



**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR ACCESSIBILITY IN HRM
MINUTES
July 17, 2017**

PRESENT: Patricia Gates, Chair
Ryan Delehanty, Vice Chair
Mikiko Terashima
Johanna Stork
Sue Uteck
Kristine Webber
Councillor Lisa Blackburn

REGRETS: Zainab Almkhtar
Councillor Waye Mason

STAFF: Kevin Arjoon, Municipal Clerk
Heather Mackenzie, Diversity & Accessibility Manager, Halifax Public Libraries
Noreen Guptill, Inclusion and Accessibility Specialist, Parks and Recreation
Laughie Rutt, Diversity Consultant, Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Kayla Douglas, Accessibility Intern,
Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Lori McKinnon, Election Coordinator, Office of the Municipal Clerk
Liam MacSween, Legislative Assistant
Sharon Chase, Legislative Support

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

The agenda, reports, supporting documents and information items circulated are online at Halifax.ca.

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m. and the committee adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chair Patricia Gates called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

Roll call was taken.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 19, 2017

MOVED by Sue Utek, seconded by Councillor Lisa Blackburn

THAT the minutes of June 19, 2017 be approved as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Deletions:

7.3.1 Presentation by Ardalan Shareghi Boroujeni will be deleted and moved to September's agenda.

MOVED by Councillor Lisa Blackburn, seconded by Ryan Delehanty

THAT the agenda be approved as amended.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Two-third majority vote required.

It was suggested that approved minutes and agendas be sent to the Province's Accessibility Directorate as a courtesy.

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- deleted

7.3.1 Ardalan Shareghi Boroujeni- Challenges in increasing accessible transportation options from an accessible taxi perspective

**8. INFORMATION ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD -
NONE**

9. REPORTS/DISCUSSION

9.1. STAFF

9.1.1 Kevin Arjoon, Municipal Clerk- Feedback on 2016 Municipal and School Board Election

The following was before the Committee:

- Feedback on 2016 Municipal and School Board Election memorandum dated June 30, 2017

Kevin Arjoon, Municipal Clerk, was taking this opportunity to collect feedback from the Committee about their experiences in the 2016 Municipal Election as they plan for the next Municipal Election in 2020. The Sackville Kinsman Community Centre's ramp and entrance were in disrepair making it not accessible without assistance. Staff were very accommodating when made aware of the situation. It was also noted that the Shambala Centre had accessibility challenges for drop-off and parking access. The stipulations around a transfer certificate were unclear to the voter and staff. Lori McKinnon, Election Coordinator, noted these concerns and discussed how polling locations are chosen. They also reviewed the training Election Workers received which covered best practices, proper etiquette and offering of assistance. Laughie Rutt, Diversity Consultant, noted that the Office of Diversity and Inclusion would be available to assist. Kevin Arjoon shared that a recent online voter engagement survey received around 300 responses. The information collected from that survey and today will assist in the preparation of a report that will be presented to Council. The Municipal Clerk's Office will be developing an Accessibility Plan for the 2020 Election which they will bring to this Committee for its review.

9.1.2 Feedback on 2017 Town Hall Meeting

The Committee discussed the best timing for next year's Town Hall. It was agreed that May was an ideal month for maximizing public participation. It was noted that many of the public speakers were very confrontational which was unfair to the panel members. The present format may have contributed to this and it was agreed that it was time to change the model. Ideally the event would be understood as a venue for the sharing of information: coming to listen and then offering suggestions. The Committee felt that with additional time for planning, changes can be made in the format and promotion of the event. Break away groups having smaller discussions focused on specific interests, i.e. parks and recreation, transportation was one option mentioned. The Chair felt that they might assist by presenting an etiquette outline or rules of engagement at the beginning of the event. It was suggested that a member of the new Provincial Directorate should be invited as a guest as many of the public comments would provide important feedback for their work and goals. The group discussed the formation of a sub-committee for the planning of this event. It could be created in the autumn and would meet as necessary reporting each month to the full committee. The venue was discussed reviewing Citadel High and suggesting the Central Library as another option to consider.

9.1.3 Laughie Rutt, Diversity Advisor and Kayla Douglas, Accessibility Intern- Feedback on creating a more accessible community

The following was before the Committee:

- Feedback on creating a more accessible community memorandum dated July 7, 2017

Laughie Rutt shared a PowerPoint presentation to review Bill 59 Representing Accessibility in Nova Scotia summarizing an understanding of the act and what is presently going on. The act which was proclaimed on April 28, 2017 sets a goal of an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030. The community identified consultations as a key piece in moving this work forward. A directorate has been created and a 12-member advisory board will be appointed by the Minister of Justice.

It outlines seven areas of inclusion:

- Delivery of goods and services
- Information and communication
- Public transportation and transportation infrastructure
- Employment

- Built environment
- Education
- A prescribed activity or undertaking

Many of these fall within municipal areas of responsibility and therefore create opportunities for HRM. Standards for each area will be developed separately and the directorate will monitor and enforce compliance. Regulations have yet to be developed which will establish any penalties. Municipalities with over 10,000 people must have an Accessibility Advisory Committee. All municipalities must submit an accessibility plan to the directorate by April 2018 which outlines their current state and a plan for the next 3 years. HRM has yet to receive any official communication from the Province.

Laughie Rutt then reviewed the next steps for HRM. They are presently collecting information and preparing a report on the current state. It will be challenging to develop the required 3-year plan without some communication from the province. A report will be prepared and delivered in September presenting a framework for business units as they develop their accessibility plans. These business units will be looking for direction from the Committee and will be encouraged to come and share their plans to get feedback as well. They asked the Committee if there was a short list of areas that were important to focus on? Over time it has been identified that these areas are frequently discussed by the group: construction mitigation, streetscape, website accessibility, taxis and public transit accessibility. Laughie invited the group to share priorities with his team. The Committee discussed building accessibility assessments and briefly reviewed the information that Darren Young, Project Manager- Operations Support, has previously shared. It was suggested that the Rick Hanson Foundation's certification could be an approach to take. The Committee agreed that using the vernacular, persons with disabilities, needs to be all encompassing and not focus on just one type of disability to be inclusive and successful. It was also identified that it is important for HRM to promote its accessibility offerings, programs and equipment not just defend what's not accessible and why. Parks and Recreation has been making very good progress in this area and demand has grown for their offerings as a result. The Committee then discussed how to reach the appropriate audience and how to encourage the disability community to be publicly engaged in groups and committees. It was suggested that offering various types of accommodations would be key to facilitating their participation. Kayla Douglas, Accessibility Intern, has been reviewing what other municipalities have been doing and there will be a series of public engagement meetings in October to get further direction from citizens.

Ryan Delehanty asked about the safety and accessibility of the waterfront's new floating walkway? There have been challenges identified and the municipality will be conducting a safety inspection. Laughie reminded the group that awareness of these types of issues helps everyone, leading to a shift in attitudes and promotes change.

9.2. COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

9.2.1 Taxi & Limousine Liaison Group- Johanna Stork

There is no update as the group did not meet this month.

10. ADDED ITEMS- NONE

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – September 18, 2017

4:00 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

Sharon Chase
Legislative Support