



## MINUTES

### SPECIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVENESS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2023, 4:00 P.M.  
BOARDROOM, SERVICE AND RESOURCE CENTRE,  
411 DUNSMUIR STREET, NANAIMO, BC

Present: Councillor H. Eastmure, Chair  
J. Cowan, At Large Member  
L. Derksen, At Large Member\*  
S. Enns, At Large Member  
W. Hall, At Large Member  
R. Harlow, At Large Member  
T. Hirasawa, At Large Member  
B. Kinrade, At Large Member\*  
J. Maffin, At Large Member\*  
A. Stuart, At Large Member  
N. Sugiyama, At Large Member

Absent: Councillor S. Armstrong  
T. Brzovic, At Large Member

Staff: K. Ing, Director, IT/CIO  
D. Osborne, Director, Recreation and Culture  
P. Rosen, Director, Engineering  
L. Brinkman, Manager, Community Planning  
L. Clarkson, Manager, Recreation Services  
J. Rose, Manager, Transportation  
A. Daly, Recreation Coordinator  
S. Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services  
N. Sponaule, Communications Advisor  
J. Tonella, Steno, Legislative Services  
K. Lundgren, Recording Secretary

#### 1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:

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

\* Denotes electronic meeting participation as authorized by "Council Procedure Bylaw 2018 No. 7272"

## 2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

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

## 3. REPORTS:

### a. Accessible British Columbia Act

Natalie Sponaugle, Communications Advisor, provided a PowerPoint presentation, outlining the *Accessible British Columbia (BC) Act*. Highlights included:

- Under the *Accessible BC Act*, local governments must have an accessibility committee, an accessibility plan and a tool to receive feedback
- The City of Nanaimo's Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (ACAI) was established in 2019, and the Terms of Reference were updated in the spring of 2023 to ensure it was in compliance with the Act
- The ACAI fulfills the requirement of the *Accessible BC Act* and plays an important role in identifying, removing and preventing barriers
- The Accessibility Plan is included in the City Plan: Nanaimo Reimagined. Key sections include C4.2 "Equity & Inclusivity" and C4.3 "Access for all"
- The Integrated Action Plan was endorsed by Council earlier this year and is a library of actions outlining the City's actions towards achieving the goals of the City Plan
- The City's accessibility feedback tool was launched on 2023-SEP-01 and is a central place to submit feedback regarding accessibility barriers
- Some recent communication initiatives include a new accessibility and inclusion webpage, a translation option on the City's website, enhanced training for website users, and a plain text version of the City Plan

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Text-to-speech apps/programs that would allow the City's webpages to be read out loud
- The City's definition of accessibility has not yet been clearly defined, and Staff are seeking the Committee's input on better defining the term

- The City uses technology such as online feedback systems; however, other ways to provide the accessibility feedback include paper-based forms as well as the option to voice comments over a phone call
- Laara Clarkson, Manager, Recreation Services, will be receiving the accessibility feedback and keeping track of when the feedback will be brought to the Committee
- Vancouver Island University has a mobile app to report accessibility issues the moment they are identified
- The City's website user group is currently working on making the website more mobile friendly to allow for easier reporting

b. Draft Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness Workplan Discussion and Potential Future Meeting Dates

Introduced by Darcie Osborne, Director, Recreation and Culture.

- The Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (ACAI) workplan is a reference point and guiding document to help establish how the Committee will meet its mandate
- Changes to the workplan must be done as a group discussion at a Committee meeting
- Staff will return to the 2023-NOV-08 ACAI meeting with an updated workplan for the Committee's approval
- The Committee will have opportunity to review the workplan annually
- The four ACAI workplan topics include:
  1. Accessibility in City Parks, Facilities & City Infrastructure
  2. City Plan: Nanaimo ReImagined
  3. Community Resource
  4. Items referred by Council
- The four workplan topics are intentionally wide in scope in order to capture the majority of topics that may arise

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- In the past, the Rick Hanson Foundation reached out to the City, and the City is open to other organizations to come forward with proposals
- Cultural and systemic barriers are addressed in the "Reconciliation" section of the City Plan and could also be addressed by the Committee under topic 4, "Items referred by Council", which includes input on other Integrated Action Plan items as needed

- Potentially including a topic in the workplan related to equitable and accessible employment for people of all ability, gender, etc.
- Two staff members from the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department are qualified to perform accessibility audits of facilities

The Committee provided input on topic 1: Accessibility in City Parks, Facilities and City Infrastructure. Highlights included:

- Applying accessibility best practices to City parks, facilities and City infrastructure
- Adding the words “and practices” to the topic title to address some practices that need to be changed and/or reviewed
- Requested a better understanding of the consultation/decision-making process involved when equipment or accessibility changes are made to City facilities
- Identifying the process for Committee members wishing to bring topics forward
- Topics brought forward by Committee members will have to fit within the workplan
- Including a statement at the front end of the workplan that identifies the overall goal of all of the topics
- The purpose of the Committee is captured broadly in the Committee’s Terms of Reference
- This Committee has been effective at advising the City on specific projects brought forward for input, and it is also important for the Committee to drive forward topics that they find important
- Requested more transparency regarding when topics brought forward by the Committee members will be discussed
- Many of the recommendations from the previous ACAI term are contained as items in the City’s Integrated Action Plan

The Committee provided input on topic 2: City Plan: Nanaimo ReImagined

- Revise the first bullet point in the overview section by removing the word “gender” in “gender inclusive language”
- Making a recommendation regarding exploring representation in Human Resources’ hiring practices
- Input on inclusive language would not only be provided for an internal style guide, but also for the City’s external communication

The Committee provided input on topic 3: Community Resource

- Seeing change from recommendations and policies takes time, but makes a difference bit by bit
- Replacing the word “Corporate” in the first bullet to clarify it is referring to the City and not other organizations
- Private organizations receiving input from the Committee would be outside Council’s jurisdiction
- The provincial government’s Accessibility Directorate is a good resource for private organizations
- Form and character design guidelines will be brought to the Committee for review in 2024
- Would like to see the City being proactive and champions in bringing up accessibility when new businesses/services come forward to the City
- The *Accessibility BC Act* applies to organizations outside of the City as well
- The City has influence and is involved in many things; therefore, the Committee has the capability to have an impact in many areas

The Committee provided input on topic 4: Items referred by Council

- Replacing the word “input” with “recommendations” in the overview section as recommendation provides stronger language
- Changing topic 3 “Community Resource” to the “Committee acts as a community resource” to provide more clarity

**4. ADJOURNMENT:**

It was moved and seconded at 5:37 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

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CHAIR

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CORPORATE OFFICER