



## **Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, March 12, 2025, 1:04 p.m.**

**Thunder Bay 55 Plus Centre**

**700 River Street**

### **1. Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting 01-2025**

Chair: Samantha Zrobin

### **2. Members**

Ken Bjorn, Visually Impaired or Blind Representative

John Gobeil, Developmental Disability Representative

Todd Kennedy, Service Agency Representative

Tara Lennox, Learning Disability Representative

Ulysses Patola, Citizen Representative

George Saarinen, Hard of Hearing/Late Deafened Representative

Samantha Zrobin, Brain Injury Representative

### **3. Officials**

Dana Earle, Deputy City Clerk

Flo-Ann Track, Council & Committee Clerk

### **4. Guests**

Jessy Bogacki, Program Supervisor - Adult Fitness, Wellness & Inclusion Services

Robert Tinsley, Citizen

### **5. Welcome and Introductions**

Meeting called to order and a roundtable of introductions to follow.

Chair Samantha Zrobin welcomed those in attendance and advised, that due to lack of quorum, the meeting would proceed as an information session.

Council & Committee Clerk Flo-Ann Track advised that communication dated March 6, 2025 was received from Member Dawn Hamilton to advise the Committee of their resignation from the AAC, and to express appreciation and support for the work the AAC does. A letter of appreciation for their service to the community will be sent on behalf of the Committee.

**6. Communication Process**

Council & Committee Clerk Flo-Ann Track provided an overview of the Committee's communication process.

Tara Lennox agreed to manage the speaker's list.

During the discussion of the above noted item quorum was achieved.

**7. Disclosures**

None.

**8. Agenda Approval**

MOVED BY: Ken Bjorn  
SECONDED BY: Tara Lennox

WITH RESPECT to the March 12, 2025 meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, we recommend that the Agenda as printed, including any additional information and new business be confirmed.

CARRIED

**9. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair**

Purpose: Required Annually

Election process for Chair and Vice Chair for the 2025 calendar year, and until such time as a replacement has been appointed, as required annually.

Council & Committee Clerk Flo-Ann Track provided an overview of the Chair and Vice-Chair positions and administered nominations for the position of Chair for the remainder of the 2025 calendar year.

MOVED BY: Ulysses Patola  
SECONDED BY: Tara Lennox

WITH RESPECT to the position of Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, we recommend that Samantha Zrobin be appointed Chair of the Committee for the remainder of the 2025 calendar year, and until such time a replacement has been appointed, as required annually.

CARRIED

Flo-Ann Track administered nominations for the position of Vice-Chair for the remainder of the 2025 calendar year.

MOVED BY: Ken Bjorn  
SECONDED BY: Tara Lennox

WITH RESPECT to the position of Vice-Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, we recommend that John Gobeil be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee for the remainder of the 2025 calendar year, and until such time a replacement has been appointed, as required annually.

CARRIED

The newly appointed Chair, Samantha Zrobin assumed the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

## **10. Terms of Reference**

Purpose: For Discussion

Under Section 3.17, Procedural By-law 51/2021, A By-law to govern the proceedings of Council and its Committees - Purpose and Responsibilities, requires an annual review of the Terms of Reference.

Document entitled "Accessibility Advisory Committee - Terms of Reference - Ratified July 15, 2024", for information.

Council & Committee Clerk Flo-Ann Track advised that Administration has completed a review of the Terms of Reference for all 19 Advisory Committees of Council, standardizing the "Governance" section to align with Council's procedural by-law; that no fundamental changes to the Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference were made since they were last presented to Council for ratification on July 15, 2024; and that, the amended Terms of Reference will be presented at the April 9, 2025 AAC meeting, for approval.

**11. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of Meeting 07-2024 Accessibility Advisory Committee, held on November 13, 2024 to be confirmed.

Notes from January 8, 2025 and February 12, 2025 information sessions provided, for information.

MOVED BY: Ken Bjorn  
SECONDED BY: Tara Lennox

THAT the Minutes of Meeting 07-2024 Accessibility Advisory Committee, held on November 13, 2024 be confirmed.

CARRIED

**12. Roundtable of Accessibility Issues**

Members to report on accessibility issues encountered in the community.

**12.1 The Scotties**

Purpose: Follow up

At the February 12, 2025 meeting of the AAC during the Roundtable of Accessibility Issues discussion, a member advised that the shuttles, for transportation to the Scotties, are not accessible.

Discussion was held relative to the above noted. Some of the items discussed as follows:

- Organizers communicated with the Member prior to the event advising that additional accessible parking spaces were reserved.
- Volunteers were on hand and helped in the accessible seating area.

**12.2 2025 Provincial Elections**

A Member provided the following information about their 2025 Provincial Election voting experience:

- Font on the Voting Card was not accessible.
- Polling location - Westmount Public School
  - School was in session while the Poling Station was open.

- Navigation to the Large Gymnasium through the school was difficult.
- Accessible parking was limited.

Discussion was held relative to Accessible Elections. Some of the items discussed as follows:

- Advocacy for the inclusion of people with disabilities in Canada's democratic processes.
  - Obstacles that still exist for persons with a disability.
    - Not limited to inaccessible polling sites.
    - Not all meeting venues, campaign offices and constituency offices are accessible.
- Administration provided the following, for information
  - City of Thunder Bay Municipal Election Accessibility Plan
    - in advance of an election the Accessibility Plan is reviewed.
      - The AAC helps to advise the City of Thunder Bay's Accessibility Plan.
      - Accessibility training is provided for election staff.
      - The Municipal Accessibility Specialist reviews potential voting locations for accessibility.
      - Advanced voting locations, voting options, parking, washrooms, information, transportation.
        - Locations close to Transit stops.
          - Transit passes are provided to remove financial burden
          - Advanced voting polls were located at various assisted living facilities, Thunder Bay Regional Hospital, Thunder Bay District Jail, Shelter House.
          - Accessible voting machines.
    - Opportunity for the AAC to advocate for fully accessible elections at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels.

- Voting Process: Ensure accessible voting methods, such as assistive technology, accessible ballots, and alternative voting options (e.g., mail-in ballots, telephone, or online voting).
  - Campaign Offices: Encourage and require candidates' campaign offices to be physically accessible, with appropriate accommodations for people with diverse disabilities.
  - Voting Locations: Guarantee that all voting locations meet accessibility standards, including parking, entrances, voting stations, and accessible transportation options.
  - Post-Election Constituency Offices: Ensure that elected representatives' offices are accessible to all constituents, promoting ongoing engagement and representation.
- Administration advised that they will work with the Chair to draft a letter to advocate for fully accessible elections in advance of the April 9th meeting.

### **12.3 Canada Games Complex**

Purpose: For information

Program Supervisor - Adult Fitness, Wellness & Inclusion Services Jessy Bogacki advised that the Canada Games Complex does not provide a receipt for fees paid on a monthly basis but will provide a letter upon request should a Member require one to submit for reimbursement from the Community Living Thunder Bay Passport Services program, or other funding programs.

### **12.4 Transit**

Discussion was held relative to the following Transit related issues:

- Taxi script vouchers
  - Previously there was a form on the back of the Taxi Script Vouchers that could be filled out and returned via mail with a cheque, Transit would process and send the vouchers back via mail, can this service be reinstated?

- Administration advised that this practice was changed in 2014 to address security issues and lessen the abuse of the program; Administration will bring it back to Management to see if this could be offered as an accommodation.
  - Can this service be offered as an accommodation?
- Lift + rides fulfilled by a Taxi
  - A member utilizing a mobility device experienced difficulties getting in and out of the standard taxi sent to fulfill their scheduled Lift + trip.
    - Administration advised that individuals utilizing Lift + are required to make their needs known to Transit, so an appropriate taxi can be booked when Lift + vehicle is not able to fulfill scheduled trip.
- On Demand Transit
  - Will Transit be switching to an on-demand system?
    - Administration provided the following, for information.
      - Transit is tasked with transforming Transit. Transit will apprise the Committee as changes are made.
- New Electronic Fare System
  - Why is payment with credit or debit card not available on the new Electronic Fare System?
    - Administration provided the following, for information.
      - The system is a “Closed Loop” system, which requires cards to be preloaded with funds. The new system does not have access to networks utilized by financial institutes to process credit card or debit transactions for payment.
- Registered CNIB Members - Transit privileges
  - Not all Transit Driver’s are aware of the transit privileges Canadian National Institute for the Blind Members have.
    - Administration advised that this is part of the Driver’s Training process, and that this feedback will be shared with

Management.

### **12.5 Accessible Parking**

Discussion was held relative to the following Parking related matter:

- Attending Advisory Committee meetings at City Hall.
  - can the parking pass issued to Committee Members while attending meetings be used at an accessible parking spot, instead of the designated metered lot next to St. Andrew's Parking Lot?
    - Administration will contact Management and advise if a different parking pass is required.

## **13. Working Group Updates**

### **13.1 Built Environment Working Group**

Samantha Zrobin - BEWG Member provided an update relative to future renovation plans for the Water Street Transit hub. Some of the information shared as follows:

- Public notice will be provided as construction will affect travel on Water Street.
- An addition will be constructed for Transit staff.
- Additional lighting will be installed.
- Patio seating area will be added.

## **14. 2025 Meeting Schedule**

Meetings of the Accessibility Advisory Committee will be scheduled from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Thunder Bay 55 + Centre, 700 River St. on the following dates:

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

Wednesday, May 14, 2025

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

Wednesday, September 10, 2025

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

Wednesday, November 12, 2025



**15. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:24 p.m.