



MINUTES

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVENESS MEETING

Wednesday, May 8, 2024, 4:01 P.M.
Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre,
411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC

Members: Councillor H. Eastmure, Chair
Councillor S. Armstrong*
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
S. Pump, At Large Member
A. Stuart, At Large Member
N. Sugiyama, At Large Member

Absent: T. Brzovic, At Large Member
L. Derksen, At Large Member

Staff: R. Harding, General Manager, Community Services/Deputy
CAO
B. Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works
K. Ing, Director, IT/CIO
D. Osborne, Director, Recreation and Culture
A. Mercer Breen, Manager, Culture and Events
M. Lum, Recreation Coordinator, Special Events
J. Sine, Recreation Coordinator, Cultural Services
K. Robertson, Deputy Corporate Officer
N. Sponaugle, Communications Advisor
J. Vanderhoef, Steno Coordinator
A. Chanakos, Recording Secretary

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

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness Meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS:

- (a) Add Regional District of Nanaimo Transit Fare Review as Agenda Item 5(b).
- (b) Reorder Agenda Item 7(c) Assistive Hearing Devices Update to Agenda Item 7(a) and reorder the remaining agenda items accordingly.

3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

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

4. ADOPTION OF 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, 2024-MAR-13, at 4:00 p.m., be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

5. CHAIR'S REPORT:

a. Introductions - Councillor Eastmure

Councillor Eastmure introduced the new committee member, Sarah Pump, and then each Committee member introduced themselves.

b. Regional District of Nanaimo Transit Fare Review

Councillor Eastmure advised of the following:

- Following the presentation provided by the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) at the 2024-MAR-13 Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (ACAI) Meeting, Councillor Eastmure attended the 2024-MAR-28 RDN Transit Select Committee Meeting as an alternate director
- BC Transit approved a number of the RDN's requests; however, the request for weekend handyDART service was not approved
- BC Transit's overall goal is to harmonize handyDART with conventional services.

- They noted the request was denied this year due to capacity reasons, and suggested the RDN apply for more hours next year to compensate
- BC Transit hired consultants to develop a handyDART strategy, and have hired more staff to assist with the handyDART service
- Considering ways to make it easier to identify accessible bus stops
- The RDN Board wrote a letter to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure requesting that the RDN be considered for any additional transit hours that may come available
- The RDN is seeking input from transit users on a potential fare hike through a survey.
- Legislative Services staff will email a link to each Committee member. The survey is available on BC Transit's and the RDN's websites through 2024-MAY-31

6. COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS:

Karen Robertson, Deputy Corporate Officer, advised of the following:

a. Update on Accessibility Improvements to City Parks and Trails

During the 2024-MAR-18 Regular Council Meeting, Council adopted the following motion:

“That Council direct Staff to conduct assessment audits on the following parks, trails and open spaces in 2024/2025:

- Westwood Lake Trail System
- Oliver Woods Park grounds
- Neck Point Park
- Stadium District
- Harewood Centennial Park
- Beaufort Park
- Bowen Park grounds adjacent to the Bowen complex
- Waterfront Walkway”

Darcie Osborne, Director, Recreation and Culture, noted that Mike Bryson, Acting Director, Facility and Parks Operations, will provide the Committee an update in the fall regarding the audits.

7. PRESENTATIONS:

a. Assistive Hearing Devices Update

Introduced by Kerry Ing, Director, IT/CIO.

- Three new microphones and one speaker have been installed in the Service and Resource Centre Boardroom.
- The microphones are designed to eliminate ambient noise from the room to enhance hearing quality, by only picking up the voice directly in front of them

Darcie Osborne, Director, Recreation and Culture, noted that Hearing Loops were installed at the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre and the Bowen Complex front office on 2024-APR-23, and so far, feedback has been positive from users.

b. Accessibility, Inclusion and Special Events

Introduced by Adrienne Mercer Breen, Manager, Culture and Events.

Presentation:

1. Megan Lum, Recreation Coordinator, Special Events, provided a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:
 - Ongoing work with First Nations partners to work towards a bid to host the North American Indigenous Games
 - The ACAI Workplan will be utilized to help make events more accessible
 - Downtown Event Revitalization Funding provides \$250,000 annually in grant funding to help event organizers host events downtown Nanaimo
 - Staff work with event organizers to ensure plans include accessible parking, access points for those with mobility issues, transit shuttles and bike valet services
 - City-hosted events include Canada Day and Concerts in the Park, and are aimed to be free or as low-cost as possible
 - Independent events make up the majority of events held in Nanaimo, many of which receive grant funding from the City to go forward
 - Interdepartmental collaborations are often required to sort out logistics for an event

Staff asked for feedback from the Committee on how the City could improve the way events are planned.

The Committee members provided the following responses:

- Food trucks at the Night Market are in an area of Diana Krall Plaza that is difficult to access for those with mobility aids and due to crowding it can be over stimulating for some.
- Would like to see base-line accessibility requirements are part of the application process.
- Language from City Plan regarding accessibility will be integrated into event grant applications to ensure a certain level of accessibility is achieved
- Sound and power cords are difficult to maneuver when using a wheelchair, and consideration needs to be given to covering obstacles
- Lack of sign language and Voice-to-Text systems available as options to accompany microphones and amplifiers
- A lot of time can be wasted taking transit to an inaccessible event that does not advertise its level of accessibility
- An information kit should be made available to event organizers that outlines ways to make events more accessible and provide connections for event organizers to help achieve a higher level of accessibility
- Improving awareness of events taking place throughout the city in one central, accessible place
- Providing transit shuttles for events from other areas of town, instead of just the north end
- Consideration for capacity management for large-scale events, and providing capacity levels to event organizers
- Canada Day celebrations will likely include shuttles from the north end and south end, and Staff are looking to integrate a central Nanaimo shuttle as well
- The contract signed by grant recipients currently includes an accessibility and inclusion clause; however, more clear language will be added with guidance from the ACAI
- Accessibility of events includes both financial and physical barriers
- Consideration for having an ambassador at events to help explain the event to those with mobility impairments or diverse needs

- Lack of accessible washrooms is a barrier that prevents people from attending events
- Encouraging event organizers to have events assessed for accessibility, prior to the event taking place

b. Public Art and Culture Initiatives

Introduced by Adrienne Mercer Breen, Manager, Culture and Events.

Presentation:

1. Jaime-Brett Sine, Recreation Coordinator, Cultural Services, provided a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:

- This year's annual street banner design contest called for designs to recognize Nanaimo's 150th year of incorporation
- Culture Awards is a free annual event held at the Port Theatre to recognize leaders in art and culture
- The City designates two poet laureates, with one specifically geared towards youth, to help raise awareness of poetry and literature in the community
- Poetry in the Park allows park users to scan QR codes placed throughout Bowen Park, and watch videos of Poet Laureate Kamal Parmar reading one of her poems. The videos are also available for viewing via the City's YouTube channel
- The Temporary Public Art program involves two pieces of public art commissioned annually, with each piece on display for five years
- The 2024 Temporary Public Art program includes three pieces by Robert Turriff to be installed at Colliery Dam Park, and a sound art installation by Eliot White-Hill which will be placed in discrete corners of the Old City Quarter
- The Urban Design Roster appoints artists and designers for a two-year term and involves small-scale art projects on City infrastructure. These projects are generally curated for the neighbourhood it is being installed in
- The City is running a temporary program to display student artwork at the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre from local students

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Confirmation the Poetry in the Park videos include closed captioning

- Suggested different engagement options for the sound art installation to broaden the scope of enjoyment
- Consideration for local public art projects to be shared in other ways such as online or in a calendar
- Consideration for including descriptions of art displays to allow those with low vision to experience the art more fully
- Inclusive language is important when describing art projects
- Suggestion to create a public art event featuring paintings by people with diverse abilities for Community Inclusion Month in October

8. OTHER BUSINESS:

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The Province is offering an Accessibility Standards engagement period from 2024-MAY-31 to 2024-JULY-31
- The Inclusion BC Conference is happening at the end of the month. As many attendees will have diverse accessibility needs, it was suggested the City work to make the downtown as accessible as possible if time permits

9. QUESTION PERIOD:

The Committee received no questions from the public regarding agenda items.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 5:54 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

CHAIR

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

DEPUTY CORPORATE OFFICER