

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda - AMENDED
January 25, 2024, 6:00 p.m.
Council Chambers, 100 King Street, Windsor, NS
Agenda is subject to changes up to and including during the meeting
This meeting is open to the public. It will not be livestreamed on Facebook



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1. Pre-Meeting Facility Walk-Through / Audit and Discussion, 100 King Street
 2. Call to Order
 3. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
 4. Announcements
 5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – November 23, 2023
 6. Unfinished Business
 - ~~Fireworks (tabled from last meeting)~~
 - a) Front Counter Accessibility Review (moved to review at the last meeting)
 - b) Main Entrance / Service Counter 76 Morison Dr. and Facility Accessibility Assessment
 - ~~Criteria for Committee Walk-Through Assessments~~
 7. New Business
 - a) Accessibility Plan Update / Anti- Racism and Hate Plan
 - b) Accessible Programming (West Hants Winter Carnival / Limitless West Hants Partnership)
 8. Next Meeting Date / Meeting Adjournment

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Present

Michel Bourgeois, Resident Member

Denise Long, Resident Member

Sarah Taylor, HR Specialist

Councillor Bob Morton

Tina McKay, Building & Fire Official

Carmen Dewar-Miller, Admin Assistant

Roseanna Boyd, Resident Member

Kevin Waters, Active Living Coordinator

Jordan Stephens, Resident Member

Troy Burgess, Public Works Operations Manager

Deanna Snair, Municipal Clerk

Resident Members Jennifer Davison and Melissa MacAskill and CAO Phillips were not in attendance

1. Pre-Meeting Facility Walk-Through / Audit and Discussion, 100 King Street

Committee members met on the second floor at 100 King Street for a walk-through of this facility. This former Town of Windsor office and RCMP satellite station now houses Municipal Public Works, Community Development, Administration and Financial Services staff. The Windsor Fire Department is also housed in this space but was not included in the walk-through.

Positives – Second Floor

- There is an elevator providing accessible access to the second floor
- Many office spaces with plenty of room to maneuver
- Hallways are mostly wide
- Two main washrooms are large spaces and could accommodate retrofitting to make accessible
- Some directional signage (not recently updated)
- Some areas included visual fire alarms
- Convex mirror hung in former RCMP area

Areas for Improvement – Second Floor

- Two second-floor bathrooms completely inaccessible (Committee Room and CD office area)
- Some areas very cut-up
- One counter in the lunchroom is too high
- Coat rack in the lunchroom is too high
- Narrow office doorways to CAO and PW Engineer's offices

- Inaccessible storage in some offices (narrow, small spaces, high shelves)
- Inaccessible photocopier in this area (too high)
- Noted in the main washrooms on the second floor:
 - Not gender neutral, not accessible
 - Issues with sloped floor to drain, lip that could cause wheelchair to tip, uneven
 - No grab bars, toilet in men's room has no access points from chair
 - Dispensers too high, waste bins block paper towel dispensers
 - Doors to washrooms are heavy, no automatic opens, no delayed open/close time, doors close too quickly
- Clutter in unused spaces, blocking doorways, storage closets
- No visual fire alarm in former Planning space
- Rooms not identified by number
- Awkwardly placed light switches (high, behind doors)
- Door in CD area with high, horizontal window
- Lack of clear signage when coming off of the elevator to the second floor
- No tactile buttons, signage or talking feature in the elevator

The group then moved to the first floor, meeting at the front entrance to the building.

Positives – First Floor

- There were auto-opening buttons on the front doors
- Space to access elevator to second floor

Areas for Improvement – First Floor

- Grade approaching the front entrance was too steep and there is a bit of a bump as well
- Automatic door needs to stay open longer when button is pushed
- Doorway could be wider
- Awkward entry into front counter area
- Paper storage area is cluttered, blocked by mats, furniture, etc. Not accessible at all.
- Hallway area is narrow, area in general is dark, cluttered
- Neither bathroom on first floor is accessible to enter, let alone evaluate
- Side entrance to parking lot is not accessible – an actual step down to get out
- No exit signage
- First aid kit hung too high in room with fridge, even for someone standing (been there a long time)

- Shelving all too high in file/copy room

2. Call to Order – Councillor B. Morton called the sit-down portion of the meeting to order at 6:55 p.m.

3. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions - **AMENDED**

There was an amendment made to the agenda to add two presentations prepared by Resident Member Bourgeois. *Main Entrance / Service Counter 76 Morison Dr.* and *Facility Accessibility Assessment* were both added to item 6. b).

Moved by Resident Members Long and Stephens that the **AMENDED agenda be approved.
Motion Carried.**

4. Announcements

Chair B. Morton noted that during this week’s Council Meeting, Resident Member Jennifer Davison was reappointed to the Accessibility Advisory Committee and Melissa MacAskill was appointed as our new Resident Member, replacing Kelly Ann Jobson. Resident Member MacAskill is away and could not attend this evening’s meeting. Council also approved the amendment to the Committee’s Terms of Reference.

Chair B. Morton acknowledged that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded 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 this land and each other.

5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – November 23, 2023

**Moved by Resident Members Boyd and Bourgeois that the November 23 minutes be approved.
Motion Carried.**

6. Unfinished Business

a) Fireworks (tabled from last meeting)

It was agreed that it would be good to see how other municipal units and accessibility advisory committees are handling this issue. Staff Members Waters and Taylor are co-accessibility leads with the AMANs accessibility group and they will use that connection to investigate. Fireworks to be revisited at the next meeting.

b) Front Counter Accessibility Review (moved to review at the last meeting)

On January 23, Resident Member Bourgeois performed an informal accessibility assessment of the front counter area at 76 Morison, including parking, entrance, service counter area, lobby and washrooms. He presented his findings in the attached Power Point presentations, *Main Entrance / Service Counter 76 Morison Dr* and *Facility Accessibility Assessment*.

Main Entrance / Service Counter 77 Morison Dr - Resident Member Bourgeois began by describing building function, expected users, and assessment scope and cited his reference material. Areas of assessment were reviewed with both positives and areas for review noted. Accessible parking, building entrance (including doors and vestibules), counter/service area, signage, drinking fountain, miscellaneous, were all covered.

Areas of success and areas for review were summarized. This comprehensive review was appreciated by committee members and staff (and is included as part of these minutes). There were questions as to timeline and standards to retrofit older buildings. Staff Members Waters and Burgess requested that this presentation be shared and possibly utilized as a training document for staff. Staff Member Waters also asked Staff Member Taylor if this could be incorporated into an official HR document for staff members to use.

Facility Accessibility Assessment – Resident Member Bourgeois also shared a presentation he put together on the facility assessment process in general. A “high points” template he would use when assessing. Touched on approach, universal design, criteria in determining areas of success and areas in need of improvement, consideration of the site and expected users. He reviewed the assessment categories, including Vehicular/Pedestrian Access, Exterior Approach/Entrances, Interior Circulation, Interior Services, Washrooms, Wayfinding/Signage and Emergency Systems, with some information provided on each.

Resident Member Stephens suggested that as part of Emergency Systems, within designated areas of refuge there should be a phone or some means to alert responders to the location.

Staff Member Waters suggested that we look towards packaging this information. It can be further tailored to staff. Improvements can be broken down into immediate short-term and longer-term. Utilize budgets accordingly. The committee could work to assess as a group but break out into teams to tackle individual categories. Combine results. Depending on what we are trying to achieve, being as consistent as possible.

Can this be incorporated into an HR document? Incredibly useful.

Do we need to respond to original email regarding front counter accessibility? Do we need to do a staff report for Committee of the Whole / Council?

The AAC is an advisory committee to Council. Any requests from the Committee would go to COTW/Council via a recommendation report. There are some decision points within Resident Member Bourgeois' presentation.

Can proceed with a recommendation or information report. Address changes that would bring area more in alignment with standards. Then staff could take it from there, add costs, then present to Council again.

It matters that the issue was brought forward to the AAC. It is the responsibility of this committee to bring it forward to Council by way of an information report. Then up to Council if they want more information and where they want to go with it.

The suggestion was made that Resident Member Bourgeois give a presentation to Council at Committee of the Whole in March. This was the agreed go-forward. The presentation could conclude with a request for Council support.

c) Criteria for Committee Walk-Through Assessments

Due to time constraints, this item was tabled for discussion at the next meeting.

7. New Business

a) Accessibility Plan Update / Anti- Racism and Hate Plan

Staff Member Waters advised that the Accessibility Plan comes up for renewal on April 1, 2025. The creation of a Municipal Anti-Racism and Hate Plan will be incorporated into this timeline. As both committees share issues and common goals, should we look at combining the WHRM Accessibility and WHRM Diversity and Inclusion Committees?

Diversity and Inclusion is quite a large committee already. Does it become unwieldly / unproductive to merge into a larger committee? Both groups still have much work to do individually. Suggestions included having some crossover with a few members attending both meetings or combining the groups only once or twice a year.

It was decided that with Staff Members Waters and Taylor attending both committee meetings regularly, this would be sufficient for now. It was also agreed that plans should be kept separate.

Staff Member Waters looked to the committee to see who was part of the original plan and how was that process? Many committee members worked on the original plan which puts us in a better position going forward with the renewed plan.

- b) Accessible Programming (West Hants Winter Carnival / Limitless West Hants Partnership)
The upcoming WHRM Winter Carnival will see the municipality partnering with Limitless West Hants for programming. This will be our first connection and working partnership. More information can be found on the West Hants Parks and Recreation Facebook page. Residents are showing interest. Along with Turf Time, winter carnival will include a sledge hockey game with two members of Team Canada attending.

8. Next Meeting Date / Meeting Adjournment

The next meeting will be tentatively scheduled for late March in Council Chambers at 76 Morison.

**Moved by Resident Members Bourgeois and Stephens that the meeting be adjourned.
Motion Carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

X

Committee Chair