

## **Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Thursday, October 14, 2021 @ 2:30 PM**

At The Hub, Caledonia + Zoom online

# Minutes

### **Present:**

Councillor Ralph Gidney, Chair  
Councillor Vicki Amirault,  
Wayne Huskins,  
Tyler Roy,  
Mackenzie Colp,  
Janine Stewart,  
Elise Johnston, Accessibility Coordinator, Region of Queens,  
Mike MacLeod, Director of Planning and Development, Region of Queens.

**Regrets:** Kelly Oxner.

### **1.0 Call to Order**

After frustrating technical difficulties, the meeting convened at 2:45 pm on Zoom.

### **2.0 Changes/Approval Of Agenda**

**It was moved by Wayne and seconded by Janine that the Agenda be approved as circulated. MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

### **3.0 Approval Of Minutes** of September 9, 2021

**It was moved by Wayne and seconded by Vicki that the Minutes be approved as circulated. MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

### **4.0 Presentations:** New member Janine Stewart was welcomed and described her interest in participating, having been in a wheelchair after surgeries due to bone cancer. She is a book-keeper for a dozen local businesses and has volunteered for numerous organizations in Queens. All the other members introduced themselves to her.

## **5.0 Planning:**

- 5.1 In terms of the Education category, we aim to develop public awareness. A new QCCR radio show 'Poss-Abilities in Queens' hosted by Elise and Eric Levy (Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator) has been created and regular broadcasting can start in about a month. It will start out as 20-30 minutes every two weeks. The segments will be recorded and posted online with accompanying text transcripts. Content will include local challenges, improvements and opportunities, as shared by residents. AAC members are asked for suggestions, willingness to be interviewed or topics to be discussed.

Meanwhile CBC Ready and Able radio show host Wendy Bergfeldt reached out and requested that Elise and Tyler be interviewed along with a Barrington AAC member. Tyler was happy to contribute despite feeling nervous. Elise will send out the audio link for the October 7<sup>th</sup> segment when the transcript is ready to be attached as well.

- 5.2 An event for 'Inclusive Employment' is being developed by Elise, similar to a Speed Meeting that ReachAbility does successfully in Halifax. Employers and Job seekers are invited to come together to practice interviewing with job development and accommodations in mind. Department of Community Services and NS Works are on board but uncertain how many of their clients are double vaccinated. Now to get Employers to participate! To be scheduled in early November.

Wayne described his career start as dismal, without the support he should have had, and having to prove himself capable more than colleagues.

- 5.3 As laid out in our Accessibility Plan, Human Resource policies within RQM are being edited with an accessibility and inclusion lens. Issues like equity and accommodations are highlighted, as well as recruiting and hiring practices. They are still in draft form and to be discussed with the CAO and then brought to Council for approval. To review existing policies, find them online or just email Elise.

## **6.0 REPORTS/UPDATES**

- 6.1 The first set of Community Health Board 'Hobby Development' sessions were completed successfully if only with an average of 5 people per session. QCT was fantastic at helping people participate. Mackenzie said she enjoyed her two sessions and that her plants were still growing. Tyler was happy to join in the 'movement to music' session, supplying a piece of music that he had created himself. Another set of hobby sessions will be offered. Meanwhile a second grant will be submitted tomorrow asking for mini mobile elliptical machines which can be pedaled by hands or by feet from a seated position. These would be shared around the county, encouraging group sessions but available for at home use as well.
- 6.2 Federal Grants have NOT been awarded to date but may be by the end of October. Elise provided amounts for the various budgets of the Astor accessibility project. In summary, Council approved \$100,000; \$20,000 came in from Community Access Ability grant (half spent on the Mobi mats) and an additional \$168,000 was requested from Healthy Communities Initiative to include costly elements such as an elevator.
- Meanwhile, the last provincial grant helped get Mobi mats purchased and installed at Beach Meadows Beach, and they have been very well received. Vicki described some of the responses from happy residents. Yay!
- 6.3 The Liverpool Universally designed Playpark has reached its funding goal, and Autism NS, the charitable vehicle that collected grants and donations, will turn over ownership of the project to the Region to move forward with planning, tendering and construction. This will be a fully accessible park with multi-generational and ramped components, various sensory elements, and a splashpad, all safely enclosed by a fence.
- 6.4 Elise asked members for any other business, concerns, and priorities.
- Wayne's priority would be improving the road shoulders, as they are narrow at best. While this is a recognized concern yet a provincial matter, RQM can still push for areas to be considered.

He also mentioned that it was Blind Sport that gave self-defense classes based on judo many years ago. Elise could not find that or other similar classes through Sport NS or Parasport, but will keep looking as well as connect with RCMP to determine what training they've had with respect to handling cases involving disabilities in the community.

Ralph proposed that we not need a monthly meeting now that the plan has been prepared. As December is slow and distracted, could we plan for Thursday, **January 6<sup>th</sup>**, 2022, 2:30, location to be determined. All agreed. Elise will certainly share updates in the interim and is always open for input from members and general public alike.

**7.0      Adjournment** at 3:15 pm.