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The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Finance and Administration Committee
From: Chief Administrative Officer
Report: #2025-A-1
Date: March 18, 2025

Subject:

Appointment of New Members to the Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

Recommendation:

That the Finance and Administration Committee recommends to Regional Council:

That the following persons be appointed to the Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee:

- i. Julia Stevenson – Community member living with a disability
 - ii. Mubina Jaffer - Community member caregiver to a person with a disability
 - iii. Laura Saumur – Community member living with a disability
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Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Accessibility Advisory Committee's (AAC) Terms of Reference allow for an eleven-member committee. The purpose of this report is to facilitate three appointments for the vacant position of community members.

2. Background

- 2.1 Under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA), Durham Region is obligated to form an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). A second piece of legislation, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) was proclaimed in 2005. However, the first Act was not repealed, and therefore, Durham must comply with both pieces of legislation. The requirement to have an AAC is still in effect.

3. Appointment of new members

3.1 The application process for the current nominees is the same as was for the original committee. After completing an application form an interview was held with each applicant. The selection criteria used to determine suitability to serve on the committee are:

- a. Knowledge of disability issues
- b. Experience with committees, volunteerism, community work
- c. Communication skills
- d. Team building and collaboration skills
- e. Demonstrated commitment to projects/teams
- f. Ability to build trust and relationships.

3.2 Every effort is made to ensure that there is representation from a variety of disabilities, lived experiences and from different professional bodies.

The term of membership will correspond with the term of Regional Council and if a member resigns the Region will seek a replacement in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

Following Council's appointment of the membership, the first AAC meeting the new members will attend will be March 28, 2025.

4. Community Member Appointments

4.1 Julia Stevenson

- a. This candidate brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the Accessibility Advisory Committee. With a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Education, they have built a strong foundation in understanding the needs of children with special needs and the impact of trauma on memory formation. Their professional background includes roles as an Accessibility Consultant for Durham Region and the Town of Ajax, where they reviewed websites and promotional materials for accessibility, created presentations on vision accessibility, and worked with local businesses to promote accessibility policies. Additionally, their experience as a CNIB Ambassador and Consumer Consultant for ODSP highlights their ability to engage with the public, create educational materials, and consult on accessibility issues. Their strengths in communication, problem-solving, and public speaking, combined with their administrative and organizational skills, make them a valuable asset to the committee.

4.2 Mubina Jaffer

- a. Their professional experience includes roles such as Manager of Training and Education at the Abilities Centre, where they advised on accessibility and inclusion, developed strategic relationships and facilitated training workshops. Additionally, their leadership in Inclusion and Diversity at Accenture Canada, highlight their strong skills in creating inclusive teams' relationship building, and program management. Their lived and caregiver experience of family with disability, and marginalized communities, combined with their certifications in coaching offer an important intersectional lens which will add value to the committee.

4.3 Laura Saumur

- a. This candidate is highly qualified for the Accessibility Advisory Committee, bringing extensive experience in education and support for individuals with diverse needs. As an Academic Assistant at Trent University, they provided comprehensive support for undergraduate courses, including responding to student inquiries and assisting with course management. Their role as a Secondary School Teacher at Blyth Academy involved delivering tailored academic and emotional support to students with mental health and learning needs, organizing events, and leading staff workshops. Additionally, their experience as a Night School Supervisor and Education Coordinator demonstrates their ability to manage educational programs and support student success. Their technical proficiency with various software and platforms, combined with their volunteer work and involvement in community initiatives, further highlights their commitment to accessibility and inclusion.

5. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 5.1 The appointment of members to the AAC aligns with the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:
 - a. Goal 2 – Community Vitality, specifically Priority 2.5 – Build a healthy, inclusive, age-friendly community where everyone feels a sense of belonging.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 It is recommended that Julia Stevenson, Mubina Jaffer and Laura Saumur be appointed as community members on the AAC.
- 6.2 For additional information, contact: Natalie Dash. Accessibility Coordinator, at 905-668-7711, extension 2009.

7. Confidential Attachments

7.1 Confidential Attachment #1: Resumes of Julia Stevenson, Mubina Jaffer, and Laura Saumur Under Separate Cover

Prepared by: Natalie Dash. Accessibility Coordinator, at 905-668-7711, extension 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer