



ACTION

Accessibility Advisory Committee Minutes

**Wednesday, February 12, 2014
5:00 p.m.
City Hall Council Chambers**

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- PRESENT:** Denise Miault, Chair
Ruth Bowiec
Bayley Kurtz-Ostenfeldt
Marion McKay
Ken Puckall
Deanne Sutton
Sharon Smith, Council (via conference call)
Heather Kasprick, Deputy Clerk
Kerri Holder, Administrative Assistant
- GUEST:** Megan Teske
- REGRETS:** Barb Penner
Diane Pelletier
Rod McKay, Council

Denise Miault called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

A. Introductions & Welcome

Denise welcomed all to the meeting and members were introduced. Councillor Smith attended by phone. Ken Puckall introduced his daughter, Megan, who attended as a guest to the meeting.

Denise gave a brief history about the Committee and expressed her concerns about the role of the Committee and the commitment from the members. Denise indicated that she is prepared to stay on as Chair, adding that if she is not available, Deanne Sutton can take the Chair role as she has done in the past. Denise noted that having Heather Kasprick as the staff resource will assist the Committee in focusing on the issues.

B. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest & the General Nature Thereof:

- 1) On Today's Agenda**
- 2) From a Meeting at which a Member was not in Attendance**
There were none declared.

C. Confirmation of Minutes:

Moved by R. Bowiec, Seconded by D. Sutton & Carried:-

That the Minutes of the last meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee November 13, 2013 be confirmed as written and filed.

D. Items:

1. Business Arising

None

2. Old Business

None

3. Terms of Reference

Moved by D. Sutton, seconded by M. McKay & Carried –

That the new draft Terms of Reference be accepted.

Discussion:

Changes discussed at the November 13, 2014 were made to the Terms of Reference and a draft copy was handed out as an aid to discussion. The Committee examined each section in the Terms of Reference, providing feedback and ideas.

Committee Mandate

It was noted that until recently there had not been an accessibility plan for the Committee to work with. The City of Kenora Accessibility Plan was accepted by Council in December 2013.

Denise suggested that the mandate should be reviewed each year to evaluate if the Committee's work is meeting the objectives.

There was discussion about the role of the Committee. The role should look at how the Committee will empower the community to respond to the Provincial mandate for accessibility, as well as what the Committee can do to make changes within our community. It was recognized that small steps will lead to big changes and not all accessibility issues can be addressed at once.

Definitions

The definitions are well laid out. It was noted that persons with disabilities or person with a disability is the correct term.

Disabilities list was reviewed and there was a discussion about the types of disabilities. It was mentioned that a disability is not necessarily limited to physical but includes mental conditions, such as autism, also.

Committee Structure

All agreed they need to be actively recruiting persons with disabilities to become members of the Committee. It was mentioned that some members would ask clients and others in their business circles.

There was discussion about the total number of stakeholders. The importance of having all groups represented was noted, however not so much that quorum is lost. While representatives from the related agencies bring different perspectives, persons with disabilities offer another look at accessibility needs. It was noted that this is an open meeting that anyone can attend. There was a suggestion to extend meeting advertisements to generate some interest. Heather indicated she could look into various avenues available to advertise the meeting.

H. Kasprick

Denise informed the group about the Stop Gap ramp program. This program involves making temporary metal ramps to allow wheel chair access into businesses where entrance heights from the sidewalk vary. Denise will share this information with the group for further consideration.

There was discussion about the economic impact of having an accessible City. A suggestion was made that the Committee needs to take on the role to convince businesses that addressing accessibility is for their betterment and investment in accessibility will be worthwhile for their business. The more accessible the City is, the more persons with disabilities will visit and enjoy what we have to offer. Integration of activities for persons with disabilities was another focus suggested.

Ken pointed out that accessibility should be part of initiative to making Kenora the premier boating destination. There was discussion about dock improvements that have been done at the Harbourfront and Discovery Centre. Heather reassured the group that the City is ensuring new projects address accessibility, and that that planning and budgeting at both Council and staff level involve accessibility aspects and City departments are aware of what needs to be done.

Councillor Smith gave an update on a new project the Kenora Urban Trails Committee is working on at Norman Park. The project is in the beginning stages and the plans will be shared with the Accessibility Advisory Committee for their input. Councillor Smith will have more information at the next meeting.

Committee Size

Denise proposed dropping the number of voting members to 10. This change supported at the last meeting and agreed by all in attendance. It was mentioned that the Committee should not worry too much about having quorum but that it is important to meet to have discussions.

Length of Term

It was recommended to change the length of term to coincide with Council where with each term of Council, members would reapply to be appointed to the Committee. It was clarified that this is standard for other committees of Council.

Absences

This provision was reviewed and it was clarified that this statement is part of all committees of Council also, not specific to this one.

Committee Selection

It was mentioned that the Committee will welcome anyone that comes forward however they are looking for stakeholder representatives listed.

Meeting Format

There was discussion about the changes with the time of the meeting and all agreed that the second Tuesday of the month at 5:00 pm was acceptable to those in attendance but could still be discussed if needed. It was mentioned once again that the Committee should always carry on with the meeting, even without quorum, simply to provide the opportunity for discussion.

Committee Operation Expenses

Heather explained that the Committee does not have a budget of its own, rather expenses are covered by the department of the staff resource assigned to the Committee.

Conflict of Interest

This section was reviewed as a reminder to all.

Ken expressed his concern about the autonomy with Committee and the narrow terms of reference they are working with. Recognizing that Council is in charge, he noted that there is much wisdom and leadership with the members of the Committee and they are be able to express desire and needs of disable persons within community. It was agreed that this is an important committee and they need to be leading the way with accessibility.

Ruth pointed out that there is a provision under Committee Operation Expenses indicating that the cost for accessible transportation, such as Handi Transit, could be covered by the Committee, adding this may help to recruit new members. It was noted that this Committee's meeting time is outside of Handi Transit's hours of operation, but that arrangements could be made if there were a minimum of five riders. There was a suggestion made that if there were enough requiring rides, the time of the meeting could be changed. It was also suggested that when advertising for new members, a notice could be included about the accessible transportation option.

Deanne Sutton spoke on building awareness about what the Accessibility Advisory Committee does. It was suggested that engaging the Kenora & District Chamber of Commerce and perhaps the Kenora Harbourtown BIZ, may be a way to promote within the business community. There was a suggestion to publish a newsletter also. There was discussion about recognizing and celebrating accessible businesses in some way, perhaps a logo on the door.

Denise shared that in the past the Committee has sent a "Congratulations" to new businesses and also asked about accessibility with the new business. This communication has given way for conversations with business owners about how to become accessible. It was suggested that this could be done again.

4. 2014 Elections

Heather gave an update about the 2014 municipal election and her role with elections. Heather explained that Council approved to allow voting by phone and internet to ensure all voters have access to participate in the election. More information will be available for the Committee at the next meeting.

There was an inquiry about the voters list, whether it included property owners and renters. Heather explained the process of how the voters list is compiled and that it should include both property owners and tenants. It was advised that the public should check to see that they are on the voters list when it becomes available in July. It was mentioned that the Committee members have clients who are renters and will make the effort to check the list on their behalf.

5. City of Kenora Accessibility Plan

Heather gave update on the City of Kenora Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, indicating that it had not been brought to this Committee earlier as there was a deadline to have it approved at Council. The Plan will be brought to the next meeting where the Committee will have the opportunity to make changes.

6. Updates and Information

Denise explained that the public knows she is involved with this Committee and therefore receives many calls from concerned citizens. This winter the majority of the calls were about the snow and normally she does contact the Roads department with the concerns received. It was clarified that Denise could contact the Roads Supervisor, Krishanth Koralalage, or the Roads Foreman, George Henley, if needed.

The main areas of concern were:

- handicap parking spaces in front of King Furniture;
- handicap parking spaces at the Kenora Recreation Centre;
- along Miikana Way; and
- triangle crossing by A & W.

It was explained that handicap parking spaces have been made wider to allow for side loading lifts to operate and wheel chairs to maneuver around vehicles. With snow build up around the spaces, this becomes difficult. Also the parking lines are covered up with snow resulting in more vehicles parking in the space than actual spots. For example at the Kenora Recreation Centre, there are five handicap spaces and during winter, 7-8 vehicles are parking there. Recognizing that this winter it has been difficult to keep up with snow clearing, Denise thanked the City for their efforts.

7. New Business

Ruth shared a paragraph from the Minutes of the Kenora Branch Coalition of Seniors of Ontario meeting about their concern for the accessibility ramps that do not conform to the building code. They are wondering if the code is being enforced by the municipality. It was explained that many existing ramps had been built to code in place at the time and had been grandfathered in. There was discussion about the process to conform if buildings are sold and some examples of ramps were given. Ruth was satisfied with this answer and will report back to the Seniors.

Wayne Ficek has made a request to attend the next meeting to make a deputation on ramp codes. Kerri to add to the agenda.

8. Next Meeting Date

- Wednesday, March 12, 2014

Meeting adjourned at 6:16 p.m.