

Report of PPPAC Meeting – Thursday, May 10, 2007

Present – Anne West, Phil Read, Vivek Tomar, Allan Robertson, Stewart MacMillan.

Regrets – Janet Kitz, Kate Greene, Sue Uteck.

1) Ambassadors' proposal for bicycle tours – Cheryl McBain of Ambassadors presented the company's proposal to offer pre-booked bicycle tours in the Park to cruise ship passengers. The tours would be offered on a pilot basis to explore demand, operational issues, and financial return. Up to three times a day, a maximum of 20 tourists would take self-directed bicycle tours of the Park. Bicycle rentals would be pre-arranged and pre-delivered, and a representative of the rental company would be on-site during each tour. The Committee agreed to support the proposal as a pilot project to be reviewed at the end of the 2007 cruising season, subject to the following conditions:

- All Park regulations must be followed (e.g. the prohibition on biking during weekends and public holidays, the need for bikers to stay on paths, etc.).
- A donation or percentage of sales revenue would be provided to the Park (yet-to-be determined).
- The proponent must monitor the program and provide an end-of-season report to the PPPAC indicating numbers of participants (day-by-day basis), incident reports, and general feedback on the Park visit experience.
- Civic events (e.g. a foot race using the Park) may take precedence over cycling, and some dates may thus be unavailable.

2) Replacement PPPAC members – The PPPAC has eight regular members, plus the Mayor and Councillor as ex-officio members. The Committee has recently lost two members to resignations. Further, the attendance at some PPPAC meetings is too low to properly discuss issues. It was agreed to increase the size of the Committee from eight to ten members (Allan Robertson agreed to modify the Committee's Terms of Reference appropriately and submit them to HRM for approval). It was also agreed to ask HRM to replace the missing two members plus two new members.

Allan reported that the process for adding members is to ask interested persons to apply, and to then ask HRM to convene the Membership Selection Committee to choose among applicants. A number of interested persons have already applied, and members were encouraged to ask others. The application form is available at www.halifax.ca/boardscom/volunteer_application.html. Stewart MacMillan agreed to put a notice on the PPP website to notify those interested. It was agreed that May 31 be considered the 'cut-off' date, and that the HRM Municipal Clerk's office be requested to convene the Membership Selection Committee shortly thereafter. (A subsequent delay in posting the website notice led to a June 8 closing.)

It was agreed that the PPPAC Chair and an appropriate HRM staff member would meet with the Mayor to arrange for one or two PPPAC members to see candidate applications prior to the final selection, so as to provide their recommendations to the Membership Selection Committee.

After discussion about PPPAC meeting venues and timing, it was agreed that the most convenient location for most members was the Lodge, and the most convenient time was late afternoon. The general practice of meeting on the second Thursday of each month was considered appropriate.

The PPPAC Terms of Reference contain the statement 'In the case of any member missing three meetings without the consent of the PPPAC, the member shall be deemed to have resigned.' After discussing the application of this condition, it was agreed that it would serve as a guide, and that its formal application would not be undertaken lightly.

3) PPP lower parking lot early closing – Allan Robertson advised that the early closing of the lower parking lot is being well-handled. All drivers in the parking are being politely asked to leave, and

the correct gate is being closed at the correct time. There is one outstanding issue, however; the lack of a sign with a number to call for park users who find themselves locked in.

Staff Sergeant Robin McNeil of HRM Police couldn't attend the meeting due to a previous commitment. Sgt. McNeil was prepared to discuss options around the early closing, speeders on neighbourhood streets, and similar issues. Discussion followed regarding the need for a police representative to become a member of the PPPAC.

4) Bicycles in PPP on weekends – An email from an unhappy bicyclist regarding the regulation which prohibits bicycles in the Park on weekends and public holidays was referred to the PPPAC. Peter Bigelow had previously indicated that the regulation had been established to reduce conflict between cyclists, pedestrians, and dog walkers during high-volume periods of park use on weekends.

In discussion, it became evident that the regulation had been established some time ago (no one knew when), and that its factual basis was 'probably' a mixture of data on usage by pedestrians, dog walkers, and bicyclists, as well as incident reports (possibly complaints or observations about conflicts). In the absence of usage data or other pertinent information, the PPPAC felt unable to recommend any changes. In response to a question about obtaining appropriate data, possibly through analysis of past surveys or commissioning new user surveys, it became apparent that HRM lacked the horsepower to do so. (Subsequent to the meeting, the idea of advising HRM to engage a consultant to undertake a user survey on this and other issues was raised – the idea will be added to the June 14 meeting agenda.)