



**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBILITY IN HRM
MINUTES
February 26, 2018**

PRESENT:

Patricia Gates, Chair
Ryan Delehanty, Vice Chair
Councillor Lisa Blackburn
Zainab Almukhtar
Jillian Banfield
Julia Bremner
Johanna Stork
Kristine Webber

REGRETS:

Mikiko Terashima

STAFF:

Dave McCusker, Parking Strategy Coordinator, Transportation & Public Works
John Gardine, Team Leader, Transportation & Public Works
Matt Covey, Division Chief, Fire Prevention, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Services
Darren Young, Senior Project Manager, Corporate Facility Design & Construction
Tracey Jones-Grant, Managing Director, Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Kayla Douglas, Accessibility Intern, Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Liam MacSween, Legislative Assistant
Simon Ross-Siegel, 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.

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The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. and adjourned at 5:18 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. in Halifax Hall, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 15, 2018

MOVED by Councillor Lisa Blackburn, seconded by Johanna Stork

THAT the minutes of January 15, 2018 be approved as amended.

It was noted that the Committee's first community engagement session was the 28th of February, and not the 15th as was noted in the draft minutes. There were no other errors or omissions.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Addition:

10.1 Municipal Clerk's Office – Correspondence from Jen Powley to Sally Christie, Supervisor of Regional Licensing, regarding wheelchair accessible cabs in Halifax available for travel to and from Halifax International Airport, identified by the Committee as Correspondence Item No. 7.1.2.

MOVED by Ryan Delehanty, seconded by Councillor Blackburn,

THAT the agenda be approved as amended.

Two-third majority required.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE

5. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – NONE

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

7.1 Correspondence

7.1.1 Correspondence from Barry Blakeney re: Access-A-Bus Service

Correspondence from Barry Blakeney to the Advisory Committee on Accessibility dated January 13, 2016 was before the Committee, as well as follow-up correspondence from Glen Bannon, Manager of Transit Operations, to Sue Uteck Regional Manager of March of Dimes Canada, dated March 14, 2016.

Committee noted Blakeney's request to Access-A-Bus staff for information regarding ridership data, accounts (if they are recorded) on individuals attending dialysis appointments, special appointments, travel to and from Universities, Access-A-Bus service bookings, daily start-times for the Access-A-Bus service, security and video surveillance practices used by Access-A-Bus, telephone and online information and booking services.

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MOVED by Councillor Blackburn, seconded by Ryan Delehanty

THAT the Committee forward Mr. Blakeney's correspondence to staff.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7.1.2 Correspondence from Jen Powley to Sally Christie, Supervisor of Regional Licensing re: Wheelchair Accessible Cabs in Halifax

Correspondence was addressed as an added item by the Committee.

8. INFORMATION ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD – NONE

9. REPORTS/DISCUSSION

9.1 STAFF

9.1.1 Defining Needs for New On-street Parking Technology

The Chair invited Dave McCusker, Parking Strategy Coordinator, and John Gardine, Team Leader for parking technology, both with Transportation & Public Works, to take the floor.

McCusker updated the Committee on the progress of plans to convert street-side parking technology in Halifax over the next year. Current plans are to remove all current older units and replace them with multi-pay units, and also to replace or improve parking ticket management systems for efficiency. Furthermore, there are plans to expand the by-law which currently governs how Halifax manages and prioritizes parking in residential areas with high parking demands, to include curb space in all high demand areas.

Gardine described the project team's engagement with new parking technologies and detailed how prospective technology is intended to meet accessibility needs.

Currently the team is focused on assessing the current business requirements and engaging with technology vendors through expression of interest efforts. Over coming months, Transportation & Public Works hopes to issue a request for proposal (RFP) to market in the early spring of 2018. Following this, staff hopes to return to Council to request the vendor to deliver in 2019. Staff contemplates implementation beginning in spring of 2019 on the assumption that the winter snow would make earlier installation cost-prohibitive.

Gardine expressed that his team was working to integrate new parking technology into the overall streetscape, and working with people and staff engaged with the Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) in this regard. The team is looking at mobile payment solutions, these intending to complement physical pay stations. Staff hopes to accommodate persons requiring special access to these technologies.

McCusker stated that one of the intents of the changes is to better capture revenue from everyone who uses parking. To this end, staff is considering changing policies regarding construction company parking and taxi stands with designated spots to ensure all service users are fairly charged. Currently, there are no charges for accessible parking, the principle being it has historically not been possible to ensure accessible access to payment stations. New payment app technologies will help change this. This is also part of an encouragement to mode shifting. Some community members expressed concern that given that many of the users, they may find it difficult to adopt to use mobile apps. Mr. McCusker agreed and expressed that it would be crucial to ensure that payment apps were foolproof and easy to use, and furthermore expressed that mobile apps would be complemented by physical payment stations. To this end, it would be important to further explore how the technology around physical payment stations could be accessible.

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Several Committee Members inquired whether, given the somewhat arbitrary standards regarding accessibility used by various manufacturers, staff had considered piloting technology before engaging in full replacement efforts. Staff replied that currently this was not the working team's plan, but it was engaged in comparing its use in various cities and the public feedback following implementation. One thing staff discovered in doing so was that payment apps were relatively consistent across manufacturers.

9.1.2 Update on proposed amendment to the Provincial Fire Code

The Chair invited Matt Covey, Division Chief, Fire Prevention, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Services to take the floor.

Covey provided Committee updates regarding changes to sections of the Building Code regarding small houses. The Subcommittee and the Nova Scotia Building Advisory Committee are satisfied with the proposed changes and have forwarded their proposals to the Province. The next step will be public consultation. Covey listed the following as notable proposed changes to the building code at this time:

- Entrance door width minimums are increased to 900 millimetres;
- Threshold height are reduced to 13 millimetres, the same standards as for all new buildings;
- Main entrances to a dwelling must be capable of being made "barrier free" from a sidewalk or other access area;
- Interior doors and corridor widths must be 900 millimetres minimum throughout the dwelling;
- In kitchens, the proposed changes require lever-tight faucets, as well as lower p-traps in order to facilitate later renovations intended to lower sinks for access purposes;
- Kitchen countertops must be constructed with roughing allowing wires to be run through the underside of the kitchen wall in order to lower costs in major renovations;
- Bathrooms must have boards installed in the walls capable of holding fixtures such as grab-bars in showers and installed bathtubs;
- Receptacles, switches and controls: These include door handles, locks, faucets, shower heads, duplex receptacles, phone, cable and data outlets, intercom and activation devices. All must be operable by one hand in a closed fist position, with no tight twisting, grasping or pinching of the wrists, with a minimum 22 newtons of force. All must also be installed in a location within 400 and 1200 millimetres of the wall;
- A one-off adjustment to the one-and-twenty rule. Currently, for every twenty units, one must be accessible. Often, the unit is built, then the builder immediately repurposes it back to a non-accessible state. Now, owners have the option to preserve the unit, or make all units adaptable (meaning "easily modifiable") to accessible conditions.

Several Committee Members sought clarification on how the proposed changes would meaningfully impact the one-and-twenty rule. Mr. Covey clarified that the amendments would apply to all part 9 small buildings, which in turn applies the small building standard to larger buildings. The proposed changes would however not apply to older buildings, unless renovations required an owner to clear and replace a wall, in which case the new wall would be required to meet the new standards. Mr. Covey also clarified that the proposed changes have been compared and reviewed with rules in CSA-B651 for conflicts, and that many of the proposed changes are also already currently applied to commercial buildings.

Councillor Blackburn suggested it might be of value to the Committee to receive regular updates to the progress of this matter as part of ordinary Council business and to take initiative as a Committee in informing the public of the proposed changes and process.

9.1.3 Update on Corporate Facility Design & Construction

The Chair invited Darren Young, Senior Project Manager, Corporate Facility Design & Construction to take the floor.

Young updated the Committee regarding facility design.

- The Canada Games Centre's new adult change table has received mixed public feedback regarding stationary, however the table is compliant with the guidelines;
- The Tantallon Library washroom has received new taps;
- An administrative order on universal access is proceeding in Council;
- There is a proposal to install a sled loader on the Halifax Commons Oval;
- There will be a product presentation on Mobi mats. These are mats that are used to enable persons in a wheelchair access on the sand and other beach areas;

Several Committee Members reported that there will be an event at Martinique "Life goes on", which will emphasise technologies for beach accessibility.

9.1.4 Update on Public Hearing

The Chair invited Kayla Douglas, Accessibility Intern, Office of Diversity and Inclusion to take the floor.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is ready and prepared to proceed with its public hearing, and is keen to receive public input. The event is currently scheduled for Wednesday in Sackville. The event managers are currently making calls for volunteers for various tasks, including site guides, catering, and assisted reading. Volunteers will receive training.

Several Committee Members confirmed that they had received copies of the recruitment posters, and . Douglas agreed to recirculate the posters and other materials by email following the Committee meeting.

9.2 COMMITTEE

9.2.1 Draft Accessibility Advisory Committee Work Plan (Updated)

The Chair invited Liam MacSween, Legislative Assistant to take the floor.

The following was before Committee:

- An updated Draft Accessibility Advisory Committee Work Plan

Liam MacSween presented an updated draft of the Committee's work plan. This document was originally created two years ago with the objective of facilitating Committee to pursue and track its goals with regard to the Committee's purpose. It was intended to be a living document to reflect achievements and new objectives. To this end, Mr. MacSween updated this document. Changes include:

- Goal #3 has been changed to include extending invitations to all business units to engage with Committee and to provide brief overview of its roles and responsibilities. This goal is intended to give business units opportunities to express how we can assist them, and to open up communication and dialogue;
- All other goals remain as previously identified;

Motion to approve the Updated Accessibility Advisory Committee Work Plan.

MOVED by Councillor Lisa Blackburn, seconded by Johanna Stork

THAT the updated Accessibility Advisory Committee Work Plan be approved as amended.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

9.2.2 Planning for 2018 Town Hall Meeting on Accessibility

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MacSween updated the Committee regarding planning for the Town Hall Meeting. The meeting is currently preparing to proceed on May 29th of 2018. Planners had previously been looking at an alternate date. MacSween has not seen the proposed venue yet, but he plans to do so soon. Staff has also discussed the idea with the Municipal Clerk to host the event at the Nova Scotia Community College campus on Pleasant Street rather than Alderney Gate Public Library. Some Committee Members expressed concern about challenges travelling to the NSCC location via transit and Access-A-Bus. At one point, several Committee Members also expressed interest in exploring the use of the Dartmouth North Community Centre as a venue for the event.

MacSween stated his intention to provide the Committee further updates next meeting, at which time he hoped to confirm the date and the meeting location.

9.3 COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

9.3.1 Taxi & Limousine Liaison Group – Johanna Stork

Committee Member Johanna Stork informed Committee Members that there would be a meeting with the Taxi & Limousine, at 10:30 a.m. on February 27, 2018, in Burnside near Highfield Park, and she would be attending.

10. ADDED ITEMS

10.1 Municipal Clerk's Office – Correspondence from Jen Powley to Sally Christie, Supervisor of Regional Licensing, regarding wheelchair accessible cabs in Halifax available for travel to and from Halifax International Airport, identified by the Committee as Correspondence Item No. 7.1.2.

The following was before Committee:

- Correspondence from Jen Powley to Sally Christie, Supervisor of Regional Licensing, dated January 22, 2018.

Committee reviewed and discussed the subject of Jen Powley's correspondence. Several Committee Members stated that members of the public have approached them with perception that cab drivers are jumping the cue to get their roof lights, then not taking calls from mobility challenged patrons. Several taxi drivers claim that there is not enough business to regularly service mobility challenged patrons, and the taxi operator could have five fares within time required to service one call from a mobility challenged patron. The Chair stated that the Committee expected to receive a report next month from Halifax Transit which may be have solutions or at least information relevant to this issue. Committee Members recognized that this has been a challenge for years, and that it would be important to make a request for some accountability or at least reporting for obtaining accessible cabs.

Liam MacSween indicated he would follow up with Sally Christie, Supervisor of Regional Licensing, to ensure the correspondence was received and obtains a response if possible, with the particular interest in exploring what decisions might be capable or incapable with regard to amending the by-laws.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – March 19, 2018 – 4:00 p.m., Halifax Hall, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:18 p.m.

Simon Ross-Siegel
Legislative Support