

**WEST HANTS MUNICIPALITY**  
**Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda**  
**October 20, 2022, 6:00 p.m.**  
**Sanford Council Chambers**  
**76 Morison Drive, Windsor, NS**

*Agenda is subject to changes up to and including during the meeting*



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1. Call to Order
  2. Attendance
  3. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
  4. Announcements
  5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – March 15, 2022
  6. New Business
    - a) Accessibility Plan and Accomplishments to Date
    - b) Committee Members Check-In
    - c) Next Steps 2022-23 and Beyond
    - d) Member Reappointments (Terms of Reference attached)
    - e) Meeting Planning Going Forward (frequency, best days and times)
  7. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment

**Time to Celebrate!**

**WEST HANTS MUNICIPALITY**  
**Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**October 20, 2022, 6:00 p.m.**  
**Sanford Council Chambers**  
**76 Morison Drive, Windsor, NS**

*Agenda is subject to changes up to and including during the meeting*



1. Call to Order – Chair Francis called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm
2. Attendance  
Voting: Debbie Francis, Denise Long, Michel Bourgeois, Kelly Ann Jobson, Jennifer Davison  
Staff Support (non-voting): Bekah Craik, Mark Phillips, Tina McKay, Shelleena Thornton, Carmen Dewar-Miller  
Guest: Zach Dickson, Parasport Nova Scotia  
*Roseanna Boyd, Jordan Stephens and Troy Burgess sent their regrets*
3. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions  
**MOVED by Resident Members Davison and Bourgeois that the agenda be approved.**  
**Motion Carried**
4. Announcements  
Chair Francis acknowledged that West Hants Regional Municipality recognizes that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people and that this land is governed by the treaties of Peace and Friendship signed in 1726. West Hants Regional Municipality also recognizes that we are all treaty people and have responsibilities to each other and this land.  
  
Staff Member Craik announced that October is Mi'kmaq Heritage Month.
5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – March 15, 2022  
**MOVED by Resident Members Jobson and Bourgeois that the minutes be approved.**  
**Motion Carried**
6. New Business
  - a) Accessibility Plan and Accomplishments to Date were reviewed by Staff Member Craik.  
There have been quite a few successes since our last meeting, including:
    - The Accessibility Plan being adopted by Council
    - Receiving \$4,794.66 through Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage to be used toward renovations at the Windsor Community Centre. These renovations will focus on providing a barrier-free, accessible entry to the centre.

- An RFP was issued for Municipal website rebrand and redesign. A Recommendation Report will be going to Committee of the Whole (COTW), in November. Included are requirements for web content accessibility guidelines 2.1 (standards currently 2.0).
- A Recommendation Report is going to COTW in November regarding the creation of the West Hants Diverse and Inclusive Communities Committee. This will align well with the work of the Accessibility Committee.
- In collaboration with Autism Nova Scotia and funded by Sport Nova Scotia, we are running an adaptive “Try-It” program. We have received over \$13,000 towards offering opportunities for neuro-divergent people to be more physically active and connected to the community. This program is always looking for volunteers if anyone is interested.
- Our new municipal road standards require that all new roads in our growth centres (Windsor, Hantsport, Falmouth and Three Mile Plains), include sidewalks
- The renovation work at Victoria Park gazebo includes a fully compliant ramp.
- CAO Phillips has completed and passed the NS Human Rights Work with Abilities course (found within the strategy). He recommends this course to committee members and staff.

#### b) Committee Members Check-In

Staff Member Craik offered the opportunity for updates from committee members.

- Chair Francis and CAO Phillips recently attended the Healthcare Community Conversation held at the Windsor Community Centre. There was a question regarding the accessibility of this venue and it was acknowledged that yes, the Community Centre was accessible. An indication that people are thinking and talking about accessibility.
- Resident Members Davison, Bourgeois and Long expressed their excitement regarding the new sidewalk mandate in WHRM growth centres. Lack of sidewalks is one of the biggest barriers to getting out in the community. Sidewalks make our community more inclusive.
- It was mentioned that we are taking good, positive steps toward accessibility. Our recreation initiatives and programs are a great example.
- Staff Member Craik met recently with New Boundaries to discuss making West Hants more inclusive and more active. The resulting suggestions will help inform the Active Living Strategy. The New Boundaries staff gained an increased awareness of WHRM’s Sensory Turf Time at the Sports Complex on Saturday mornings. Low sensory walking times are also offered at the Sports Complex walking track.
- CAO Phillips spoke to the plan and go-forward strategy. The committee needs to reflect on prioritization and create a game plan including budgets and resources. He has highlighted some of the short-term, achievable goals. Internally, there are efforts being made to prioritize some of Staff Member Craik’s functions. This will help her better support this committee and accessibility initiative. Training is another item that we can move on internally.

#### c) Next Steps 2022-23 and Beyond

The committee agreed to break into smaller groups to review and prioritize the policies and actions found within the six focus areas of the Municipal Accessibility Plan. Each group was to report back on two assigned focus areas. Priorities would be classified as green, yellow or red, depending on the time frame and resources required for actioning. Groups as follows:

- Chair Francis, Staff Member Craik and Resident Member Bourgeois addressed Transportation and Programs and Services
- Staff Members Thornton and McKay and Resident Member Davison addressed Awareness and Built Environment
- CAO Phillips and Resident Members Jobson and Long addressed Employment and Information and Communication

*The live stream was paused at 6:22 pm for the breakout exercise. The live stream resumed at 6:50 pm.*

Chair Francis brought the meeting back to order. Each group presented their feedback for discussion. The results have been summarized in the attached document, "Proposed Actions 2022-23."

d) Member Reappointments

Resident Members Davison and Jobson's terms don't expire until 2023. Resident Members Boyd, Stephens, Bourgeois and Long have the option to reapply. Chair Francis will know next Tuesday if she will continue as our Council representative.

e) Meeting Planning Going Forward (frequency, best days and times)

The committee will continue to meet every two months. Set dates for the coming year will help with planning and attendance. Thursdays at 6 pm work well for committee members. Meetings can be cancelled if there is no progress to report. If six meetings per year are not warranted, the Terms of Reference could be amended.

7. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment

Thursday, December 15 at 6pm, location to be determined (Sports Complex was suggested).

*Chair Francis adjourned the meeting at 7:52 pm.*

**Time to Celebrate! After adjournment, committee members were joined by Zach Dickson, Sport Nova Scotia's Parasport Coordinator, for an informal chat about Parasport's adaptive equipment loan initiative. Zach demonstrated a few pieces of equipment available for loan.**

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Committee Chair

**Implementing the Plan: RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Council** - Allocate adequate funding to satisfy the commitments of the Municipality under the Accessibility Plan.

**CAO** - Assign an Accessibility Coordinator

**Accessibility Coordinator/Accessibility & Inclusion Specialist** - Work with the AAC to identify and provide advice on removing accessibility barriers in new policies and programs.

**AAC** - Provide guidance to the Accessibility Coordinator to support the development and ongoing review of the Accessibility Plan.

**Implementing the Plan: MONITORING**

**AAC** - The AAC will prepare an annual Accessibility Report Card. The Accessibility Report Card will measure the performance of the policies and actions outlined in this plan.

**Implementing the Plan: EVALUATION**

**AAC** - The AAC will lead a review and evaluation of the Accessibility Plan every three years. The first review will be initiated before the 2025/26 fiscal year.

**AWARENESS Section**

Increase accessibility awareness through the delivery of public information campaigns.  
 Facilitate regular activities to improve the Municipality's knowledge and understanding of accessibility challenges across West Hants Regional Municipality.  
 Engage and collaborate with local disability stakeholder groups to gather insight and lived experiences.  
 Demonstrate inclusivity in municipal publications and communication material.

Actively work to increase the representation of people with disabilities on all municipal committees by extending invitations to disability support networks and groups.  
 Regularly promote the Accessibility Plan and actions completed to improve accessibility.  
 Provide accessible and inclusive workplace training for Council, senior leadership, and key staff members.  
 Build strategies to support people with disabilities to participate on Municipal committees.

Develop a communications strategy that reflects the diversity of our West Hants and promotes the Municipality's commitment to accessibility.

Promote and celebrate National Accessibility Week, taking place annually in the last week of May.  
 Explore opportunities to promote and celebrate other accessibility and inclusion initiatives.

**Type of Recommendation Assigned Priority Lead Staff Notes**

Policy	Green/Yellow
Policy	Yellow
Policy	Yellow
Policy	Green
Top Priority	Green
Top Priority	Green
Top Priority	Green-Red (Ongoing)
Top Priority	Green
Other Priority	Yellow
Other Priority	Green
Other Priority	Yellow

**BUILT ENVIRONMENT Section**

**Type of Recommendation Assigned Priority Lead Staff Notes**

Provide basic access for people of all ages and abilities to public buildings, public washrooms, and public parks.	Policy	Green
Improve the condition and availability of sidewalks, curb cuts, and pedestrian crossings to comply with the CSA Accessible Design for the Built Environment B-651 standard.	Policy	Green (Ongoing)
By 2024, evaluate and prioritize retrofits to existing municipal buildings and facilities to meet, at minimum, the accessibility requirements in the latest version of the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulation.	Policy	Yellow
Strive to have all new municipal buildings and major renovation projects meet the requirements of RHFAC Gold.	Policy	Yellow/Red
Provide accessible parking at municipal buildings and facilities that meet the requirements of the latest version of the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulation.	Policy	Green
Initiate accessibility audits at key facilities	Top Priority	Green (Ongoing)
Ensure that any proposed changes to the built environment are reviewed by the AAC.	Top Priority	Green-Red (Ongoing)
Commit a portion of the annual budget to go toward the installations and maintenance required for improving the accessibility of public buildings and public spaces.	Top Priority	Green
Support local businesses in making accessibility improvements by promoting the provincial ACCESS-Ability Grant and providing resources for other funding opportunities.	Top Priority	Yellow/Red
Install visual or vibration-based smoke alarms in municipal buildings.	Top Priority	Yellow/Red
Detail a sidewalk/crosswalk remediation plan with timeline and budget according to updated provincial standards.	Other Priority	Green
Establish a standardized process in the project planning stage for evaluating and prioritizing capital projects which consider the degree of impact on accessibility.	Other Priority	Green
Conduct a review of zoning and land use by-laws to identify opportunities to improve accessibility and support aging in place.	Other Priority	Red
Explore incentives for renovations and new builds that aim to achieve Rick Hansen Accessibility Certification. Consider: - Establishment of a municipal grant program to financially support small businesses completing accessibility improvement projects. - Deduction of accessibility certification costs from development fees; - Fast-tracking of development application approval process; and/or - Waiving of development fees.	Other Priority	Yellow/Red

**EMPLOYMENT Section**

**Type of Recommendation Assigned Priority Lead Staff Notes**

	Type of Recommendation	Assigned Priority	Lead Staff	Notes
Offer accommodations to job candidates during the hiring process.	Policy	Green		
Offer accommodations to employees to provide them with the support they need to succeed at their job.	Policy	Green		
Offer training and awareness programs to staff and Council to foster a welcoming and inclusive corporate environment.	Policy	Green		
Require Council and all municipal staff to complete the Working with Abilities online training provided free of cost by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission.	Top Priority	Green		
Undertake an anonymous survey to establish a baseline employee demographic and track the number of employees with disabilities, both diagnosed and self-identifying, with the intention of reflecting the diversity of the Municipality in the municipal workforce.	Top Priority	Green/Yellow		
Assign designated liaisons to serve as the main point of contact for accessibility matters within each department.	Top Priority	Green		need baseline training
Establish a centralized accommodation fund to pay for assistive technology, devices, and accommodations for employees.	Top Priority	Yellow		
Undertake assessments of municipal workplaces to identify areas where accessibility improvements can be made (i.e., staff common areas including washrooms and kitchens, doorways, and workspaces).	Other Priority	Yellow/Red		Designated Quiet Space?
Provide and promote ongoing opportunities for municipal staff to complete further accessibility training relevant to their assigned job duties and tasks (i.e., plain language, inclusive customer service, accessible employment practices, accessible information, and communication practices).	Other Priority	Yellow		
Develop a formal process for requesting accessibility accommodations.	Other Priority	Yellow/Red		Survey first & then roll out training

**PROGRAMS & SERVICES Section**

**Type of Recommendation Assigned Priority Lead Staff Notes**

Increase customer service support to better serve people with non-visible and visible disabilities.	Policy	Yellow	training for all staff
Increase recreation program offerings to provide equitable opportunities for people with disabilities to participate.	Policy	Yellow	Look at "Rec for All Policy" from TOK Look at "Rec for All Policy" from TOK
Ensure public parks and open spaces can be enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities.	Policy	Yellow	
Improve snow clearance.	Policy	Green	
Consider accessibility as a part of policy development and decision-making processes.	Policy	Green	
Provide annual accessibility and inclusion customer service training for new and existing customer service, sports complex, aquatic centre, and recreation programming staff.	Top Priority	Green	Partner w/ Parasport NS
Introduce the use of assessment of accessibility impact as a part of staff reports to Council.	Top Priority	Green	
Undertake a review of recreation programming to identify barriers to participation, feasible adaptations to eliminate barriers, and/or new inclusive programming opportunities.	Top Priority	Yellow	
Train staff in the safe and proper use of adaptive recreation equipment.	Top Priority	Green	
Prioritize snow clearance on sidewalks and crosswalks, and provide training to plow operators to increase awareness about maintaining barrier-free access.	Top Priority	Green/Yellow	
Investigate opportunities for partnerships with local organizations with expertise in adaptive sport and recreation to support the development of adaptive sports programming.	Top Priority	Green	
Support the continued growth of the adaptive equipment loan program by growing the inventory and providing recreation staff with the training necessary for proper equipment use.	Other Priority	Yellow	Question for Diana
Upgrade to wireless payment terminals at applicable public facilities.	Other Priority	Green?	
Develop an accessible trail marketing strategy.	Other Priority	Yellow	
Investigate the development of an Accessibility and Inclusion Specialist position within the Community Development Department.	Other Priority	Green	Consider housing this within the CAO's Office

**INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION Section**

**Type of Recommendation Assigned Priority Lead Staff Notes**

Provide, on request, information in an accessible format or with communication supports that consider a person’s individual need, at no additional charge.  
Host in-person public meetings in barrier-free locations.

Policy Green/Yellow  
Policy Green

Train front-line staff in inclusive customer service and to provide information in accessible formats.  
Increase accessibility across the Municipality’s website, social media, and online resources.

Policy Green/Yellow  
Policy Green

Establish a dedicated stream of communication for accessibility-related information. Information should be available in digital and print formats.  
Train relevant staff in the use of plain language and accessible document formatting.

Top Priority Green  
Top Priority Yellow

Create modified versions of key municipal documents and resources such as forms, bills and statements, and brochures in accessibleformats. Accessible formats should include at minimum large print, plain language, and screen reader compatible digital communications.

Top Priority Yellow/Red

Develop an accessible signage and wayfinding toolkit to support people with vision or hearing impairments.

Top Priority Yellow/Red

Create promotional material to build awareness of adaptive recreation and inclusive programming. This could include video content and print material.

Top Priority Green

Ensure the Municipality’s website and any downloadable content meet the latest WCGA guidelines.

Other Priority Green

Include braille on staff business cards.

Other Priority Yellow

Explore the use of mapping platforms to improve wayfinding in public buildings.

Other Priority Yellow/Red

Provide ASL and/or CART services upon request at Council meetings and other meetings hosted by the Municipality.

Other Priority Yellow/Red

Explore alternative methods to deliver information such as infographics and video content.

Other Priority Green/Yellow

Review the feasibility of permanently allowing opportunities for both in-person and virtual participation on Municipal committees and at public meetings coordinated by the Municipality.

Other Priority Green

**TRANSPORTATION Section**

Continue to provide support to community-based transportation services.  
 Improve the accessibility and availability of transportation services, AT, and parking infrastructure for people with disabilities.

Consider the needs of people with disabilities when exploring the feasibility of any future public transit services.

Ensure and maintain a broad and safe AT network across the Municipality which includes paved shoulders and other dedicated AT facilities.

Prioritize the implementation of the AT Plan.

Initiate a public transit feasibility study to investigate appropriate transit models for a municipally-operated transit service.

Prioritize support for West Hants Dial-a-Ride to help them expand their service offerings.

Actively promote and increase awareness of community-based transportation providers including West Hants Dial-a-Ride and the Windsor Senior Citizen Bus Society.

Prioritize AT facilities in the Asset Management Plan.

Improve lighting on the Municipal road and trail network.

Explore opportunities and incentives for accessible taxi service.

Explore opportunities to further expand community-based transportation services across the Municipality.

Type of Recommendation	Assigned Priority	Lead Staff	Notes
Policy	Green		Reoccurring, but there's opportunity to expand
Policy	Yellow		
Policy	Yellow/Red		
Policy	Green/Yellow		Policy change for funding AT on Provincial roads?
Top Priority	Green		
Top Priority	Yellow/Red		
Top Priority	Green		
Top Priority	Green		
Top Priority	Green/Yellow		
Top Priority	Yellow/Red		
Other Priority	Yellow/Red		
Other Priority	Yellow/Red		