



**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBILITY IN HRM
MINUTES
May 28, 2018**

PRESENT: Patricia Gates, Chair
Councillor Lisa Blackburn
Jillian Banfield
Julia Bremner
Johanna Stork
Kristine Webber

REGRETS:

STAFF: Darren Young, Senior Project Manager, Corporate Facility Design & Construction
Dale Smith, Acting Manager of Operations, Halifax Transit
Heather MacKenzie, Diversity & Accessibility Manager, Halifax Public Libraries
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.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m., and the Committee adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. in Halifax Hall, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

The Chair noted the resignation of Deputy Mayor Wayne Mason from the Committee and extended thanks to the Deputy Mayor on behalf of the committee. The Chair noted that the clerk's office will soon begin recruiting for a Council Member replacement.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 16, 2018

Several corrections were noted regarding item 9.1.3 Update on Halifax Public Libraries Diversity & Accessibility Initiatives, specifically the addition of the line "These sessions focus on the abilities that people have, not their disability, and give children the message that everyone can tell a story in various ways (reading aloud from Braille, using ASL etc.)" and the addition of several lines on audio books, CELA audio book collections, the DAISY reader lending pilot project, and the Summer Job Placement project, as well as several other minor housekeeping matters relating to the minutes generally. A further correction was noted regarding item 9.2.1 Update on Corporate Facility Design & Construction regarding a clarification that pursuant to the draft administrative order on accessibility, HRM Regional Council shall consult with *Corporate Facility Design & Construction staff* on an annual basis or, should it desire, more frequently.

MOVED by Councillor Lisa Blackburn, seconded by Jillian Banfield,

THAT the minutes of February 26, 2018 be approved as amended.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Liam MacSween informed the Committee of correspondence from Emily Martinello dated May 26, 2018 regarding accessible parking. This correspondence was received by the clerk's office on May 28, 2018, and was circulated to members as item 7.1.1 Staff expressed that this item could be added as an addition to the agenda should Committee move to do so.

Chair Patricia Gates informed the Committee that, regarding Darren Young's previous update (Item 9.2.1) from the February 26, 2018 Meeting of the Committee, draft Administrative Order 2018-002-OP regarding Universal Access to Municipal Facilities was approved by Regional Council. Darren Young circulated this draft to Committee Members for information purposes.

MOVED by Kristine Webber, seconded by Councillor Lisa Blackburn,

THAT item 7.1.1 be added to the agenda, and the agenda be approved as amended.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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 Emily Martinello dated May 26, 2018 regarding accessible parking

Committee put forward a motion to forward correspondence from Emily Martinello dated May 26, 2018 regarding accessible parking to Transportation & Public Works staff.

MOVED by Julia Bremner, seconded by Johanna Stork,

THAT the correspondence from Emily Martinello dated May 26, 2018 regarding accessible parking be forwarded to Transportation & Public Works staff.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

8. INFORMATION ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD – NONE

9. REPORTS

9.1 STAFF

9.1.1 Update – Darren Young, Project Manager, Senior Project Manager, Corporate Facility Design & Construction

The following was before the Committee:

- Draft Administrative Order 2018-002-OP – Universal Access to Municipal Facilities, previously submitted to Regional Council for review on May 22, 2018.

Darren Young, Project Manager, Senior Project Manager, Corporate Facility Design & Construction, provided the following updates to the Committee:

- Draft Administrative Order 2018-002-OP regarding Universal Access to Municipal Facilities was approved by Regional Council on Tuesday, May 22, 2018 and is now in effect. Corporate Facility Design & Construction will be applying this Administrative Order to all new construction and major renovations undertaken by the department.
- The staff has completed installation of the accessible dock for universal access in Lake Banook. This dock also has a bowl and rail system to enable persons to raise and lower and raise themselves into the water or into kayaks.
- Construction for a universal access washroom is underway in the Bay Community Centre and is anticipated to be completed in three weeks.
- Universal access washrooms in the Cole Harbour Turf are anticipated to be open to the public later this week.

In addition to these updates, Darren Young informed the Committee that May 24, 2018 was the local meeting of the Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate. Several working groups collaborated to address seven major items. Regarding the “built environment” item, several attendees commented on the need for adult change tables in public washrooms. Darren Young asked the Committee if this was an item Committee Members wished to pursue in new construction or major renovations going forward. It was noted that several adult change tables are currently installed in the Canada Games Centre.

The Committee agreed by consensus to prioritize adult changing stations. Darren Young noted that further information will be brought back at a future meeting. Several Committee Members also suggested it may be valuable to conduct a small survey in order to compare what technologies would be preferred by persons and in what configuration. It was also suggested that it may be valuable to seek to demonstrate some of the technologies available at the upcoming 2018 Town Hall.

9.1.2 Update – Heather MacKenzie, Diversity & Accessibility Manager, Halifax Public Libraries

The following was before the Committee:

- A Visual Communication Binder
- A video-projected demonstration of the Halifax Public Libraries website

Heather MacKenzie, Diversity & Accessibility Manager, Halifax Public Libraries, updated the Committee regarding Halifax Public Libraries initiatives.

All branches of the Halifax Public Libraries now have Visual Communication Binders. These were created in participation with Autism Nova Scotia. These binders contain removable Velcro-adhesive cards with mixtures of text and visual symbols to facilitate conversation for persons who may be nonverbal and to assist persons requiring assistance in initiating communication. These binders are prominently located in key locations within each library branch such as information desks. In branches with multiple floors, there is a binder for each floor of the branch.

Halifax Public Libraries will soon be launching its new website, and the draft website has been published for members of the public to explore. Heather MacKenzie demonstrated the features of the Halifax Public Libraries' "Accessibility Services and Resources" webpage.

The accessibility page contains a guiding statement and lists several accessibility features available in Halifax Public Libraries. A first major sidebar link "Accessibility at the Library Branches" lists and describes various accessible resources and technologies available and identifies which branches carry and provide each resource. The second major sidebar link "Accessible Collections" lists accessible print formats as well as CELA and NNELS collections. Though it did not appear to be published in the draft webpage before the Committee, Heather MacKenzie stated that there will be a third major sidebar link directing users toward a page detailing home delivery services available from Halifax Public Libraries.

Halifax Public Libraries now own four Victor Reader Stratus DAISY readers. Halifax Public Libraries plans to proceed with its pilot lending program to enable persons to test the technology before purchasing readers for themselves. The first stages of the pilot program will likely lend the readers to current home delivery clients and the pilot may expand to new lenders in the future.

9.1.3 Update

This item was not addressed at this meeting of the Committee and will be addressed at a future meeting of the Committee.

9.1.4 Update

Kayla Douglas, Accessibility Intern, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, updated the Committee on behalf of Tracey Jones-Grant regarding initiatives undertaken by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion's report has been pushed back to end of June. Until it appears before Regional Council staff cannot share findings or details from the report. It should be available as of June 25, 2018. Furthermore, staff from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion will likely not be available for the next ordinary meeting of the Committee, but plans to update the Committee as soon as possible following the publication of the report.

9.1.5 Update – Mike Spicer, Manger of Operations, Halifax Transit

Dale Smith, Acting Manager of Operations, Halifax Transit, addressed the Committee regarding his oversight of the Access-A-Bus service and updated the Committee regarding staff efforts and improvements to the service.

Since April of last year, Access-A-Bus has travelled over 146,000 kilometres, surpassing its expected number of kilometres travelled for the first time in the service's history. During the same period it has overseen increases in both its passenger list and calls received. The number of call hang-ups has decreased during the same period from a rate of about five per day to two per day during peak service hours. Dale Smith expressed staff's opinion that these are huge improvements, however staff expects and is eager to receive further performance feedback in May. Regarding the service improvement program, staff is waiting for the Advisory Committee on Accessibility's engagement Report, however Halifax Transit intends to participate in the Committee's 2018 Town Hall in any case. Access-A-Bus services are beginning to use "NVT" systems to enable service operators to better coordinate pickups at various locations. Staff aims to enable email reservations in the near future. Staff would also like to reduce the minimum advance notice reservation times from a week to two or three days in advance to decrease the number of cancellations.

Regarding next steps, staff plans to participate in community engagement and collect data from these events. Staff will hold public engagement sessions in the Autumn of 2018, and will review data for the creation of a final report, which it hopes will come before Regional Council in January of 2019. Following review from Regional Council, staff hopes to begin implementing new programs between January and March of 2019.

Committee Members requested staff inform the Committee of any future outreach initiatives so that they may share this information with their contacts. Staff also clarified for Committee Members that future plans for email reservations intend to supplement rather than replace telephone call reservations. Staff defined customer education initiatives as efforts intended to provide customers with an informed understanding of how Access-A-Bus provides service, the aim of such being to empower customers to better use Access-A-Bus services.

Some Members mentioned concerns highlighted by Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) regarding immigrants using Access-A-Bus services and experiencing language challenges with service operators. Committee Members inquired if staff has established contacts with ISANS. Staff replied that it has none at this time but would be eager to establish contacts with ISANS regarding this and other issues. Some Committee Members suggested the 311 telephone service as a possible resource which enables callers to get access to an interpreter. However, other Committee Members expressed that they had looked into this issue during prior community engagement and had received feedback that expressed limitations to this service, specifically that callers were still required to ask for an interpreter for their preferred language in English.

9.1.5 2018 Town Hall Planning – Liam MacSween, Legislative Assistant

The following was before the Committee:

- Public Meeting Minutes of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility's November 9, 2015 Meeting
- A Town Hall Meeting Agenda, dated May 15, 2017
- A Flyer with information relevant to the May 15, 2017 Town Hall Meeting

Liam MacSween, Legislative Assistant, addressed the Committee. Further to past discussions of the Committee to move the 2018 Town Hall to Autumn of 2018, staff provided the prospective date of Sept 25, 2018 at Dartmouth North Community Centre. Staff also circulated material to Committee Members illustrating work which was done in past years. These included a Town Hall agenda and poster from a previous Town Hall meeting. Staff's intention in circulating these was to spur the Committee to provide feedback for materials for the 2018 Town Hall. Staff noted that the Office of Diversity & Inclusion was not listed on these materials and suggested adding it to any relevant materials for the 2018 Town Hall.

Some Committee Members suggested that since the Town Hall is likely to be held in Autumn, it would be valuable to display and showcase winter activities materials at the Town Hall. Staff agreed and stated staff has been in contact Norreen Guptill regarding this suggestion. Staff agreed to follow up with the Committee further to this suggestion. Similarly, some Committee Members mentioned that the recreational therapy equipment showcases were well received last year and inquired Halifax Public

Libraries staff if library services can be showcased as well? Heather MacKenzie affirmed this suggestion, and agreed to check with directors to see if staff could prepare to deliver a presentation for the DAISY readers program.

Some Committee Members inquired if some sort of children's activities could be provided to increase attendance of participants who might otherwise be dissuaded from attending due to lack of childcare. Heather MacKenzie replied that it may be possible for branch staff at the Dartmouth North Public Library to coordinate children's activities during the Town Hall meeting. Staff agreed to follow up with the Committee regarding this suggestion.

Some Committee Members suggested the Chair should take a more active role in expressing that the purpose of the Town Hall meeting is to inform and educate members of the public what accessible services exist and how to get access to them. Committee Members expressed that this would help prevent the Town Hall meeting from devolving into an attack on staff and instead motivate members of the public and staff to coordinate to constructively address problems in the municipality.

9.2 COMMITTEE

9.3 COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

9.3.1 Taxi & Limousine Liaison Group – Johanna Stork

Johanna Stork addressed the Committee and informed Committee that the next meeting of the Taxi & Limousine Liaison Group will be held in early June prior to the next ordinary meeting of the Committee on June 18, 2018.

9.3.2 Active Transportation Advisory Committee – Jillian Banfield

Jillian Banfield addressed the Committee, and informed the Committee that there had been two meetings of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee prior to this meeting of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility.

David MacLlssac, Active Transportation Supervisor, while describing staff's process for planning identified that staff sought public engagement feedback from the Active Transportation Advisory Committee. Following discussion with Jillian Banfield, David MacLlssac indicated staff would be receptive to receiving feedback from the Advisory Committee on Accessibility as well in future planning. David MacLlssac may also be receptive to attending the Advisory Committee on Accessibility's 2018 Town Hall.

Additionally, Jillian Banfield informed the Committee that the Province is updating the Motor Vehicle Act, and the government's website is currently accepting comments and public feedback. Jillian Banfield stated she would circulate the link to Committee Members.

Additionally, Jillian Banfield informed the Committee that the Active Transportation Advisory Committee discussed cycle path sharing with pedestrians and other users and signage relating to such with a focus to address concerns about safety for all users. Concerns and experience brought to the Advisory Committee on Accessibility regarding the use of trails and mixed-use paths by users with accessibility issues may be relevant to this discussion. The Committee may wish to forward their thoughts and reflections to the Active Transportation Advisory Committee.

10. ADDED ITEMS

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – June 18, 2018 – 4:00 p.m., Halifax Hall, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

Chair Patricia Gates informed the Committee that both Chair and Vice Chair Ryan Delehanty would not be present on the June 18, 2018 meeting of the Committee. Chair Patricia Gates asked Committee if a

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Member would volunteer to chair the meeting. Councillor Lisa Blackburn volunteered to Chair the June 18, 2018 meeting of the Committee.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Simon Ross-Siegel
Legislative Support