

**MINUTES OF THE
ACCESSIBILITY WORKING GROUP
MONDAY, JUNE 6, 2016**

1. THE CHAIR CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 4:00 P.M.

Working Group Members Present: Linda Bartram
Steve Bertrand
Chris Dobbie
Rachel Buchanan
Paul Jones
Susan Gallagher

Regrets: Chris Marks
Kathryn McWhirter
Keith Kroeker

Councillor Present: Councillor Loveday
Councillor Regrets: Councillor Alto

Staff: Brad Dellebuur, Transportation Department
Chaz Whipp, Manager of Facilities
Christine Brinton, Recording Secretary

Guests: Mary, Sign Language Interpreter
Jenny, accompanying Rachel

The Accessibility Working Group did a roundtable introduction and the meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm.

Susan Gallagher arrived at 4:06 pm.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – JUNE 6, 2016

The Accessibility Working Group added “Sidewalk Puzzle Pieces” and “Disabled Park Furniture” to the agenda.

Motion: It was moved by Linda Bartram, seconded by Steve Bertrand that the agenda of Monday, June 6, 2016 (with above amendments) be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY 2, 2016

Motion: It was moved by Linda Bartram, seconded by Chris Dobbie, that the minutes from the Accessibility Working Group meeting held May 2, 2016 be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

4. BUSINESS ARISING

a) Audiovisual Equipment for Citizen Engagement Meetings

Chaz Whipp updated the Accessibility Working Group on what the Victoria Conference Centre (VCC)'s Accessibility Assessment regarding audiovisual equipment used for large public meetings.

- An accessibility study was completed in 1993 by independent consultant, 1998 independent consultant and Accessible Tourism in 2008 (see attached example).
- Continually educate the staff through workshops and ERT training.
- Have adapted areas to accommodate access into the building from both the exterior and interior perspective when required.
- After each event a risk assessment and an evaluation of special needs requirements is completed.
- VCC has wayfinding signs, support videos on the web for wheelchair access showing the accessibility into VCC, signage in braille for meeting rooms and washrooms, service dogs are permitted.
- Evaluate each event to ensure that if any special needs are required, that they are covered either by the VCC or the client – dependent on the nature of the accessibility etc.
- There is one elevator used for wheelchair /scooter access.
- If there is an event where a demographic of access requirements, we hire extra security to support and be an ambassador for assistance.

The three methods of hearing assistance are arranged by the CLIENT:

- Neck Loop device (we carry a basic version of these, similar to the interpretation devices we use)
- Sign Language (specialized, much like a language interpreter)
- Closed captioning (more common such as what you can use on your T.V.)
- Transcription

The Citizen Engagement Department at the City of Victoria does not have a policy in place, but Chaz Whipp did speak with the City's Information Technology department and the City has borrowed equipment from the conference centre in the past.

The AWG discussed the issue of 8 years passing without another assessment being done, this is a long time since an audit has been done.

- Chris Dobbie agrees that is a long time since this last audit, should be more regular. Who is in charge of the conference centre? They have a manager of operations there. It's the owner that needs to be proactive for these assessments. How often are assessments done, maybe this committee could look at the current policies.
- This working group hopes an assessment was done after the last event, because there were too many people attending that could not see the displays or hear the speakers, therefore there is room for improvement.

Chaz Whipp advised the AWG that the City of Victoria did a review of some City owned buildings with “an accessibility lens”. Walking through they would ask three questions, can you get in, can you use it for its intended use and can you use the washroom. After this was complete, the consultant recommended some specific accessibility upgrades.

- Steve suggested this body having a formal assessment process.
- What does it mean when you say you are looking into something with an accessibility lens? This group should spell out what that means.
- Paul Jones – understands the code, but can’t just be the code. Bodies hide behind the code. We can go further with this, but are there funds to make this better?

Chaz Whipp is working to update the Crystal pool with universal washrooms, would appreciate any comments from this committee.

Paul Jones asked about when a consultant comes through a building, does he or she have a disability. Chaz Whipp – typically no. Paul Jones suggested that now that we have this committee, the AWG can be utilized.

Susan – would like the word accessibility taken out and replaced with barrier free. Also deaf people have sign language, but descriptions are needed for blind.

ACTIONS:

- i. Chaz Whipp will forward the 2008 “Accessible Tourism Strategy – accessibility assessment” from the VCC and forward to AWG.
- ii. AWG would like to be included in discussions before issues go further with Citizen Engagement.
- iii. Look again at Barrier Free Principles (<http://barrierfreebc.org/our-principles/>). Are these specific enough, does this Group need to expand? Please review prior to next meeting (July 11, 2016). Christine forwarded link via email (June 13, 2016).

b) Hearing Loop at Front Desk of City Hall – Susan Gallagher

Susan Gallagher updated the Accessibility Working Group, stating the next step is City staff contacting someone to come and do a review of the Public Service Centre and Council Chambers to see what would work best (Hearing Loop, FM system?)

ACTION:

- i. Chaz Whipp and Brad Dellebuur will discuss and visit the conference centre.
- ii. Staff will bring back information to the July meeting.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a) Public Realm Open House and Online Survey email – Linda Bartram

On Wednesday, June 1, 2016 a Public Realm Open house and Online Survey took place. This open house presented an opportunity to revitalize and create new public space on both sides of the new bridge and improve connectivity for people who walk and cycling through the area. With the new Johnson Street Bridge set to open next year, work continues with the community around what the revitalized areas adjacent to the bridge will look like, and how they can be better utilized

(<http://www.johnsonstreetbridge.com/public-involvement/plazas-pathways-public-spaces/>)

There was no representation from the AWG at this meeting, but there is information on the Johnson Street Bridge webpage (click on link above). Brad is looking into the possibility of a presentation to this Group at the July meeting, depending on turnaround time and when information is going to Council.

ACTION: Brad will follow up and report back to AWG before the next meeting.

b) Disabled Park Furniture

Paul Jones discussed looking at a 'merry go round' for disabled children (in wheelchair) also space at some picnic tables for wheelchairs. The parks department is working on a master plan, suggestion on inviting the parks department to an upcoming meeting. Rick Hansen Foundation also may have grants to help with funding for this.

ACTIONS:

- i. Paul Jones will put together something for the next meeting with pictures and descriptions.
- ii. Councillor Jeremy Loveday will email the Parks Department.
- iii. Brad Dellebuur and Chaz Whipp will also have a conversation with parks.

c) Puzzle Pieces on the Sidewalks

The painted puzzle pieces on the sidewalks are a problem for people with low vision. It is very bright, making it confusing and has replaced some of the yellow lines on either side of the crosswalks, making it difficult to distinguish roadside to curb and vice-versa.

The AWG should have been consulted on this project, but it was prior to this group being created.

ACTIONS:

- i. Brad Dellebuur will investigate and take this feedback to the DVBA, taking into consideration the white lines at night are florescent.
- ii. Linda and Rachel will try the intersection at Blanshard and Fort Street.

Question regarding the walk signals at Blanshard and Broughton, and along Douglas – the beeping is not long enough. Please send Brad an email with concerns and he will find out about the technical issues and bring back information for the AWG.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was decided to have the next two meetings on the second Monday of the month. July 11th and then August 8th.

Next Meeting is Monday, July 11, 2016 at 4:00 pm.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The AWG adjourned at 5:15 pm.