

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda
April 25, 2024, 6:00 p.m.

Hantsport Memorial Community Centre, 6 Main St., Hantsport, 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 Grounds/Facilities Tour, Hantsport Memorial Community Centre
 2. Call to Order / Introductions
 3. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
 4. Announcements
 5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – January 25, 2024
 6. Unfinished Business
 - a) Front Counter Accessibility Review
 - b) Criteria for Committee Walk-Through Assessments
 7. New Business
 - a) National AccessAbility Week, May 26 – June 1, 2024
 - b) Diverse and Inclusive Communities Committee Update
 8. Next Meeting Date / Meeting Adjournment

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Present:

Michel Bourgeois, Resident Member	Roseanna Boyd, Resident Member
Denise Long, Resident Member	Kevin Waters, Active Living Coordinator
Sarah Taylor, HR Specialist	Jordan Stephens, Resident Member
Councillor Bob Morton	Troy Burgess, Public Works Operations Manager
Tina McKay, Building & Fire Official	Mark Phillips, CAO
Carmen Dewar-Miller, Admin Assistant	Melissa MacAskill, Resident Member
Jennifer Davison, Resident Member	Ben Johnson, HMCC Recreation Director

1. Pre-Meeting Grounds/Facilities Tour, Hantsport Memorial Community Centre
Committee members met at 6:00 p.m. in the upper parking lot of the HMCC. HMCC Recreation Director, Ben Johnson, led committee members on a tour of the grounds and facilities. Following were some takeaways through the lens of accessibility:

Positives

- Beautiful property, lots of room, open, green spaces
- Pavement in lower parking lot and driveway closest to dog park is in good condition
- The building at the tennis/pickleball courts is being renovated and upgraded according to the latest standards (ramps, lighting, door fixtures, etc.), accessible washroom facilities, accessible entry to courts and building itself.
- Outdoor basketball courts can be accessed
- Dog park, except for a few housekeeping items is accessible (see room for improvement)
- Entry to the playground space is accessible. The playground area is spacious.
- Pool house change rooms were bright, colourful spaces
- There is an accessible side entrance (wooden ramp) into Churchill House. Ramp is sturdy but showing its age.
- The main floor washroom at Churchill House could be considered accessible as it was roomy enough to accommodate a wheelchair, with a few modifications (see room for improvement). Toilet was a good height, there was a grab bar installed, and soap and paper towel dispensers were at the right height.
- A desire within the HMCC organization to strive for improvements in the area of accessibility

Room for Improvement

- The main gated driveway in from Main St. that loops around Churchill House and includes the upper parking lot is not in great shape for navigating a wheelchair. The entire area is in need of repaving. Potholes and tree root damage causing cracked, bumpy surfaces and asphalt transitioning to gravel. Branches and other fall/winter debris from the large chestnut trees covered the pathway to the pool. This impedes accessibility for chairs or others dealing with mobility issues.
- The ramped entrance to the pool house is too short, too steep and too narrow. There is a gap between the edge of the concrete ramp and the fencing that creates a hazard.
- Entering the changing rooms/washrooms is doable but tricky to maneuver with the partial privacy walls in place. Could possibly scale these partitions back.
- Changing stalls are narrow – the two furthest from the entrance should be combined to make one large, accessible stall. Install low hooks, accessible door latches.
- Washrooms in need of roll-in, accessible sinks, higher toilets, grab bars at the toilet, accessible door latches, accessible showers, taps, paper towel and soap dispensers positioned to be reached from a wheelchair. Space for a wheelchair to fit and maneuver.
- Possibly take out a portion of the benching around the main change area so that a wheelchair could back in, out of the way of traffic, not be stuck in the middle of the area, more inclusive
- No easy way to access the pool area from the pool house. There is a gate within the fencing that could be opened to access, but that is not inclusive
- The pool itself has no accessible entrance into the water – there is no ramp or lift option
- Doorways/thresholds not easily navigable
- More signage required, incorporate tactile signage
- The playground splash pad is not wheelchair accessible. There is no access point, and the pad is raised above the ground a couple of inches
- No accessible play structure options in the playground, such as accessible swings
- Pea gravel around the play structures is not accessible
- Washrooms need upgrades, much the same as the pool house. Only one functioning right now.
- No accessible picnic tables on the HMCC grounds
- Some bigger rocks in the entryway to the dog park made it difficult to maneuver the chair between the gates. Some holes and uneven terrain. Ensure latches on the gates into the park are accessible
- The red barn used for day camps does not have an accessible entrance. Needs many upgrades in general. Upgraded lighting and exit signage. No washroom facilities.

- Churchill House is 164 years old. Was not built with accessibility in mind. The fire alarm pull is placed too high in the main gathering space and there was a long coat rack in the hall from the main foyer to the kitchen impeding access for a wheelchair. There is no accessible means to go upstairs. Counters in the kitchen would be too high and not much room to maneuver. Thresholds are high.
 - The grounds would benefit from designated accessible interconnecting walkways, would help with access to the three ball fields in particular. Walkways would also keep pedestrian traffic out of the driveway/parking lots.
2. Call to Order – Councillor B. Morton called the post-tour portion of the meeting to order at 6:53 p.m.
 3. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
Moved by Resident Members Long and Boyd that the agenda be approved.
Motion Carried.
 4. Announcements – no announcements
 5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – January 25, 2024
Moved by Resident Members Davison and Bourgeois that the minutes be approved.
Motion Carried.
 6. Unfinished Business
 - a) Front Counter Accessibility Review
 Staff Member Waters noted that Resident Member Bourgeois gave a successful presentation to Council at the March Committee of the Whole (COTW) meeting. It went over very well and Council were receptive.

Although we now have this comprehensive review, the original intention of the email from Staff Member LaPierre was to address the situation for someone who could not sit at the newly renovated (lowered) counter. There is nothing in the standards that notes what to do in this instance. It becomes more challenging as there are two works stations. Some places have continuous counter that tapers from high to low. The bank is a good example. Can move between low and high – Resident Member Bourgeois can email examples. Staff may have to shift workspaces to accommodate customers who prefer to stand.

With the front counter review done from the proposed draft standards (not regulations), should we be improving to standards we have now, or should we be waiting for the new, updated

standards? The general consensus was to wait. The new standards are expected very soon. Some easy fixes could be addressed (door handles, height of sanitizer, moving garbage cans). There is also the question of whether staff will be staying in this building. Staff Member Waters and Resident Member Bourgeois could meet to discuss carryover and action items and also meet with front counter staff to provide an update.

b) **Criteria for Committee Walk-Through Assessments**

The committee discussed how far they should be taking these facility walk-throughs. Criteria suggestions included the following:

- Establish boundaries
- It is important to ensure that the committee is invited
- No associated responsibility for either side, simply information to be shared and taken in.
- These assessments/audits could be packaged with a name (i.e. Accessibility Assessment)
- Every type of disability should be taken into consideration, not just physical
- There should be an accompanying checklist that would include
 - additional resources (local, provincial, federal contacts, organizations, websites)
 - links to current standards and regulations
 - training opportunities
 - funding sources

These walk-throughs will help build awareness in the community.

With regard to this evening's meeting, it is an opportunity for Rec Director Johnson to hear and welcome feedback from the committee. It's been a topic of discussion for the HMCC board. They don't know where to start. For him it's an educational piece that he can take back to the board. Use this committee as a reference point for proposed changes. Another consideration for HMCC (and other local groups, businesses) is locating funding sources – what is available out there?

7. **New Business**

a) **National AccessAbility Week, May 26 – June 1, 2024**

Staff Member Waters advised that there will potentially be an AMANS (Association of Municipal Administrators Nova Scotia)-sponsored event for this week – a Silent Disco. They would like to see municipal units jump on board. There was unanimous support from the committee to participate. Discussion ensued as to what kind of a space would be required. This will be further explored by Staff Member Waters – he will see where AMANS is in the process. The general ask was to gauge interest. The Diversity and Inclusive Communities committee is also on board. More to come regarding this event.

b) Diverse and Inclusive Communities Committee Update

This committee is working towards a full plan, short and long-term. Staff Members Waters and Taylor cross-attend Accessibility and D&I committee meetings to ensure there is connection, consistency and communication between the two groups. A back and forth effort.

This committee is still very much in the early strategizing planning phase. Looking at some key wins in the coming months. A committee has been created for special events. If anything comes from that Staff Member Taylor would like to bring back to the Accessibility Advisory Committee for input. Avon River Days is one example. There are guidelines available for planning accessible events.

We now have an AccessAbility flag. Staff Member Waters is going to check with Clerk Snair regarding the flag policy. The flagpole below Tim Hortons in downtown Windsor is generally used to acknowledge special weeks, we will see if AccessAbility Week can be celebrated with a flag.

There was a suggestion to create a video during AccessAbility Week to promote accessibility in our region, possibly focused on the accessible equipment we offer. Promote awareness of our accessible resources for residents, families and visitors.

Staff Member Waters announced that there is a plan to bring Limitless Nova Scotia back at a bigger function. There is a goal to run free Limitless programs this year – swims and open gym. Limitless will hold the registrations for these programs.

Staff Member Waters thanked Rec Director Johnson and the HMCC for inviting the committee for the tour and hosting our meeting at Churchill House.

8. Next Meeting Date / Meeting Adjournment – possibly late May (before AccessAbility Week)

Moved by Resident Members Bourgeois and Davison that the meeting be adjourned.

Motion Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

X

Committe Chair