



Accessibility Advisory Committee

MINUTES

Wednesday, July 26, 2023

Open to public attendance in Committee Room G

Lower Level, City Hall

Committee members may attend electronically

PRESENT:

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy
Anne Bélanger
Karen Basran

Chair
Committee Member
Human Resources Business Partner

Shannon Dolton*
Hazel Fitzpatrick*
Nancy Kato
Vic Leach
Karla Olson
Julia Schoennagel

Committee Member
Committee Member
Committee Member
Committee Member
Committee Member
Committee Member

GUESTS:

Asifa Lalji

Community Member/Lived Experience

REGRETS:

Taryn Bruckshaw
Iris Cheng

Committee Member
Committee Member

STAFF PRESENT:

Mike Anderson
Hailey Finnigan
Erica Mark*
Katie Stobbart

Manager of Transportation
Communications Coordinator
Recreation Services and Facilities Manager
Committee Clerk

*Denotes electronic attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Councillor McEvoy opened the meeting at 5:43 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsundered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. He acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. He recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting began with a round of introductions.

3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Parking Access on Sixth Street at Eighth Avenue be added to the agenda.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 June 28, 2023

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Minutes of the June 28, 2023 Accessibility Advisory Committee be adopted as circulated.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

5. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

None.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

6.1 Accessibility Focus Areas Summaries

Karen Basran, Human Resources Business Partner, Mike Anderson, Manager of Transportation; Hailey Finnigan, Communications Coordinator; and Erica Mark, Recreation Services and Facilities Manager, Seniors and Youth reviewed the Accessibility Focus Areas Summaries and noted the following:

- Staff hope to redesign the external website and will want to make it compliant with accessibility standards using recommended practices for site design; and
- Century House has a concierge-like service to support anyone with questions or access needs, a large-print newsletter, and lots of seating both in and outdoors.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Basran and Mr. Anderson provided the following comments:

- Enforcement of accessible parking is a Bylaws matter;
- Pedestrian Scramble crosswalks have complications, particularly for blind and visually impaired people;
- The transportation department refers to the Transportation Association of Canada guidelines;
- Accessibility improvements tend to be implemented as part of larger capital projects, rather than city-wide all at once;
- If a candidate for employment is not offered a position, staff let them know further feedback can be provided if desired;
- Staff would like to better assess how user-friendly Taleo is for job applicants; and
- There was a previous report done on accessible parking stalls, but it focused on the consistency and quality of the stall rather than assessing need, number of stalls, etc.

Discussion ensued, and Committee members provided the following comments:

- Sustainability plans that translate into fewer parking spaces affect the ratio of parking spaces to accessible spaces—it is no longer the right ratio;
- Accessible parking hubs would be convenient for people with mobility issues to get closer to walkable and wheelable areas;
- Would like to see a proactive project addressing accessibility in the city, not just including it as part of other projects;
- There should be a notice in the paper that notifies people of big changes to an area so they are prepared when they travel through or visit there;
- A sign that says “Sidewalk Closed” does not help a blind person, and there are many people who have severe visual impairments;

- The City website should be a priority as it is difficult to navigate;
- The City's FEST committee should discuss accessibility of events as part of their work, and perhaps reach out to organizations like New West Pride who are doing it well;
- An important intersection that is often missing in addressing accessibility is with poverty, and it should be added to the list of groups to be included in things like the DEIAR framework;
- When making lists of groups we want to include or acknowledge, people with disabilities are often at the end of the list—suggest changing this so the list is alphabetical with Indigenous peoples first; and
- There is a need to review the benefits people get and who has access to them.

6.2 Update: Accessibility at the New Westminster Police Department

Hailey Finnigan, Communications Coordinator, reviewed the Accessibility Focus Areas Summaries.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Finnigan advised that the Peer Assisted Care Team (PACT) has a close working relationship with the NWPD's Mental Health Unit, and the partnership has freed up time for officers to respond to other calls for service.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Universal Design

Discussion ensued regarding universal design and Councillor McEvoy noted that there is some work needed to understand Universal Design and take it forward. Going forward the Committee will need to establish some guidelines.

7.2 Additional August Committee Meeting

Discussion ensued regarding the possible need to an additional committee meeting in early August. Staff will reach out before scheduling an additional meeting.

7.3 **Parking Access on Sixth Street at Eighth Avenue**

Councillor McEvoy will discuss this item with interested members of the committee outside of the meeting.

8. **END OF MEETING**

The meeting ended at 8:06 PM.

9. **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

August 23

September 27

October 25

November 22

Certified correct,

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk