



**WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY**  
**Accessibility Advisory Committee - Meeting Agenda**  
**March 18, 2021 - 1:00 p.m.**

**In-Person Sanford Council Chambers, 76 Morison Drive, Windsor, NS**

Agenda is subject to change due to additions that may not be able to be reflected until after the meeting.

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1. Call to Order
2. Attendance / Introductions
3. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
4. Approval of previous meeting minutes – None
5. Unfinished Business – None
6. New Business
  - a) Presentation(s)
    - i. Accessibility Introduction – Planner Saira Shah (attached)
  - b) Election of Chair and Vice-Chair (attached)
  - c) Draft Terms of Reference (attached)
  - d) NS Accessibility Toolkit Information (attached)
  - e) Accessibility Consultant Information (verbal)
7. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment



**WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY**

Accessibility Advisory Committee – Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2021 - 1:00 p.m.

In-Person Sanford Council Chambers, 76 Morison Drive, Windsor, NS  
& Virtual Meeting via Zoom & Facebook Live

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**1. Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 1:02 pm

**2. Attendance / Introductions**

Debbie Francis, Councilor, District 5	Troy Burgess, Mgr., Public Works Operations
Jennifer Davison, Resident Member	Bekah Craik, Active Living Coordinator
Jordan Stephens, Resident Member	Roseanna Boyd, Resident Member
Denise Long, Resident Member	Michael Bourgeois – Resident Member
Mark Phillips, CAO	Saira Shah, Planner
Shelleena Thornton, Admin Supervisor Carmen Dewar-Miller, Admin Assistant	

**3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

No minutes to approve.

**4. Unfinished Business**

No unfinished business.

**5. New Business**

a) Accessibility Introduction – Overview of accessibility in Nova Scotia, provincial commitment, Accessibility Act, related statistics, Municipal expectations

Discussion Points

- Department of Justice (DOJ) responsible for accessibility.
- Groups addressing accessibility (1) the built environment; (2) education.
- Committee’s responsibility is to address built environment, not education.

- Expectation to incorporate accessibility / inclusivity through review of municipal infrastructure (facilities, sidewalks, trails, parks, signage, etc.).
- Education links in presentation.
- Comprehensive accessibility plans already drafted (Town of Kentville, Town of Wolfville and Municipality of the District of Lunenburg), worthwhile to circulate for review.
- Opportunity to align our plan, considering all aspects of our unique region.
- Plan can be more detailed if the expectations within the Act are met.
- Work with other groups to incorporate accessibility from the beginning.
- Look for opportunity to link with other funding / grant applications.
- Active Transportation Plan, Active Living Strategy and Strategic Plan for the Municipality provide opportunities for synergies.
- Request to call the committee the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee
- Use Municipal social media platforms to inform and promote accessibility grants and other funding opportunities.
- Does DOJ offer an accessibility presentation, package, or representative who could visit with the committee to help understand goals and responsibilities? To be investigated.

b.) NS Accessibility Toolkit - Why are we here; where do we come from; what are we thinking? What is your current experience of accessibility in West Hants? What is working / not working?

#### Discussion Points

- Assessing public facilities and costs, understanding legislation.
- Meeting standards in a way that benefits residents.
- Advocating for residents with disabilities who struggle with access.
- Considering sidewalks, installation of tactile plates, looking at buildings, developing awareness through NS Public Works Association (NSPWA).
- Exploring training opportunities (Rick Hansen Foundation).
- Consider accessibility when setting budgets.
- Consider accessibility with rebuilds (elevator at Brooklyn Arena).

- Assisting local businesses, groups with becoming accessible.
- Opportunity to promote funding, find some room in budget.
- Offering welcoming, holistic, inclusive and diverse programming.
- Focusing on adaptive equipment for all abilities, indoors and outdoors.
- Accessibility has evolved over 30 years, from designated parking spaces to the creation of comprehensive standards manuals.
- Causeway trail one area where accessibility is an issue.
- Advocating for inclusion and integration.
- Challenging / conquering participation limitations in sports and activities, requiring perseverance, community support, fundraising, volunteers.
- Focus on sporting venues, playgrounds, schools, camps, local events.
- Steps, sidewalks, curbs, stores, offices, washrooms – barriers exist.
- Pandemic makes accessibility difficult; people forget about disabilities.
- Tables in front of counters for social distancing, impossible to use debit.
- Frustrating when newer buildings constructed with poor accessibility.
- Need to account for people with vision loss and hearing loss.
- Making good strides, empathy and inclusion are recognized.
- What about other stakeholders and community groups? Do programs exist? Is there representation? Education? Awareness? Supports?
- West Hants residents and businesses have been amazing.
- Accessibility has not always been well-thought out.
- When Community Services moved, accessibility was not well-considered. The issue was fixed after being brought to their attention.

Round table on short (low-cost), and long-term (potentially costly) measures, not necessarily municipally funded.

#### Short-term Measures

- Increase education.
- Promote funding opportunities.
- Connect qualifying people, groups and businesses with available programs and funding, and ensure programs are utilized.

- Hand-held, cordless debit machines in stores.
- More accessible taxis.
- Ensure businesses are accessible for all.
- Offer adaptive equipment for loan.
- Bring thoughts of accessibility and inclusion to the forefront, consider existing biases.

### Long-term Measures

- Have accessibility be one of the first things considered for new builds.
- Invest in adaptive equipment that would help as many people as possible.
- Install sidewalks everywhere (e.g. New Boundaries to the sportsplex).
- Create accessibility standards for infrastructure design.
- Combat systemic and community biases.
- Create accessible outdoor spaces, water access, parks and trails.
- Initiate active transportation gap analysis.
- Offer accessibility for everyone with no barriers.
- Move from compliance to integration and understanding.

#### c.) Draft Terms of Reference (TOR)

The TOR were reviewed.

#### d.) Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Elections deferred to the next meeting. Chair cannot be a staff member – either a councilor or resident member.

## **6. Next Meeting Date / Action Plan**

The committee will meet next month, leading into budgets. Staff to consider resources and budget.

A list of action items was created:

- Reach out to the province for accessibility presentation or package.
- Consult community stakeholders or a municipality that has been through the process (best practice).
- Prepare budget.
- Research closed captioning, signing capabilities for meetings.
- Mentally travel a common route through the lens of accessibility.
- Contact organization such as CNIB to provide an accessibility exercise.

## **7. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 2:25pm.

X

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Chair