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2003 ANNUAL REPORT

TO HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL

FROM

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

November 25, 2003

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FROM

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities consists of individuals with a variety of disabilities and is comprised of the following members:

Betty MacDonald, Chair

Joanne Coffey, Vice-Chair

Peggy Brown
Jane Cale
Barbara LeGay
Cynthia Street

Sally E. Campbell
Patrick Harrington
Donald Mullins
Bob Venus

Elsie Cholette
Anne Langille
Maureen Reynolds

Councillor Gary Meade

Councillor Condo Sarto

The Committee had an extremely productive year working in areas of civic concern related to Persons with Disabilities in the Halifax Regional Municipality. Since spring 2002, the Committee has been directly involved with HRM planning staff and other community organizations to examine guidelines related to accessible sidewalk cafes in HRM. Our Committee continues to be involved with the Planning Department to fulfill a commitment to establish accessible sidewalk cafes in HRM.

In 2003, the Committee had lengthy discussions on CNIB's policy of issuing free bus passes for a small number of their clients. After meeting with CNIB staff, the Committee formulated a response to Council's request to look into the use of free bus passes for all persons with disabilities.

Presently, there is only one accessible taxi in HRM available for use for persons with disabilities. The Committee has started to participate in meetings with other interested organizations involved with disability issues, the Taxi Commission, and the Public Utility Review Board. It is hoped that meetings with the Taxi Commission and Public Utility Review Board can resolve some of the issues that impede the operation of accessible taxis in HRM.

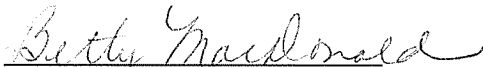
Recently, members of the Committee contributed time and expertise to work directly with the Capital District Task Force. Members from our committee assisted planners with accessibility issues related to the urban design project of Halifax and Dartmouth's downtown area.

Other activities the Committee has been directly involved with in 2003 include:

- Initiatives to improve the lives of those living with environmental sensitivities;
- Participation in a public forum on sidewalk snow removal in District 16;
- Working on access problems between West End Mall and Wal-Mart area in Halifax;
- Access to communications, information and documentation. Overcoming barriers in communication is an on-going struggle. HRM now has a Braille printer which is useful in circulating information amongst members of the Committee who require that particular format. More still needs to be done to educate other parts of the organization and outside agencies to provide information in a format that can be converted to Braille.

The Committee would like to thank HRM for installing overhead crosswalk signs and upgrading the intersections with pedestrian ramps.

Respectfully submitted,



Betty MacDonald, Chair
Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities

November 25, 2003