



Minutes
Of a Meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee
Of the City of Kenora
Thursday, January 23, 2025
Lake of the Woods Museum/Virtual
4:00 p.m.

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**With** Chad English, Chair, Mary Bawden, Co-Chair, Heather Bird, Peggy Whitta, Councillor Koch (alternate)

**Regrets** Councillor Van Belleghem

**Staff** Kelly Galbraith, Customer Services Manager/Deputy Clerk, Greg Breen, Director of Engineering & Infrastructure

**1. Call to Order**

Chad called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. and delivered the land acknowledgement. The group welcomed Councillor Koch. Roundtable introductions were done.

**2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof**

There were none declared.

Chad spoke to the passing of former committee member Corrie Neufeld and the contributions she made to the committee and her community. Peggy shared a sincere parting gift that Corrie sent her. The committee discussed a bench in memory and Greg spoke to the City's bench policy.

**3. Lake of the Woods Museum & Douglas Family Art Centre Accessibility – Braden Murray & Rick Brignall**

Braden and Rick were introduced to the group. They shared that it is recognized the museum exhibit spaces are dated. Museum staff would like to renew the spaces with new pictures, new content and new "old" items ensuring it is as barrier free as possible. Upgrades to text on the walls, or placement of items on the floor will also be considered. Braden shared a brief history of the building. Construction began in 1985 and the building was completed in 1986. At the time it was hailed by some as the most accessible building in Kenora. A few months after completion, a disability advocate disputed this.

Over the next few years content will be switching out. With the changes, the MUSE wants to ensure content and other items are as accessible as possible and barrier free. MUSE staff would be thrilled if AAC can help make the Lake of the Woods Museum as good as it can be. The process will be as we complete sections, feeding the design and layout, and seeking feedback. Spacing and flow will be taken into consideration.

#### **Discussion:**

Concerns with the written panels that are displayed were identified. They include that they are not big enough, the font is not accessible, there is glare from the lighting, the installation angle is incorrect, etc. The panels represent a time when museums were of academic nature, staff are trying to have the museum be for the people now. The intent is for the visitor experience to be easier, more enjoyable and support a wide range of abilities; sensory, touch, etc. The space will be transformed slowly, this is not a large capital project. Technology was also discussed. QR codes to listen to exhibit explanations will be installed. Mary spoke about the thought-provoking questions that were displayed on exhibits which she saw in her recent travels abroad.

#### **4. Confirmation of Minutes**

##### **Moved by Mary Bawden, seconded by Peggy Whitta & Carried:**

That the Minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting held November 21, 2024 be confirmed as written and filed.

#### **5. Election of Committee Chair and Co-Chair**

As per the committee's terms of reference "The Committee shall elect a chairperson from its members at the first meeting of each year and hold the office for one year. The Committee shall elect a co-chairperson from among its members at its first meeting, in the case of absence of the chairperson." Chad English was re-elected as Chair and Mary Bawden was re-elected as Co-Chair. It was noted the committee continues active recruitment. With additional members, an election of committee Chair and Co-Chair may be revisited.

#### **6. 2025 Meeting Dates and Times**

As per the committee's term of reference "Regular meeting dates are to be established by the Committee at the first meeting of the calendar year. The location and frequency of meetings will be at the discretion of the Committee." The committee will continue to meet on the third Thursday of each month, at 4:00 p.m.

#### **7. National AccessAbility Week – 2025 School Challenge (May 25-31)**

Last year's school challenge brought some impressive submissions of artwork. The feedback received from schools was the project was sent out too late to be incorporated in the curriculum. It was shared that it would be nice to have the newspaper carry the story this year. The concept of having a school challenge to create a flag for National AccessAbility Week was discussed. A flag raising could be held with the winning classroom attending, along with Mayor and Council to kickoff National AccessAbility Week.

BIZ and Chamber were identified as potential groups who may also participate in National AccessAbility Week celebrations.

AccessNow was also discussed.

## **6. Viewing of Accessible Lake Living Videos**

There were four (4) short videos created as part of the Accessible Lake Living Video series. Two of the films were shared with group.

## **7. Roundtable**

The seating options for the re-purposing of the Coney Island floating walkway was discussed. Greg shared that the re-purposing project will not be moving forward at this time.

Peggy spoke to the railings at the TD Bank and questioned if the City has a Safety Officer who would be able to assist. Greg shared that the City has no ability to go and force private business to do safety upgrades. Once a permit is signed off it is completed. Occupational Health and Safety pertains to workplaces. TD has been made aware of the concerns by their customers and knows it is a liability. The committee thanked Peggy for her advocacy.

Greg shared there is a tender out for the for design of the Central Park green space, surround playground and rink. This project will come to the committee for reviews of the pathway, benches, etc. It is anticipated this will come to the committee in March.

**8. Next Meeting** – Thursday, February 20, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.

## **9. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.