

MINUTES
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVENESS MEETING
VIRTUAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, 2021-SEP-22, AT 4:00 P.M.

Present: Councillor Z. Maartman, Chair
Councillor S. Armstrong, Chair
L. Derksen, At Large Member (joined electronically)
S. Hamel, At Large Member (joined electronically)
R. Harlow, At Large Member (joined electronically)
D. Hollins, At Large Member (joined electronically)
J. Maffin, At Large Member (joined electronically)
R. Pike, At Large Member (joined electronically)
E. Williamson, At Large Member (joined electronically)

Absent: A. Breen, At Large Member
S. Cameron, At Large Member

Staff: R. Harding, General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture
L. Wark, Director, Recreation and Culture
L. Bhopalsingh, Manager, Community Planning
L. Clarkson, Manager, Recreation Services
C. Davis, Manager, Parks Operations
P. Entwistle, Parks Project Coordinator
K. MacDonald, Parks & Open Space Planner
D. Stewart, Social Planner
S. Snelgrove, Deputy Corporate Officer
K. Gerard, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVENESS MEETING TO ORDER:

The Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS:

- (a) Agenda Item 5(c) – Maffeo Sutton Accessible Playground – Phase 2 Update – Add additional slides.
- (b) Agenda item 5(d) – Westwood Lake Park Amenity Improvements – Add PowerPoint Presentation.
- (c) Add Agenda Item 7(a) – New Article re: New Adaptive Bike Program Rolling Out This Fall.
- (d) Add Agenda Item 7(b) – Eileen Williamson re: Closed Captioning.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

It was moved and seconded that the Agenda, as amended, be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES:

It was moved and seconded that the Minutes of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness Meeting held in the Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre, 411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC, on Wednesday, 2021-JUN-23, at 4:00 p.m. be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

5. PRESENTATIONS:

(a) REIMAGINE NANAIMO

Introduced by Richard Harding, General Manager, Parks, Recreations and Culture.

Presentation:

1. Kirsty MacDonald, Parks and Open Space Planner, provided an update regarding REIMAGINE Nanaimo. Highlights included:
 - Phase 2 includes exploring options, land use planning and growth management within the City of Nanaimo (the City)
 - Phase 3 includes policy and action planning where more engagement with the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (the Committee) will take place
 - There were many engagement options throughout the summer including in person, through surveys and online workshops
 - Valuable feedback was provided to Staff through Insight West consultants and workshops with youth at Wellington Secondary School and Nanaimo District Secondary School
 - Workshops took place with City Staff for an insider and professional perspective
 - Key group workshops included City Council, the City's Senior Leadership Team, students from the Masters in Planning program at Vancouver Island University (VIU), developers and stakeholders such as the Vancouver Island Regional Library Board and the Nanaimo Port Authority
 - Three growth scenarios have been tested within the community including:
 - Scenario 1 - Current path which includes current land use planning and the Official Community Plan (OCP)
 - Scenario 2 - Focuses on mobility hubs surrounding commercial, malls and town centres
 - Scenario 3 - Focuses on growth within the downtown area and links to VIU

- After testing these three scenarios the proposed outcome may be a hybrid model that encompasses all three scenarios

Committee discussion took place regarding a focus group workshop with non-profits in Nanaimo.

Kirsty MacDonald, Parks and Open Space Planner, advised the Committee that non-profit groups have been invited to stakeholder engagement workshops, board members and executives have taken part and there will be opportunities for non-profits organizations to provide feedback throughout the REIMAGINE Nanaimo process.

Kirsty MacDonald, Parks and Open Space Planner, continued her presentation. Highlights included:

- Key documents that will be included in the integrated City plan include the OCP, Climate Action Plan, Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan and the Active Transportation Plan
- Phase 2 closes on 2021-SEP-23 and an engagement input analysis summary will be created
- Workshops with the Committee will occur regarding the draft policy review, gap analysis and new draft policy development
- Recommended land use scenarios will be drafted and Phase 3 engagement will occur in late 2021 and early 2022

Committee discussion took place regarding development of the Green Thumb Nursery property.

(b) Jovan Stefani, Rise Bridge Project

Introduced by Councillor Maartman, Chair.

1. Jovan Stefani, Executive Director, Rise Bridge Project, provided the Committee with a presentation regarding the Rise Bridge project current offerings, goals and visions. Highlights included:

- Opened in August of 2021 as a new not-for-profit society run by peers and professionals
- Mandate is to provide a safe and culturally anchored low-barrier space to advance mental health, resiliency and well-being for community members
- To date Rise Bridge has:
 - Hosted over 60 community meetings
 - Attending 4 nationwide conferences
 - Participated in several community events including Fresh Start back to school and an Anti-Racism rally
 - Served over 100 community members and have signed up over 40 volunteers
- Current program offerings include:
 - Culture education
 - Youth nights

- Pre/post natal support
- Health promotion
- LGBTQ2IA+
- Food accessibility program
- Elder education
- Goals and visions include operating a low barrier, safe space and resource office, facilitate weekly programs for BIPoC and collaborate with other service providers
- Rise Bridge is requesting assistance from the City with funding, consultants and a larger, long-term lease building

Committee discussion took place regarding youth referrals to the Rise Bridge project and coordinating with other non-profit organizations.

Jovan Stefani, Rise Bridge Project, advised the Committee that they have the capacity and people to run the programming but not the infrastructure.

(c) Maffeo Sutton Accessible Playground – Phase 2 Update

Introduced by Richard Harding, General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture.

Presentation:

1. Charlotte Davis, Manager, Parks Operations, and Pete Entwistle, Parks Project Coordinator, provided the Committee with an update regarding the Maffeo Sutton Accessible Playground. Highlights included:
 - Phase 2 will start construction in spring of 2022 and equipment is geared toward children ages 18 months to 5 years old
 - Features will include curb free surfaces, tactile stimulation, sensory play and expands on the accessible parks model
 - Staff are looking at implementing play features such as a swing that can accommodate a wheelchair and rider at the same time, sensory wall, quiet play area, see-saw that includes bucket seats and easy grip handles
 - One large play structure will also be included that incorporates activity, slides, climbing and uneven surfaces that promote balance
 - Staff are looking at including sound and music equipment that will be accessible and safe for all ages
 - Reviewed site plans to show placement of play structures and transitions from Phase 1 to Phase 2
 - Snuneymuxw First Nation will be implementing another art piece which will be unique and child friendly

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Age and weight limit of the “we-saw”
- Wheelchair accessible swing and will this be an unlocked enclosure
- Quiet play dome and the height of the opening for children in wheelchairs or who use a walking device
- Slide limitations for wheelchair users

- Garden and landscaping features that incorporate different senses
- Lighting and visibility during evening hours
- Bathroom and change facilities for older children who need assistance

Charlotte Davis, Manager, Parks Operation, advised the Committee that additional lighting was not included in Phase 2 and there are two pockets of landscaping that have sensory elements.

Richard Harding, General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture, advised the Committee that improvements to the bathroom facilities are scheduled for 2023 but Staff could look at incorporating a change only facility closer to the park in Phase 2. Mr. Harding stated that a sub group could be created to advise Staff of existing barriers and site visits could be scheduled for the Committee.

(d) Westwood Lake Park Amenity Improvements

Richard Harding, General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture, provided the Committee with a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:

- The goal of the Westwood Lake Park improvements includes improvements to parking, accessibility, waterfront and trails
- Site plans include a new accessible washroom and wheelchair access to the beach, lake and some trails
- The survey is open until 2021-OCT-31 and can be accessed through www.getinvolvednanaimo.ca and click on “Westwood Lake Park Amenity Improvements”
- Staff ask that Committee members encourage friends, family members, organizations, places of employment and service providers to fill out the survey

Kirsty MacDonald, Parks and Open Space Planner, advised the Committee that through stakeholder engagement with the Child Development Centre and Adapt Island accessible washrooms and beach area are one of the focus areas for improvements.

Committee discussion took place regarding wheelchair access and adaptive bike trails.

6. REPORTS:

(a) Family Friendly Housing Policy

Introduced by Lisa Bhopalsingh, Manager, Community Planning.

Presentation:

1. Dave Stewart, Social Planner, provided the Committee with a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included

- Project goal is to encourage construction of two and three bedroom units for large or extended families
- In order to implement this policy Staff need to better understand supply and demand, cost implications, and policies that will need to be amended
- Family friendly housing was a recommendation in the Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS) adopted in 2018
- A consultant will be hired to research the impact on the housing market and Staff will be ensuring that parking requirements reflect the needs of family friendly housing
- Statistics from October 2020 show that the vacancy rate for two bedrooms units is 0.8% and three bedroom units is 0.0%
- The renter/landlord survey was completed with 465 respondents and results showed that 23% respondents stated that lack of family friendly housing and yard or play space is a concern in finding rental accommodations
- The work plan consists of four phases including:
 - Phase 1 – research and project launch (current)
 - Phase 2 – impact study and draft policy
 - Phase 3 – stakeholder engagement
 - Phase 4 – final policy

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Guide dogs seen as pets are a barrier to finding rental housing
- Need for senior focused housing and enforcement of policies or bylaws
- Requiring a percentage of rentals for people with disabilities and/or on Persons with Disability (PWD) Income Assistance

Dave Stewart, Social Planner, continued his presentation. Highlights included:

- 65% respondents stated that pets are a barrier to finding housing
- Enforcement of the policy could happen at the application stage of a new development
- Staff studied 23 municipalities in Canada, US and Europe and found that family friendly housing requirements are found in guidelines, zoning bylaws or policy documents
- Percentage of required family friendly units for new developments in other municipalities, ranged from 10% to 40%

(b) Accessible and Adaptable Housing Policy

Introduced by Lisa Bhopalsingh, Manager, Community Planning.

Presentation:

1. Dave Stewart, Social Planner, provided the Committee with a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:
 - The definitions of accessible and adaptable are different:

- Accessible - housing designed to meet the needs of people with all abilities
- Adaptable – housing is designed to be easily renovated to meet tenant or owners changing accessibility needs
- Staff will need to research the supply and demand including barriers for including adaptable and accessible housing units
- A study will be conducted regarding the impacts for requirements and need for standards beyond those required by the BC Building Code
- AHS recommendations included minimum unit requirements for all new dwellings, incentives for developers, senior-oriented developments and financial assistance programs
- Renter survey identified that 12% of respondents had difficulty finding housing that suited their accessibility needs and 8% were unhappy with their rental due to accessibility challenges
- The work plan consists of four phases including:
 - Phase 1 – research and project launch (current)
 - Phase 2 – impact study and draft policy
 - Phase 3 – stakeholder engagement
 - Phase 4 – final policy
- Stakeholder groups will include Nanaimo Brain Injury Society, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Age Friendly Nanaimo and others
- Staff studied 19 other municipalities with similar issues with adaptable housing policies included in design guidelines, zoning bylaws and/or the OCP
- The BC Building Code – Adaptable Housing Standards is a guideline but is not enforced

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Other components to accessibility include parking, utility rooms and garbage disposal
- Working with service providers and other resources and including social rooms where tenants can work within the same building as they live
- Wrap around, holistic approach and including a bylaw that certain percentages of new units must be rented by someone with a disability
- Council’s jurisdiction in enforcing or requiring units for people with disabilities
- Using rebates or financial incentives to make suites more accessible

Councillor Maartman, advised the Committee that Council does have the right to create bylaws but property taxes and housing (residency and tenancy) are Provincial legislation and out of City Council’s jurisdiction; however, Council can advocate to the Province.

Lisa Bhopalsingh, Manager, Community Planning, stated that Staff and/or Council does not have the ability to control what landlords charge for rent and who they can rent their units or suites to. Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHA) does provide financing for owners to make their homes more accessible.

Due to time constraints Agenda Items 6(c) – 2021 Workplan Review and 6(d) – Beban Pool Accessibility Audit Update were moved to the 2021-NOV-24 Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness Committee Meeting.

7. OTHER BUSINESS:

(a) New Article re: New Adaptive Bike Program Rolling Out this Fall

For information only. No discussion took place.

(b) Closed Captioning

Eileen Williamson, At Large Member, requested an update regarding the closed captioning service at Regular Council Meetings.

Sky Snelgrove, Deputy Corporate Officer, advised the Committee that meetings, which are live streamed and recorded through the eSCRIBE app, do have closed captioning. Meetings that are held in the Shaw Auditorium and live streamed through Shaw TV do not have closed captioning and Staff continue to work on having close captioning implemented through Shaw TV.

8. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 6:03 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CHAIR

CORPORATE OFFICER