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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

A meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, March 26, 2024 at Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby at 1:05 PM. Electronic participation was permitted for this meeting.

1. Traditional Territory Acknowledgment

J. McEwen, Vice-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: D. Campbell, Whitby
P. Chandwani, Whitby
W. Henshall*, Whitby, left the meeting at 3:01 PM
M. Lloyd*, Oshawa
Councillor McDougall*, left the meeting at 3:00 PM
J. McEwen, Clarington, Vice-Chair
S. Sones, Whitby
L. Williams*, Pickering, attended the meeting at 1:08 PM
***denotes members of the committee participating electronically**

Absent: A. Beach, Oshawa
A. Blum, Scugog
R. Purnwasie, Ajax, Chair

Staff

Present: N. Dash, Accessibility Coordinator, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

A. Hector-Alexander*, Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
P. Hines, Manager, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
A. Smith, Manager, Corporate Initiatives, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
K. Smith, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
***denotes staff participating electronically**

3. **Declarations of Pecuniary Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

4. **Adoption of Minutes**

Moved by D. Campbell, Seconded by Councillor McDougall,
That the minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting held on
Tuesday, January 23, 2024, be adopted.
CARRIED

5. **Presentations**

A) Andrea Smith, Manager, Corporate Initiatives, re: Developing Durham Region's 2025 Strategic Plan

Andrea Smith, Manager, Corporate Initiatives, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding Developing Durham Region's 2025 Strategic Plan.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Purpose
- Approach to Strategy Development
- Timeline
- Engagement Activities
- Your Voice Matters

A. Smith welcomed members of the Committee to visit the Region's website to provide input regarding the 2025 Strategic Plan.

A. Smith responded to questions with regards to the outcome of feedback that has been received to date; the number of surveys completed to date in relation to previous years; common feedback being received on the survey; and when implementation of the Strategic Plan will begin.

J. McEwen requested that a follow up presentation be provided to the Committee when the 2025 Strategic Plan survey has been completed.

6. Discussion Items

A) Sub-Committees Overview and Membership

N. Dash asked Committee members for their feedback on the following questions:

- Which sub-committees each Committee member is a part of?

Committee members advised that J. McEwen, D. Campbell and R. Purnwasie are part of the education sub-committee; S. Sones, J. McEwen and Councillor McDougall are part of the site plan sub-committee; and J. McEwen and W. Henshall are the appointed members to the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC).

Committee members provided a brief overview of the tasks completed at the education sub-committee and site plan sub-committee for members to have a better understanding of what is done at each of the sub-committees.

- What would be the most appropriate time for sub-committee meetings to take place?

Committee members suggested not adding sub-committee meetings to the end of the Accessibility Advisory Committee meetings; the education sub-committee meet quarterly; and the site plan sub-committee meet on an as-needed basis based upon site plan review requirements.

N. Dash advised that there is a contact person in the Planning department that will be providing a list of the upcoming site plans and that she will provide the list to the sub-committee members when received.

- Whether the two current sub-committees are sufficient to complete the work outlined in the workplan or whether a new sub-committee should be created?

Discussion ensued with regards to topics within the workplan such as site plan, traffic road improvements, transit committee, accessibility awards, equitable employment and communication; consulting or advising around emergency preparedness or services; reviewing priority areas within the workplan; and combining education and workplace accommodations together.

N. Dash advised she would email Committee members with an updated list with the tasks for each of the sub-committees.

7. Correspondence

There were no items of correspondence to consider.

8. Information Items

A) Site Plan Sub-Committee Update

N. Dash advised that there was no site plan sub-committee update at this time.

B) Durham Region Equity Audit Recommendations

The Durham Region Equity Audit: Summary Report was provided to Committee members prior to the meeting.

P. Hines advised that the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Division hired a consultant to conduct an equity audit to review equitable policies and practices within the organization. The report, which was emailed to all members prior to the meeting, included 86 recommendations from the consultant. She provided a brief overview of recommendations relating to accommodation and accessibility contained in numbers 15, 17, 18, 19, 34, 72, 74 and 75 as they relate to the Committee and outlined where Durham Region is with respect to complying with the recommendation.

Discussion ensued with regards to not tracking accommodation requests only through a software program in order to not lose sight of the individual; ensuring good engagement with outsourced vendors being hired; and conducting the audit with more intersections between the identified areas.

C) Education Sub-Committee Update

N. Dash advised that there was no education sub-committee update at this time.

D) Update on the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC)

The February 20, 2024 Transit Advisory Committee meeting update from J. McEwen was emailed to Committee members prior to the meeting.

Discussion ensued with regards to the need for Durham Region Transit to be more communicative regarding transit delays; providing transit updates through more social media channels; and setting up a focus group to have discussions on how to improve transit communication.

E) Accessibility Coordinator Update

N. Dash provided the following update:

- There was a flag raising ceremony held on March 18, 2024 for Neurodiversity Celebrate Week and 29 people attended the ceremony.

- The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Division is partnering with the Abilities Centre to host the Durham Accessibility Conference being held on May 22, 2024 at 10:00 AM. The event is being held in a hybrid format and all Committee members are invited. The registration link will be sent to Committee members.

P. Hines provided the following update:

- The Project Search program that is providing 10 internships to students with developmental disabilities will be wrapping up for the 2023-2024 school year with a graduation taking place on June 26, 2024. The program will continue for the 2024-2025 school year.

W. Henshall advised that the LCBO is launching a program in April called “We belong here” at 100 locations across Ontario with one person with a disability being hired as part of the program. He suggested staff look into the program to see how the Region can learn from it.

The Committee recommended that the Project Search interns be invited to attend Accessibility Advisory Committee meetings or have one person sit on the Committee.

N. Dash provided the following update:

- The Accessibility Report is in the final stages and will be presented to the Finance & Administration Committee on April 9, 2024 and to Regional Council on April 24, 2024.
- There has been discussion with the lower tier municipalities at the Accessibility Coordinators meetings about accessible taxis in Durham Region. The next meeting is taking place on April 5, 2024 and Durham Region Transit will be attending.
- The annual Accessibility Awards are being presented at the Abilities Centre on April 26, 2024 at 6:00 PM and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Division will be purchasing a table and is extending the invite to four Committee members.
- Durham Region is beginning a partnership with CNIB for their Come to Work program which will help the Region to understand what it is like for someone experiencing sight loss, in the hope that they will hire more persons with sight loss.

W. Henshall noted that he was the original creator of the Come to Work program and was the first volunteer, and is now the Director of Partnerships at CNIB.

9. Reports for Information

There were no reports to consider.

10. Other Business

A) Vulnerable Persons Registry

J. McEwen advised that he attended the City of Ottawa Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting and there was discussion regarding a vulnerable persons registry. He suggested that the Committee considering looking into this for the Region of Durham.

Discussion ensued with regards to concerns around the privacy of those on the registry; and whether there is a registry currently in place with other agencies.

It was the consensus of the Committee to further discuss the vulnerable persons registry at the May 28, 2024 Committee meeting.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at 1:00 PM.

12. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 3:03 PM

Respectfully submitted,

J. McEwen, Vice-Chair, Accessibility Advisory
Committee

K. Smith, Committee Clerk