



Minutes

Of a Meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee Of the City of Kenora Thursday, January 18th, 2023 – City Hall/Virtual 4:00p.m.

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**With:** C. Kelsie Van Belleghem Corrie Neufeld (v) Mary Bawden Chad English

**Staff:** Kelly Galbraith – Deputy Clerk Danica Farion – Executive Assistant  
Kyle Attanasio – City CAO

**Guests:** Jamie Hilland – Urban Systems

**Regrets:** Heather Bird

### 1. Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement

Chad called the meeting to order at 4:07pm and delivered the land acknowledgement. Chad welcomed guests that were observing the meeting.

### 2. Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Councillor Van Belleghem made note that the second paragraph of agenda item 3 from the previous minutes was not accurately captured. She noted that the conversation was around the political will to utilize that funding for additional accessibility features. Table discussions on how this item unfolded at the previous meeting.

**Moved By Mary Bawden Seconded by Kelsie Van Belleghem, and Carried –**

That the Minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting held November 30<sup>th</sup> 2023, be filed as amended.

### 3. Election of Chair and Co-Chair

K. Galbraith relayed that as per the Terms of Reference annually the Committee needs to elect a Chair and Co-Chair. She added that the committee has recently had a resignation and that administration have circulated a call for applications to multiple City Committees. If anyone at the Table knows of someone who has been considering joining the Committee, to have them reach out and submit an application.

**Moved By Mary Bawden, Seconded by Kelsie Van Belleghem, and Carried -**

That Chad English be elected as Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee for a one (1) year term effective January 18, 2024 through to January 09, 2025;

**Moved by Mary Bawden, Seconded by Kelsie Van Belleghem, and Carried –**

That the election of the Co-Chair be deferred until all members of the Committee are present.

**4. Confirmation of Future Meeting Dates for 2024**

Discussions on the best meeting date possible and whether the current rotation is enough. Table consensus that meeting more regularly with anticipation of capital projects coming forward would be in the best interest of the Committee.

**Moved By Corrie Neufeld, Seconded by Mary Bawden, and Carried -**

That the Accessibility Advisory Committee will meet the third Thursday of every month at 4:00pm, unless otherwise noted, for the duration of the 2024 term.

The next meeting will fall to the fourth Thursday of the month due to a staff conflict, and the meeting will be two hours to accommodate the lengthy agenda.

**5. Message from CAO**

K. Attanasio noted that he wanted to come today to listen to the Committee, the galvanizing event for him to attend today was the media coverage of Central Park. What has become apparent is that some projects come through the Committee, and some don't. He shared with the table that administration has had numerous meetings to discuss more efficient ways to ensure there is adequate consultation with this Committee.

He wanted to hear directly from the Committee to understand what is happening well and what is not, so that he can work on that with administration staff.

K. Attanasio acknowledged that the City will make a more constructive effort to help the Accessibility Advisory Committee deliver their mandate.

He continued that administration will be working through the 2024 capital projects with the Committee and there will be opportunities for conversations when putting together the 2025 budget as well. He noted that he is unsure what the best way to do this will be but will work with the Committee to ensure the goal is achieved.

M. Bawden made note that ideas can come from all places. Councillor Van Belleghem shared that she has mentioned to K. Attanasio previously that she does not want to see these Committees spinning their wheels and that the Committee needs to have eyes on things for a reason. She continued that the universal design standards suggested at the last meeting was to mitigate the loss of institutional knowledge when there is staff turnover.

M. Bawden shared a story of a tv show she watched where they are building a fully accessible house. She added that people beyond the committee need to be thinking beyond minimum as well.

C. English stated that its refreshing that the CAO is at the table. He continued that although the Committee was consulted on Central Park it still ended up not accessible, and questioned what happened, where did this process fall short. He explained that he does not feel that the City is being transparent with this Committee; he wondered if universal standards would mitigate this. He spoke to the shifting of attitudinal barriers. He would like to see K. Attanasio at these meetings more often and would like this Committee to help K. Attanasio help his staff. K. Attanasio clarified the answer to Central Park is that it comes down to lack of proper process. K. Attanasio continued that he is exploring AODA training for all staff. He shared that if Council chooses to implement universal standards that is for them to implement, and staff will follow. He asked for the Committee's patience while we work towards better process. C. English made note that it shows care that K. Attanasio is at the table today and the Committee is committed to working with the City towards better process.

K. Attanasio concluded by letting the Committee know that they would be receiving a presentation on Central Park at the next meeting as well as have a consultant in for McLeod Park.

K. Galbraith shared with the Committee that the 2024 Capital Budget has been approved by Council, which will allow administration to start moving forward on projects and engaging with the Committee. The Director of Engineering and Infrastructure, Greg Breen, along with the General Manager of Engineering, David Mellor, will attend the February AAC meeting and start going over the process for engagement and consultation on projects.

K. Galbraith reminded that Committee members to start thinking of AccessAbility Week ideas. She provided a recap of ideas done in the past, she noted that even if there is an idea that has budget associated please bring it forward either way. No ideas are bad ideas.

In speaking with administration, budget process for 2025 will start in the spring of 2024, ideally Chad would report to Council around May in order to bring forward any ideas from the Committee prior to budget deliberations/work starting. Councillor Van Belleghem questioned whether the MAT dollars could be used towards AccessAbility week, she will inquire.

D. Farion reminded the Committee to continue to submit their ideas to be added to the Wishlist, which will be added on each copy of the meeting minutes. No additions noted during today's meeting.

## **6. Active Transportation Plan Consultation and Engagement**

C. English thanked J. Hilland for joining the meeting today.

J. Hilland introduced himself and shared a bit about himself and his position with Urban Systems.

The Active Transportation Plan will build a network to connect walking and cycling routes within Kenora, it will address current gaps and add additional connections. There is also a policy piece that will encourage citizens to use the system.

He asked the table to share things that they felt are important to see included as part of their recommendations for the plan. He added that Urban Systems has an accessibility expert within their office who also has eyes on the project.

Councilor Van Belleghem shared that she is an able-bodied person and there is no direct impact to her life when it comes to being able to access spaces, however, she has two small children who have really brought her attention to accessibility inequalities. She said this created an awareness that if she struggled as an able-bodied person how people with physical disabilities must feel and how we have let them down. This is important to her that all members of the community be included, she made note that if we are using public funds to create spaces, then all public must be able to use the space.

M. Bawden made note that she chairs the Kenora Aged Friendly Committee. She spoke about her initiative of Snow Moles and how they will make note of issues with terrain as they walk, such as sidewalks or icy patches. She said she wanted to partner with the City. The intent of her group is to make the community walkable for four seasons. She spoke again to her Aged Friendly Committee, and that if something is made accessible for older adults it will be accessible for everyone.

C. Neufeld will email her suggestions to D. Farion to share with Urban Systems.

C. English shared that he does not see active transportation in Kenora. He thinks of space in the community and how it is underutilized. He used the Harbourn town parking lot as an example that it is underused and Main Street being too tight. From an infrastructure perspective he is suggesting Urban Systems look at these types of areas. He noted that snow removal is a huge barrier, when he thinks about policy he thinks of the City needing to maintain better policy with maintenance.

Councillor Van Belleghem spoke to the line painting not addressing crosswalks.

M. Bawden made note that lights at intersections need to be pushed and then its only on for a short period of time, slower walkers do not have time to cross and she suggested there is a need for countdown crossing so pedestrians know how much time is left before the light changes.

K. Galbraith shared two things she has heard over her time as the staff resource for this Committee is that there are the terrain challenges in our area. She continued that it will be important to implement resting places along the system as the slopes can be difficult to navigate. She referenced Norman Park as an example. The second item she has heard previously from the Committee is the need for shade and protection from the elements.

J. Hilland thanked the Committee for their perspectives and input and concluded that the plan should positively effect all members of the community.

**7. Next Meeting – February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024 @ 4:00pm – 6:00pm**

**8. Adjourn Meeting – The meeting adjourned at 5:19pm.**

**Upcoming Items:**

- **National AccessAbility Week – May 25 – June 1, 2024**
- **Annual Accessibility Plan Update – Spring 2024**
- **AAC Report to Council – May 2024**

**Wishlist:**

- Doorknobs to levers – particularly at City Hall
- A wheelchair accessible taxi
- Accessible Pool and adult change bed in change rooms at pool
- That the street corners in the core area be maintained
- Keewatin beach should become more accessible for people in wheelchairs. Mobi-Mat is often dirty and does not go out far enough
- The sidewalks that have slanted driveway access need to be changed; people in wheelchairs and motorized wheelchairs have a tendency flip over on the side when crossing the driveway
- The accessibility washrooms in Kenora or not accessibility friendly need to revisit this (not big enough for chairs, ex. Pavilion)
- All businesses should have accessibility especially in the downtown core including the store themselves
- Discussions around the curb stops and ramps around new builds such as the KDSB property for seniors in Lakeside not being adequate
- Lower toilets in public washrooms and add grab bars on both sides, most power chairs are 22-24 inches, stalls need to accommodate
- Reduce slope of ramp at McLeod Park
- Remove all woodchips from parks and use accessible material