



**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR ACCESSIBILITY IN HRM
MINUTES
January 16, 2017**

PRESENT: Patricia Gates, Chair
Deputy Mayor Steve Craig
Gerry Post
Yvon Clement
Sue Uteck

REGRETS: Krista Daley, Vice Chair
Mikiko Terashima
Nancy Beaton
Councillor Waye Mason

STAFF: Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant, Government Relations & External Affairs
Darren Young, Project Manager, Corporate Facility Design & Construction
Noreen Guptill, Inclusion and Accessibility Specialist, Parks & Recreation
Tracy Jones-Grant, Manager of Diversity & Inclusion, Government Relations
& External Affairs
Liam MacSween, Legislative Assistant
Jenny Benson, Legislative Support

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to the Committee are available online: <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/access/170116aac-agenda.php>

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m., and the Committee adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax. Roll call was taken.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 21, 2016

Corrections:

9.1.2 The word 'braille' was spelled incorrectly

9.2.4 The word 'decal' was spelled incorrectly

MOVED by Councillor Steve Craig, seconded by Mr. Yvon Clement,

THAT the minutes of November 21, 2016, be approved as amended.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Additions:

10.1 Audio Pedestrian Signals

MOVED by Ms. Sue Uteck, seconded by Mr. Gerry Post,

THAT the agenda be approved as Amended.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - NONE

5. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST - NONE

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - NONE

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & PRESENTATIONS

7.1 Correspondence - None

7.2 Petitions – None

7.3 Presentations – None

7.3.1 Presentation – Demonstration of Hearing Hotspot Technology in Halifax Hall – J. Phillips, PNL Communications

Mr. Phillips explained that his company, PNL Communications, was tasked with doing a significant refit to Halifax City Hall including demonstrating Hearing Hotspot.

Hearing Hotspot is technology that allows for individuals to download an app that provides users with access audio services through their own mobile device. Halifax will be providing users with earphones for

their mobile device or a hearing loop if an individual has hearing aids. The hearing loop allows for individuals with hearing aids to turn the channel to 'T' and listen to the audio through their hearing aids.

Hearing Hotspot allows for any information coming out of the speakers in the room to be transmitted over wifi to your mobile device or hearing aids.

Mr. Phillips noted that this technology also allows for the sending of PDFs or messages to everyone in the room in real time. For example, meeting minutes can be sent out or a notification saying "10 minutes left in meeting". The technology can also allow for an interpreter or translator on a second channel.

The Committee participated in a demonstration of the system using their personal cellphones and the headphones provided.

The correlating app is available on Apple and Android devices.

The Committee expressed excitement around the fact that this technology will allow for members to call into the meeting if they cannot make it in person.

Five ipods have been purchased for Halifax Hall along with a number of earbuds and hearing loops.

7.3.2 Presentation – Gerry Post – Halifax.Access4All: A Community Based Approach Towards an Accessible Strategy

Mr. Post expressed excitement around accessibility becoming a mainstream issue. Halifax City Council recently made the commitment to becoming a leader in accessibility. The Mayor has promised to make 2017 a year of inclusion in HRM.

Mr. Post stated that to date the Committee has been more reactive, like a complaints bureau. He expressed a desire for the Committee to become more proactive.

Mr. Post and the Mayor have met with Mr. Rick Hansen as a first step in taking a proactive approach to accessibility based on his program which follows LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) accessibility standards. Mr. Post would like Council to empower the community to build its own accessibility strategy and create a partnership with Walk 'n' Roll Halifax to deal with this issue.

Mr. Post is offering to commit his entire year to this project, free of charge. He would like to engage two bright, young individuals in the disability community who cannot find jobs as a result of their disability. Mr. Post noted that establishing a centre of excellence around this in Nova Scotia will be of great benefit to this province as well as a number of provinces who have mandated accessibility measures.

The work will happen through a series of town hall meetings. The plan will be presented to Council in chapters based on priorities set by the community, with one chapter being presented every three months. Mr. Post estimates that this project would cost around \$90,000.

It was clarified by Deputy Mayor Craig that the budget has not been finalized yet.

MOVED by Ms. Sue Uteck, seconded by Yvonne Clement,

THAT the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report on potential funding and partnership opportunities between HRM and Walk 'n' Roll Halifax in relation to the Halifax.Access4All Accessibility Policy & Action Plan proposal outlined in the January 16, 2017 Accessibility Advisory Committee presentation.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

8. INFORMATION ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD – NONE

9. REPORTS/DISCUSSION

9.1. STAFF

9.1.1 Update – Report Request on Committee Terms of Reference – Tracy Jones-Grant, Manager of Diversity & Inclusion, Government Relations & External Affairs

Ms. Jones-Grant explained that she is responding to two requests from the Committee.

In response to the Committee's inquiry regarding its reporting structure, Mr. MacSween conducted an analysis of the reporting structure of similar committees across the country. In order to have a similar reporting structure to comparable committees, Ms. Jones-Grant and Mr. MacSween suggested that the Committee report to the Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) Committee.

Ms. Jones-Grant also explained that she and Mr. MacSween have been reviewing the Committee's Terms of Reference. A draft of the revised Terms of Reference will be distributed following this meeting and Ms. Jones-Grant requested that the Committee review the document and provide their feedback at the February meeting.

The revised Terms of Reference will clarify the role of the Committee and make that role more active. Instead of being in just an advisory role, the committee will be given additional responsibilities. This would include advising Council on accessibility issues that could impact the budget building process.

Mr. Post expressed concerns with the Accessibility Committee continuing to report to a planning Committee given the horizontal nature of the Committee. Mr. Post requested that the Committee report to the Executive Committee and that the Chair be given the authority to send various issues to other Standing Committees.

The Legislative Assistant noted that the Committee still needs a home where they can pass their appointments and other administrative business.

Ms. Jones-Grant and Mr. MacSween stated that they would discuss the Committee's feedback and will distribute a revised Terms of Reference in advance of the February meeting.

9.1.2 Darren Young, Project Manager, Operations Support – Update

Mr. Young provided the following updates to the Committee:

1. He is working on installing new ramps at Findlay Community Centre and YouthLive
2. Work is continuing on the family and universal washrooms at the Halifax Central Library.
3. A pilot project was conducted at the Scotiabank Centre to help create more accessibility using handrails. The results of the project were positive so the project will be expanding to other parts of the Scotiabank Centre.
4. The accessibility audit of the libraries is currently taking place.
5. Mr. Young's unit will be starting work based on accessibility audits that took place last year on administrative buildings.

Mr. Post recommended that two HRM staff become certified in the audit procedure from Rick Hansen and apply that audit procedure to HRM buildings. Mr. Young noted that he has already expressed interest in being certified and is waiting for the certification program to launch. The Committee noted that there may be a delay in Mr. Young being certified based on the cost and location of the certification courses as well as the fact that priority is being given in these courses to individuals with disabilities.

The Committee inquired about issues around the plexi-glass at the Central Library and the need for it to be changed to a dark, contrasting colour. Mr. MacSween will pass along these concerns to Ms. Heather MacKenzie.

9.1.3 Update from the Legislative Assistant re: Town Hall location and date, Goal Summary Chart

The document entitled "Accessibility Advisory Committee Goal Summary" was before the Committee.

The Committee agreed to meet on May 15th, 2017 at the Cafetorium at Citadel High School from 6PM-8:30PM.

The Legislative Assistant explained that he had reviewed the Goal Summary Chart as requested and found that most goals were in line with the Committee's Terms of Reference.

Mr. MacSween read through the Committee's Goal Summary Chart, explaining where each item falls under the Terms of Reference and providing an update on each item.

Ms. Uteck left the meeting at 5:30PM. Quorum was lost.

Mr. MacSween noted that the only item that was outside of the Mandate was Goal #7 "Expanded role of AAC to participate in decision-making/consultation process and to be catalyst of HRM-Province dialogue." Mr. MacSween explained that much of this will be addressed in the revised terms of reference. He also noted that intergovernmental dialogue is allowed as long as it is directed through the proper channels.

He also expressed the hope of clarifying Goal #9 through the reporting structure clarification and revisions.

9.1.4 Approval of proposed 2017 meeting schedule

The Proposed 2017 Meeting Schedule was before the Committee.

The Committee decided to meet on May 29th following the Town Hall Meeting on May 15th.

The Committee will vote on approval of the 2017 Meeting Schedule at the February meeting with quorum.

9.2. COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

9.2.1 Active Transportation Advisory Committee – Councillor Mason

9.2.2 Taxi & Limousine Liaison Group – Gerry Post

The meeting was cancelled. Mr. Post noted the importance of more accessible taxis on the road as soon as possible.

10. ADDED ITEMS – NONE

10.1 Audio Pedestrian Signals

Mr. Clement agreed to have this agenda item moved to the February meeting due to lack of quorum.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – February 27, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:46 p.m.

Jenny Benson
Legislative Support