



**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR ACCESSIBILITY IN HRM
MINUTES
September 18, 2017**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Patricia Gates, Chair
Ryan Delehanty, Vice Chair
Mikiko Terashima
Zainab Almukhtar
Councillor Waye Mason
Councillor Lisa Blackburn

OTHERS PRESENT: Deputy Mayor Steve Craig

REGRETS: Kristine Webber

ABSENT: Johanna Stork
Sue Uteck

STAFF: Kayla Douglas, Accessibility Intern, Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Darren Young, Senior Project Manager, Corporate Facility Design & Construction
Heather Mackenzie, Diversity & Accessibility Manager, Halifax Public Libraries
Shannon O'Connell, Program Engineer, Policy and Standards, Infrastructure and Planning
Christopher Davis, Supervisor Right-of-Way Services
Dave McCusker, Parking Strategy Coordinator, Transportation and Public Works
Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant, Office of the Municipal Clerk
Sharon Chase, Legislative Support, Office of the Municipal Clerk

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 4:03 p.m. and the committee adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Patricia Gates, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

The Chair welcomed everyone and reviewed the best practices regarding speaking time at meetings to ensure everyone's participation and time management.

Roll call was taken.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 17, 2017

Under 9.1.2 reference to the new Provincial Directorate should be clarified to read Accessibility Directorate.

MOVED by Councillor Lisa Blackburn, seconded by Ryan Delehanty

THAT the minutes of July 17, 2017 be approved as amended.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Item 9.1.1 will be deferred to the next meeting as Laughie Rutt was unable to attend.

Darren Young, Project Manager, HRM Planning and Infrastructure will provide a staff update under Item 10 Added Items.

MOVED by Councillor Waye Mason, seconded by Mikiko Terashima

THAT the agenda be approved as amended.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Two-third majority vote required.

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

7.3.1 Challenges in Increasing Accessible Transportation Options from an Accessible Taxi Perspective - Mikiko Terashima on behalf of Ardalan Shareghi Boroujeni

The following was before the Committee:

- A summary on Promoting Accessible Taxis in Halifax, by Ardalan Shareghi Boroujeni

Mikiko Terashima presented this thesis synopsis on behalf of Ardalan Shareghi Boroujeni. They reviewed the mix of conventional and accessible taxis from 2008 to today. After researching solutions and strategies they focused on three areas which they used in interviewing local industry and users. These three areas were: central dispatching system distinct from regular taxis; additional funding for drivers and users, for example a chit system; replacing access a bus with the use of accessible taxis, investing in this alternative. It was noted that the participants in this study generated many ideas and solutions and highlighted that it is a complex industry with many conflicting ideas and interests to consider. The full thesis can be provided to the Committee upon request.

Councillor Waye Mason confirmed that under the HRM Charter funding can only go to not for profit business. Industry feedback indicates some of the challenges: more expensive to operate but must charge same fares; a universally accessible vehicle costs about \$45,000; the demand for accessible vans on average is 12-15 calls a day; many customers will specify they do not want a van sent. Drivers are not able to be profitable in the present environment. Mandating accessible vehicles has been voted down by Council due to the costs involved, 4-5 times more expensive than a conventional vehicle.

The Committee discussed how cabs may be able to supplement access a bus by the two businesses targeting particular customers based on their needs. It was suggested that a demand analysis should be undertaken to identify where this service is needed and what form it should take. Outside of HRM there have been some successful community based transportation services, this idea may provide a not for profit opportunity here. The Committee discussed how accessible taxi licenses are presently issued.

8. INFORMATION ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD - NONE

9. REPORTS/DISCUSSION

9.1. STAFF

9.1.1 Feedback on creating a more accessible community - *Laughie Rutt, Diversity Advisor & Kayla Douglas, Accessibility Intern*

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

9.1.2 Request for permanent encroachments for wheel chair ramps on Spring Garden Road and Dresden Row - *Shannon O'Connell, Program Engineer, Policy and Standards, Infrastructure and Planning*

The following was before the Committee:

- A staff presentation

Christopher Davis, Supervisor Right-of-Way Services, reviewed the existing standards and guidelines used by HRM for sidewalks.

Staff advised that permanent encroachments, such as wheelchair ramps, within the public street right of way require approval from Regional Council. These proposals will now come to this Committee for review where the feedback received will be included in the staff report to Council.

Shannon O'Connell, Program Engineer, Policy Standards, Infrastructure and Public Works, reviewed two applications for permanent encroachment for additions of wheel chair ramps to commercial storefronts.

The first application is for 5990 Spring Garden Road, a clinic with an existing ramp at the back entrance of their business. Staff shared the site plan, showing the proposed ramp design, highlighting the ramp's footprint on the sidewalk. The sidewalk width is presently 5 metres and a width of 2.5 metres would remain with the proposed accessible ramp.

The second application is for 1587 Dresden Row. Staff shared the site plan, showing the proposed ramp design and highlighting the ramp's footprint on the sidewalk. The sidewalk width is presently 4.6 metres and a width of 2.1 metres would remain, with a pinch point of 1.5 metres due to an existing power pole.

The Committee discussed both applications commending businesses who are striving to be more accessible. There were no concerns with the Spring Garden Road application. It was suggested that by extending the ramp the adjoining property could also be made accessible.

Feedback provided on the Dresden Road application focused on the pinch point of 1.5 metres. It was agreed that there is less foot traffic on Dresden Row and that the 1.5 metre guideline for suburban streets could apply here.

The Committee felt that it would be important for staff to investigate snow removal practices and how this might be affected.

A question was raised about the ramp's width and how ramp widths are determined. The Dresden Road ramp width is 5 feet. The building code of Canada determines ramp width and grade. Darren Young, Project Manager, HRM Planning and Infrastructure noted that newer power scooters and wheelchairs require a greater turning radius than traditional wheelchairs which can provide challenges to ramp design. Staff briefly reviewed the existing measurements for ramps to ensure they meet accessibility standards. It was noted that there are design features that should be considered to ensure people with a visual impairment can travel safely through the area. The use of tactile strips; high visibility and high contrast features were suggested. There are specific examples of this at the CNIB on Almon Street as well as the Lacewood and Dartmouth bus terminals. Moving of the power pole was considered an option. The cost of this solution would fall to the applicant with lots of site variables to consider.

MOVED by Ryan Delehanty, seconded by Zainab Almkhtar

THAT the Advisory Committee for Accessibility in HRM recommend approval of the applications for the permanent encroachment on sidewalks for wheelchair ramps at 5990 Spring Garden Road and 1587 Dresden Row, as presented at the September 18, 2017 meeting.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

9.1.3 Overview of Parking Strategy Co-Ordinator role and discussion on Accessible Parking Utilization – Dave McCusker, Parking Strategy Co-Ordinator, Transportation & Public Works

Dave McCusker made a presentation to the Committee introducing this new role which resulted from a Parking Strategy Road Map as approved by Council in 2015. To determine if there was a parking shortage an inventory was taken of 5 districts within the regional centre. It was identified that in these areas 78% of accessible spaces were utilized. They reviewed new technology which will replace parking metres with pay by plate pay stations and a mobile phone app which has been used in other Canadian municipalities. Dave McCusker reviewed the on-street parking hierarchy as identified in the draft Integrated Mobility Plan, where accessible parking was identified as the 2nd highest priority after emergency service vehicles.

The Committee supported the new technology. Public education on the pay stations will be important. The use of an app does create convenience for those who have smart phones. A discussion on the enforcement of accessible parking spaces identified that there is concern over the access and abuse of passes. In Toronto citizens with an accessible parking tag can park for free in any parking spot which may be an idea for HRM's consideration.

9.2. COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

9.2.1 Taxi & Limousine Liaison Group- Johanna Stork

There was no update available.

10. ADDED ITEMS

Darren Young, Project Manager, HRM Planning and Infrastructure provided a staff update.

- The accessible dock and beach mats will be installed at Birch Cove in the spring of 2018 as they did not arrive in time for this season.
- 9 accessible drinking fountains have been installed.
- The Pavilion's ramp installation has been awarded and is being designed.
- The Power House's first floor is now fully accessible.
- The Bay Community Centre has had an accessible washroom renovation.
- Training on the Rick Hanson certification will take place in the spring.
- The circulation desk at the Bedford Library is now fully accessible.

Councillor Lisa Blackburn asked about the feasibility of an elevator at the Sackville Heights Community Centre. Darren Young noted that the 2nd floor of this building was not public but private space which was considered due to limited budgets.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – October 16, 2017, 4:00 p.m., Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting be adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

Sharon Chase
Legislative Support