

Accessibility Meeting Minutes
August 8, 2019
Town Council Chambers

Present

Deputy Mayor D. MacInnis
Mayor L. Boucher
Councillor M. Farrell
P. Dec, Planner (EDPC)
G. Kell
G. Mattie

Also Present

G. Post, Executive Director of the Accessibility Directorate
Councilor W. Cormier
Councilor A. Murray
Councilor D. Roberts
J. Lawrence, CAO
M. Barkhouse, Director of Corporate Services
S. Scannell, Director of Community Development
S. Smith, Bylaw Enforcement Officer
E. Stephenson, Active Living Coordinator
K. Gorman, Marketing and Communication Officer
L. Basinger, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator
Warden O. McCarron (Antigonish County)
Councillor M. MacLellan (Antigonish County)
Alex Dunphy, Planner (EDPC)

The meeting was called to order at 1:03pm by the Chair, Deputy Mayor D. MacInnis.

Mayor L. Boucher introduced Mr. G. Post, Executive Director of the Accessibility Directorate noting his commitment to improving accessibility in the province.

Round table introductions took place.

G. Post provided a presentation about Access by Design. He noted the Act is about preventing and removing barriers including physical, communication, attitude, institutional, and lack of awareness.

A road map is available online for [Access by Design](#), providing guidance on how to make a community accessible by 2030.

Those in attendance were advised that the Province has a grant program through Communities Culture and Heritage that will fund up to two thirds of the costs to make businesses more accessible. This

funding isn't just for the built environment but also for things like upgrading business website to accommodate visual impairment, installing hearing aid amplifiers in large meeting rooms, or printing new menus in braille.

G. Post noted that there is a requirement for all municipalities to develop an accessibility plan. The mandate has not been fully vetted yet, but it is expected soon. Municipalities will have one year to create an accessibility plan following the mandate

It was noted that the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) along with the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia (AMANS) have a provincial working group that is creating an accessibility handbook and training programs. Additionally, the Town of Wolfville Accessibility plan commitments mirror the Act so this can serve as a guide.

G. Post finished his presentation and took questions from the room.

Councillor W. Cormier mentioned the draft Municipal Planning Strategy that is currently being reviewed and wondered about considerations that should be given for accessibility in that plan.

G. Post noted that there are training programs available for Planners and that the Wolfville Accessibility plan is a great point of reference. Additionally, the Cogswell neighbourhood in Halifax may serve as a guide as it is going to be a Rick Hanson gold zone.

Discussion took place regarding the new ramp planned for the main entrance of Town Hall, highlighting how the minimum standards of the Building Code don't always align with functionality for the user.

G. Post noted that there is accommodation in the code because what the code requires may not meet the needs required.

P. Dec brought up his concerns that the new planning documents that are being adopted are outdated and wondered what we can do to prevent using guidelines that will be out of date in a few years' time.

G. Post indicated that we can only do the best we can with what's available but also offered himself as a resource

Mayor L. Boucher inquired about the status of the building code and the minimum standards, wondering if there is work pending to try to raise the standards.

G. Post noted that the Built Environment Plan will have an impact and likely drive amendments. He noted the Building Advisory Committee meets regularly and there is overlap with the Accessibility Board.

Mayor L. Boucher recognized that the Town needs an accessibility plan and asked if there is any help from the province for that.

G. Post highlighted the toolkit and training program that are available along with Wolfville's existing plan. The Accessibility Directorate is also available to provide support and they will come to us to do so.

D. MacInnis thanked G. Post for taking the time to attend the Accessibility Committee's meeting and presented him with a token of appreciation.

With there being no further business the meeting was adjourned.