on Route 84.

Eddie Robar explained that buses used for the highways have double sway bars but there are times when there are no buses with double sway bars available. Rather than not send a bus at all, Transit Services would send a bus without. It was not a matter of mechanical failure but an equipment issue.

Troy Mitchell indicated he wanted to make sure that this issue was discussed and addressed. He requested that if a bus is sent without the double sway bars, the driver be made aware to make sure he slows down.

5.3 Route 86 Complaints

Alastair Lawrie outlined problems with the 86 bus not showing up for the evening run. He acknowledged that staff had provided an explanation of same.

Phillip Cox pointed out that if the driver put up the wrong number on the bus, as per the explanation provided, then who was he picking up.

Alastair Lawrie requested that staff look further into this matter and provide a response for the next meeting. Eddie Robar agreed to do so.

5.4 Cleaning of Buses

Troy Mitchell asked what procedures are in place for the cleaning of bus grab handles. He indicated he felt this was a health issue. Eddie Robar agreed to look into this and advise.

5.5 Traffic Holdups due to Construction

Alastair Lawrie outlined traffic problems due to construction in the afternoon earlier this week which resulted in late buses. Construction problems were at Barrington and Cornwallis and at Cunard and Robie where a new condominium is being built.

Eddie Robar agreed to check with Vaughn Perrin, Traffic and Transportation to see what requirements are in place to limit construction during peak hours.

6. NEXT MEETING DATE

Wednesday, June 18, 2003 at the Metro Transit facility on Ilsley Drive.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Sandra M. Shute
Legislative Assistant

