



**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR ACCESSIBILITY IN HRM
MINUTES
October 28, 2019**

PRESENT: Julia Bremner, Chair
Elizabeth Doull
Jacki Purcell
Councillor Lisa Blackburn
Councillor Richard Zurawski

REGRETS: Victoria Levack, Vice Chair
Jillian Banfield
Haylee Milne

STAFF: Melissa Myers, Accessibility Advisor, Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Isaac Cromier, Assistant to Accessibility Advisor, Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Lynn Barrington, Manager – Transit Operations, Halifax Transit
Heather MacKenzie, Manager – Diversity Services, Halifax Public Libraries
Darren Young, Senior Project Manager, Corporate Facility Design & Construction
Judith Ng'ethe, Legislative Assistant, Office of the Municipal Clerk

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 at Halifax.ca

The meeting was called to order at 4:15 p.m. and the Committee adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. at the Duke Tower Boardroom, 3rd Floor, Duke Tower, 5251 Duke Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED by Jacki Purcell, seconded by Councillor Blackburn

THAT the minutes of September 16, 2019 be approved as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Deletion: 9.3.1 Active Transportation Advisory Committee – Jillian Banfield

MOVED by Councillor Zurawski, seconded by Councillor Blackburn

THAT the agenda be approved as amended.

Two-third majority vote required.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Correspondence – Alison Garber

Judith Ng'ethe, Legislative Assistant, shared information received from Aquatics & Inclusion Services, Parks and Recreation, in response to correspondence from Alison Garber dated July 15, 2019. The communication outlined the policy in place for the 2019 Summer Day camp program, as well as the challenges experienced in obtaining qualified inclusion staff to fill the available positions which impacted accommodation of requests. The communication further outlined that the policy was under review and any changes or revision would be updated by January, 2020. This review is undertaken annually after the end of each summer program.

The Committee received the update and expressed their wish to receive further information from staff once the policy has been reviewed.

5. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST - NONE

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

6.1 September 16, 2019 – Appointment of Member Representative to the Taxi and Limousine Liaison Group

The following was before the Advisory Committee on Accessibility:

- A Motion Memorandum

MOVED by Councillor Zurawski, seconded by Jacki Purcell

THAT the Advisory Committee on Accessibility in HRM request the Legislative Assistant to put out an email on the agenda item to members of the Committee and have the item deferred to the next meeting of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATION

7.1 Correspondence

Judith Ng'ethe, Legislative Assistant noted that correspondence was received from Erica Lewis dated July 23, 2019 and from Oliver Depper dated October 8, 2019. This correspondence was circulated to the Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Blackburn, seconded by Councillor Zurawski

THAT the correspondence from Erica Lewis dated July 23, 2019 be forwarded to Halifax Transit and the correspondence from Oliver Depper dated October 8, 2019 be forwarded to Bylaws and Right of Way Engineering.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7.2 Petitions - None

7.3 Presentations – None

8. INFORMATION ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD – NONE

9. REPORTS/DISCUSSION

9.1 STAFF

9.1.1 Update – Staff Presentation – First Draft of Accessibility Strategy – Melissa Myers, Accessibility Advisor, Office of Diversity and Inclusion

The following was before the Advisory Committee on Accessibility:

- A staff presentation dated October 28, 2019

Melissa Myers, Accessibility Advisor, provided a presentation on the first draft of the Accessibility Strategy. Highlights included:

- Nova Scotia Persons with Disabilities Act requires that all municipalities in NS create accessibility advisory committees, which this committee has done
- HRM business units want more direction and support on accessibility updates and support financially as well as more contact with the community
- In 2018 HRM undertook accessibility public consultations in the areas of transportation, recreation and buildings
- The Diversity and Inclusion Framework was created as a roadmap to assist business units in actioning diversity and inclusion initiatives
- The Accessibility and Inclusion Strategy is being modelled on the main five goals of the Framework and is developed from consultations with the public and HRM business units
- Accessibility strategic objectives identified are inclusive public service; safe, respectful and inclusive work environment; equitable employment; meaningful partnerships, accessible information and communication to educate people on accessible services offered.
- Draft recommendations (each with timelines for implementation) were outlined with regard to the built environment, employment, goods and services, information and communication, public transportation and transportation infrastructure. Some of the recommendations are in the process of being implemented and for some a baseline is being created first so as to track improvements.

Myers responded to a question of clarification from a member of the Committee, noting that with regard to physical accessibility, such as rails on stairs and making sure that step treads are not too high, the way forward will be determined by the standards developed. It was also noted that Rick Hansen standards would apply to this issue. In response to a further query, Myers noted that there was no data regarding how many of HRM's 4,000 plus staff identified as having a disability, though it is known that up to 30% of Nova Scotia residents identify as having a disability.

The Committee provided the following feedback to the draft strategy:

- It is progressive to have comment or statement regarding accommodation at interviews
- There will shortly be a unique opportunity for HRM to have a more diverse workforce as a large proportion of HRM staff are set to retire within the next five years
- Some HRM staff may be reluctant to self-identify as requiring accessibility accommodation as they may be worried that they will be penalized.
- HRM is waiting for the Province to revert on subsidies for accessible taxis. There may be a need to develop an alternative plan should no subsidy be forthcoming.

Myers noted that the next step with regard to the draft strategy is to present it to business units for feedback. Feedback from the Province would also be beneficial. It will then go to Council by mid-2020.

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

Darren Young, Senior Project Manager, gave an update on accessibility improvements and upgrades to HRM facilities. Young reported that he is working on the capital budget for the forthcoming year and incorporating an accessibility audit component. Diversity and Inclusion goal of the business unit is an inventory of the facilities and washrooms. The Zatzman Sports Complex video on accessibility highlights had been delayed due to hurricane and is yet to be rescheduled. The lettering correction at the Zatzman complex is being undertaken. Young also noted that he will be attending the first annual conference of the Rick Hansen Foundation in Toronto later this week.

9.1.3 Update – Heather MacKenzie, Manager – Diversity Services, Halifax Public Libraries

Heather MacKenzie, Manager – Diversity Services, Halifax Public Libraries, reported on CNIB on living with vision loss presentations. Presentations are scheduled in Tantallon and Bedford. On CEELA, the Daisy players rentals had been suspended for staff training. A review of closing procedures at branches had established that most branches undertake a physical sweep. MacKenzie would establish if light flashing is also undertaken. MacKenzie announced that her position is changing as she is moving on regionally to work with volunteer services. She will be replaced eventually at the Committee.

9.2 COMMITTEE

9.2.1 Planning for 2019 Town Hall Meeting on Accessibility

Judith Ng'ethe, Legislative Assistant, provided an update on planning for the 2019 Town Hall Meeting on Accessibility. Ng'ethe informed the meeting that the venue booking had been done for the Multipurpose Room in Cole Harbour Place, for November 19, 2019 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. CART captioning had also been booked.

Ng'ethe also noted that following a meeting between with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, it had been noted that due to limitations of CART, it was not possible to have breakout roundtable discussions after all as approved at the September, 2019 Committee meeting. The format would therefore need to revert to a traditional Town Hall meeting. However, to ensure a good flow during the question session, questions could be taken by topic.

Heather Mackenzie informed the meeting that the Cole Harbour Public Library would have a desk at the Town Hall meeting displaying accessible and audio books.

Ng'ethe confirmed that copies of the Town Hall meeting poster would be forwarded to Committee members to forward to their networks.

Jacki Purcell volunteered her services as a sighted guide noting that she had undertaken training in this area and suggested that other members undertake the sighted guide training available on the CNIB website.

9.3 COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES - NONE

10. ADDED ITEMS - NONE

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – November 18, 2019 - 4:00 p.m., Halifax Hall, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax

MOVED by Councillor Blackburn, seconded by Councillor Zurawski

THAT the November 18, 2019 meeting of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility be cancelled due to proximity to the Town Hall meeting date of November 19, 2019.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Judith Ng'ethe
Legislative Assistant