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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, January 23, 2024

A meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, January 23, 2024 at Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby at 1:09 PM. Electronic participation was permitted for this meeting.

1. Land Acknowledgement

R. Purnwasie, Chair, read the following land acknowledgement:

The Region of Durham exists on lands that the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg inhabited for thousands of years prior to European colonization. These lands are the traditional and treaty territories of the Nations covered under the Williams Treaties, including the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, Alderville First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, and the Chippewa Nations of Georgina Island, Beausoleil and Rama.

We honour, recognize, and respect Indigenous Peoples as rights holders and stewards of the lands and waters on which we have the privilege to live. In our efforts towards reconciliation, we continue to build and strengthen relationships with First Nations, as well as the growing Inuit communities and large Métis communities and here in Durham. We commit to learning from Indigenous values and knowledge, building opportunities for collaboration, and recognizing that we are all connected.

2. Roll Call

Present: A. Beach*, Oshawa
D. Campbell*, Whitby
P. Chandwani*, Whitby
W. Henshall*, Whitby, attended the meeting at 1:57 PM
M. Lloyd*, Oshawa
Councillor McDougall*
J. McEwen*, Clarington, Vice-Chair
R. Purnwasie*, Ajax, Chair
L. Williams*, Pickering, attended the meeting at 1:18 PM
***denotes members of the committee participating electronically**

Absent: A. Blum, Scugog
S. Sones, Whitby

Staff

Present: N. Dash*, Accessibility Coordinator, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
P. Hines*, Manager, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
S. Dessureault, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
N. Prasad, Assistant Secretary to Council, Corporate Services – Legislative Services

***denotes staff participating electronically**

3. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

N. Prasad called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Moved by D. Campbell, Seconded by J. McEwen,
That R. Purnwasie be nominated for the position of Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Moved by J. McEwen, Seconded by D. Campbell,
That nominations be closed.

CARRIED

N. Prasad asked if R. Purnwasie wished to stand. R. Purnwasie indicated she would stand.

R. Purnwasie was acclaimed as the Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Moved by J. McEwen, Seconded by P. Chandwani,
That D. Campbell be nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Moved by D. Campbell, Seconded by Councillor McDougall,
That J. McEwen be nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Moved by Councillor McDougall, Seconded by M. Lloyd,
That nominations be closed.

CARRIED

N. Prasad asked if D. Campbell wished to stand. D. Campbell indicated she did not wish to stand.

N. Prasad asked if J. McEwen wished to stand. J. McEwen indicated he would stand.

J. McEwen was acclaimed as the Vice-Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

R. Purnwasie, Chair, assumed the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

5. **Adoption of Minutes**

Moved by J. McEwen, Seconded by D. Campbell,
That the minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting held on
Tuesday, November 28, 2023, be adopted.

CARRIED

6. **Presentations**

A) Neisha Mitchell, CNIB re: Get on Board Report: Results from Accessible Transit Campaign Fall 2023 – Summary of Findings provided to AAC

Neisha Mitchell and Magda Madsen, CNIB, participating electronically, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to CNIB's Get on Board Transit Campaign Overview.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Consultations with the Community
- Get on Board Transit Campaign
- Key Summary Comments
- What we Learned from the Town Hall
- What we Learned
- Wrap up/Contact Us

N. Mitchell stated that the Get on Board Campaign kicked off in late August 2023. She stated that between January and June 2023, CNIB embarked on a consultation with the blind, partially sighted and key stakeholder community members and hosted 45 consultations with over 1300 participants. They deployed 3 surveys in 9 different languages with over 400 respondents; executed a 6-week text message campaign with over 6000 responses; and held focus groups with over 125 participants. She advised that 3 key themes emerged from the engagement which formed the strategic commitments in CNIB's new Strategic Plan, "The Way Forward 2023-2028".

N. Mitchell stated that a key focus from the community members was on accessible transit and conventional transit and how it can be made more accessible for blind, partially sighted and deaf blind community members. She advised that 3 campaign activities were hosted: Transit Ride-Along; Secret Rider Survey; and Transit Town Halls and provided an overview of the comments received from the campaign. She stated that the key takeaways are as follows:

- Bright lime green seats made locating an empty seat easier for someone partially sighted;

- Location of the bus shelter entrance was a challenge;
- Volume needs to be increased on stop announcement as it is challenging to hear when air conditioning or heat is on; and
- Updated and detailed training on various disabilities is important for new and existing drivers.

She further stated that the following comments were provided at the Town Hall:

- Community members felt uncomfortable and unsafe when taking public transit and would rather take uber or rely on friends and family;
- Some community members remain isolated;
- Bus shelters do not have lights or signs which make it difficult to commute in the dark;
- Improper snow shovelling can cause problems and issues;
- Due to the change of specialized services, many community members do not quality;
- Community members stress that the criteria around having a support person should be the applicant's choice and not be mandatory; and
- It is important to have public education and awareness (more specialized training for DRT staff, public awareness campaigns, blindness etiquette, priority seating, etc.).

Discussion ensued with regards to the various challenges in taking public transit; whether drivers are trained in accessibility so that the riders feel supported when using the service; whether riders can connect with DRT for training; the importance of snow clearing and adequate lighting at bus stops; the possibility of doing the transit ride-along again; whether there is an opportunity to look at other reports from other Regions; the committee's comments should be provided to the Transit Advisory Committee; and the importance of having transit staff engage with various groups as part of their mandate.

7. Discussion Items

A) Accessibility Advisory Committee Annual Work Plan 2024

A copy of the 2024 Annual Work Plan was provided as Attachment #2 to the Agenda.

Discussion ensued and it was recommended that changes be made to the wording included in the 2024 Workplan with regards to the following:

- The proposed Activities under the Priority Area of 'Facilities and Site Plan Review'
- The proposed Activities under the Priority Area of 'Advise Council'
- The proposed Activities under the Priority Area 'Subcommittees'
- The proposed Activities under the Priority Area 'Accessibility Report'
- The proposed Activities under the Priority Area 'Advocacy'

It was the consensus of the committee that the Workplan be circulated to the committee with the proposed amendments within the next few days.

Moved by J. McEwen, Seconded by D. Campbell,
That we recommend to the Finance & Administration Committee for approval and subsequent recommendation to Regional Council:

That the 2024 Accessibility Advisory Committee Annual Work Plan, as amended, be adopted.

CARRIED

B) Updated Terms of Reference

A copy of the 2024 Updated Terms of Reference was provided as Attachment #4 to the Agenda.

Moved by J. McEwen, Seconded by M. Lloyd,
That we recommend to the Finance & Administration Committee for approval and subsequent recommendation to Regional Council:

That the 2024 updated Terms of Reference as contained in Attachment #4 to the agenda, be adopted.

CARRIED

8. Correspondence

A) Letter from Peterborough AAC dated November 15, 2023 regarding Accessibility of eScribe Software

Moved by Councillor McDougall, Seconded by D. Campbell,
That the correspondence from the Peterborough Accessibility Advisory Committee dated November 15, 2023 be forwarded to the Regional Clerk with a request that it be forwarded to the Municipal Clerks of the lower tier municipalities.

CARRIED

Moved by A. Beach, Seconded by J. McEwen,
That Items 9.A) to 9. E) and Item 11 be deferred to the meeting scheduled for March 26, 2024.

CARRIED

9. Information Items

A) Site Plan Sub-Committee Update

This item was deferred.

B) Education Sub-Committee Update

This item was deferred.

C) Transit Advisory Committee Update (TAC)

This item was deferred.

D) Durham Region Equity Audit Recommendations

This item was deferred.

E) Accessibility Coordinator Update

This item was deferred.

10. Reports for Information

There were no reports to consider.

11. Other Business

A) Sub-Committees Overview and Membership

This item was deferred.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 26, 2024 at 1:00 PM.

13. Adjournment

Moved by M. Lloyd, Seconded by D. Campbell,
That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 3:01 PM

Respectfully submitted,

R. Purnwasie, Chair, Accessibility Advisory Committee

N. Prasad, Assistant Secretary to Council