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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, November 26, 2024

A meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, November 26, 2024 at Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby at 1:00 PM. Electronic participation was permitted for this meeting.

J. McEwen, Vice-Chair, chaired the 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
M. Lloyd*, Oshawa
Councillor McDougall
J. McEwen, Clarington, Vice-Chair, left the meeting at 2:30 PM
S. Sones, Whitby
L. Williams*, Pickering
***denotes members of the committee participating electronically**

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
A. Sharma*, Policy Advisor, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

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 S. Sones,
That the minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting held on
Tuesday, September 24, 2024, be adopted.
CARRIED

5. Presentations

A) Anu Sharma, Policy Advisor, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Division, re: Region of Durham Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy

Anu Sharma, Policy Advisor, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Division, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to the Region of Durham Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy.

A. Sharma advised that the presentation will share how they got to the DEI strategy; what they are trying to accomplish; and the timelines for the work being done. She stated that all levels of government have equity focused strategies and are working towards removing barriers to people from Indigenous and equity seeking groups.

A. Sharma also advised that the goal of the strategy is to look at how Durham Region conducts its business by determining if it is being done in a manner that is equitable to all residents. The DEI Division was created in 2021 and has been focusing on fact finding over the past three years, including a workplace census which was conducted in 2022 and resulted in 86 recommendations. One of the recommendations was an equity focused strategy and the DEI Division began working on this with Ediseed in the Summer 2024. An environmental scan within public sector organizations in Canada and the GTHA was done and using that methodology they have moved on to an engagement plan which is phase four of six. A survey has been created called Informing Durham Region's DEI Strategy and consists of five questions. The survey deadline is December 15, 2024. The next step is compiling the data and developing a strategy that will be available in March 2025.

P. Hines requested feedback from Committee members and advised they will be meeting with service providers and working with the eight lower-tier municipalities on this project.

A. Sharma responded to questions with regards to which service providers the DEI Division will be working with on the DEI Strategy.

Committee members provided the following feedback:

- With respect to question 2: suggested changing the wording to read either “what examples can you provide of fair access to services and opportunities in Durham” or “what outcomes do you associate with fair access to services in Durham:
- With respect to question 3: specify what kinds of inclusion challenges you are referring to;
- With respect to question 5: suggested changing the wording to read “what specific actions can respondents take to promote inclusion in events, programs or services”;
- With respect to question 6: prompt respondents to think about who should be involved and how by requesting what resources, partnerships or supports are needed to implement the actions; by adding a section to ask about challenges or specific solutions to marginalized groups and address the intersectionality component; and by testing the survey on a small subset before sending out to the community.

A. Sharma advised that the Committee’s feedback would be provided to Ediseed.

6. Discussion Items

A) New Process for Nomination of AAC Award Winners

N. Dash advised that feedback was received from Committee members and other stakeholders regarding the AAC Awards event and that the main concern was how nominees were chosen for the awards. N. Dash stated that using feedback from the committee, a new process has been established, which was provided to Committee members prior to the meeting for their review.

N. Dash advised the new process will look at how nominees made a significant contribution to improve access for persons with disabilities in the areas of governance/policies; impact; inclusive programming; service delivery; transportation; housing; communication; employment; built environment; and education.

Discussion ensued with regards to the nomination process and who is eligible to nominate a person or business; how the weight of the factors are taken into consideration; how the scoring matrix is taken into consideration and the grading factors; providing more space for the description on why the nominee should be nominated for an award; ensuring nominees who are strong in one area are able

to be considered to be nominated for an award; and reducing the categories to a maximum of three.

N. Dash advised that a further update will be provided at a future meeting.

7. **Correspondence**

There were no items of correspondence to consider.

8. **Information Items**

A) Direction Memorandum re: Resolution adopted by the Finance and Administration Committee as its meeting held on November 12, 2024

Direction Memorandum from Leigh Fleury, Deputy Clerk, Region of Durham regarding Resolution Adopted by the Finance and Administration Committee at its meeting held on November 12, 2024 was provided as Attachment #2 to the agenda and received.

In response to a question from a Committee member, P. Hines advised that the direction memorandum was referred to the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer and falls under Allison Hector-Alexander's portfolio and can provide any updates to the Committee that arise.

B) Education Sub-Committee Update

N. Dash provided the following update:

- There will be a flag raising, lunch and panel discussion for International Day of Persons with Disabilities being held on December 2, 2024 at 12:00 pm outside the Council Chambers. Committee member Meghann Lloyd will be the moderator for the panel discussion and Committee member Wayne Henshall will be sitting on the panel.
- Looking to have a forum next year October in recognition of National Disability Employment Awareness month to bring together employers and businesses to listen, collaborate and learn from those who have hired persons with disabilities.

C) Update on the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC)

The November 19, 2024 Transit Advisory Committee meeting update from J. McEwen was emailed to Committee members.

W. Henshall advised that a review of the communication methods will be done on how Durham Region Transit communicates service and service transitions and interruptions by leveraging other methods of communication outside of technology to ensure all users receive the information and there is clarity of messages and messages are received in a timely manner.

D) Accessibility Coordinator Update

N. Dash provided the following update:

- The Accessible Taxi Survey is completed, and the results will be shared when they are available.
- At the Regional Accessibility Coordinators meeting, and in response to discussion at the last AAC meeting, the lower tier municipalities advised they would not be able to provide access to their workplans due to short turnaround requirements and they would be happy to work in collaboration with Durham Region AAC on events starting in 2025.
- At the Regional Accessibility Coordinators meeting, it was decided to have a virtual networking event for all Accessibility Advisory Committees. The calendar invite will be provided to Committee members.

Discussion ensued with regards to hosting the AAC networking event in person; working to remove the transportation barrier to hold the event in person; providing transportation support for those needed; bringing in a professional moderator to assist with hosting the event virtually; and potential in-person event locations. N. Dash advised she would bring these comments back to the next Regional Accessibility Coordinators meeting in December.

- Durham Region Transit is providing training to operators on accessibility and asked Committee members for their feedback on assisting in providing a training video to assist the training specialist.

Discussion ensued with regards to the lack of service providers that do not have proper training; collaborating with Durham Region Transit to provide training videos; how long the operator training takes; and whether accessibility training has been provided in the past.

- An election of the Chair and Vice-Chair will be conducted at the January 28, 2025 meeting. The AAC Workplan will need to be adopted at the January 28, 2025 meeting. Continuing to look for new Committee members to fill the current vacancies.

At this time, J. McEwen, Vice-Chair, left the meeting.

Moved by Councillor McDougall, Seconded by S. Sones,
That Dawn Campbell chair the meeting for the remainder of the meeting.

CARRIED

9. Reports for Information

There were no reports to consider.

10. Other Business

A) Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA) Alliance Hearing

D. Campbell advised that the 30th Anniversary of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA) Alliance Hearing was held at Queen's Park on November 25, 2024. There was an opportunity for questions to the MPPs that were in attendance and there were a number of presentations from members of the community who provided their story on what barriers they are still experiencing in Ontario and also shared solutions with the MPPs on the panel.

In the absence of Jim McEwen, D. Campbell provided a summary of his takeaway of the hybrid version of the event and noted that it will be provided to Committee members following the meeting.

Discussion ensued with regards to whether there was any response from the three Provincial parties on the plan to continue to work towards making Ontario accessible.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 1:00 PM.

12. Adjournment

Moved by S. Sones, Seconded by M. Lloyd,
That the meeting be adjourned.
CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 2:41 PM

Respectfully submitted,

J. McEwen, Vice-Chair, Accessibility Advisory
Committee

K. Smith, Committee Clerk