

ACCESSIBILITY WORKING GROUP

Monday, February 5, 2018

1. WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

Present: Linda Bartram, Robin Bayley (via Skype), Paul Jones, Steve Bertrand, Chris Dobbie
Interpreters: (Keith Brougham, Mary Butterfield)
Councillors: Councillor Thornton-Joe, Councillor Loveday
Staff: Brad Dellebuur
Visitors: Wendy Cox, Christine Paisley
Regrets: Chris Marks, Susan Gallagher

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

- added to the agenda: Accessibility Survey (Linda Bartram)
- **Moved: Chris D, seconded: Paul, carried**

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES from January 8 2018 Moved by Linda, seconded by Steve, carried

4. BUSINESS ARISING:

A. ACCESSIBLE MEETING VENUE

AWG members agreed to change the priority rating for this issue from "1" to "3" upon Robin's request.

Paul supports the importance of the issue, and believes that this group, of all City committees, should have an accessible venue.

Paul put forward a motion that finding an accessible venue should be the #1 priority of AWG. Possible options could include:

- City & Robin jointly find a venue
- Robin finds a possible venue, and makes a recommendation to AWG
- Suspend AWG meetings until a suitable venue is found

Paul noted that this issue has taken way too long to resolve, and that AWG time could be better spent on more pressing issues.

Proposed Motion:

That the AWG undertake to find an accessible venue/meeting space that is accessible for all members, and that the AWG make this their #1 priority over all others.

Moved: Paul Seconded: Chris D.

Robin noted that she would not necessarily support the motion as it takes the pressure off the City to make City Hall accessible which she feels should be accessible to her to do her own City Hall business.

Paul said that approval of the motion would not necessarily exclude City facilities including City Hall.

Brad noted that City Studio would be considered a marginal facility for meeting – while the front door is accessible, washrooms may not be fully accessible, food/beverages are occasionally consumed on-site, and it’s unlikely to be a scent-free area.

Robin noted Skype technology should allow for multiple participants. Steve offered to look into this. Robin also identified the Conference Centre as a possible meeting location, however, scented washroom products do not make it suitable. Robin also commented that even if scent free products are used by the venue, she still runs the risk that someone attending the meeting uses scented personal products or in their laundry. Many of the AWG members stated that they did not use scented products.

Councillor Thornton-Joe noted that the City can follow up with technology improvements to make remote participation more reliable.

Action: Councillor Thornton-Joe and Councillor Loveday to follow up with improving remote participation through technology.

She also noted that cleaning products can be harsh, particularly when trying to clean/maintain an older building like City Hall, and that pets are currently invited into City Hall.

Councillor Thornton-Joe and Councillor Loveday both felt that a scent-free environment in City Hall was likely not achievable.

Chris D. noted that these accessibility issues must be very hard for people with allergies/sensitivities.

Robin noted that some characteristics for room selection could improve conditions/minimize risks. These include:

- direct access/egress (separate entrance)
- size of public space
- technology

Action: Robin to forward criteria for meeting room selection.

Amended Motion: “That staff undertake to find an accessible venue/meeting space that is accessible for all members and report back by the next meeting.”

Moved: Paul

Seconded: Chris D.

CARRIED

B. EFFECTIVENESS OF AWG ACCESSIBILITY CONSULTATIONS

Robin noted that, for other than Brad’s projects, consultation hasn’t resulted in changes. The expectation of AWG is that:

- AWG be heard
- early consultation allows for a greater opportunity for feedback to be incorporated

Robin asked what AWG can do to ensure that their input gets heard. She suggested a general handout which is sent to staff prior to attending a consultation. AWG is looking for the City to have an

accessibility analysis process that provides clarity through the Accessibility Impact Statement on staff reports to Council.

Paul noted that the recent Fairfield Community Association Plan included only 1 paragraph on accessibility in 150 pages of text. His understanding was that the AWG task was to identify barriers and develop policy, but also thought AWG would provide input on development applications, specific to accessibility concerns.

Linda noted the focus of AWG feedback has been on City capital construction projects.

Steve noted the AWG input given for the Johnson Street Bridge Public Realm, and wondered if the items identified by AWG members were considered/contemplated, or were they misinterpreted, or were they just forgotten?

One example of such input was the proposed use of black furniture, and the recommendation to either provide reflective strips on the outer edges, or select a different colour. AWG feels the recommendation was just ignored.

Councillor Loveday stated that he recognized the AWG's frustrations and noted that so far there is no process to deal with recommendations from the AWG. Recommendations come to Council in different forms and he wished that there was a clear process. Currently, input is received via:

- feedback from the engagement process and engagement summary
- written summary from AWG
- Feedback from Robin or Linda on staff reports scheduled to be presented to Council

Councilor Loveday noted that AWG feedback is often not based on preference but on safety and that such input needs to be considered on a different level. This needs to be recognized within the feedback process and enshrined in the AWG's Terms of Reference.

Councillor Loveday and Councillor Thornton-Joe work to get items into budget (Capital or Operating), but noted that the pollinating discussion, for example, doesn't fit into a clear location. That topic may have to be part of a Strategic Plan discussion.

Councillor Thornton-Joe and Councillor Loveday do their best to find where AWG issues/recommendations/requests fit in the process but this fit is sometimes not evident.

Robin noted that AWG recommendations are under reported in Accessibility Impact Statements and that City policy changes are needed.

The AWG January 2017 Report resulted in a recommendation to include Accessibility Impact Statements in staff reports.

AWG provided a recommendation in November 2017 that staff develop policy on how to write Impact statements.

Councillor Loveday indicated that Council would have to direct staff to develop this policy directly through a Quarterly Review or it would be incorporated into the Accessibility Framework.

Action: Linda and Robin to send all outstanding motions to Councillor Loveday, and Councillor Thornton-Joe, to put in front of Council for consideration.

Currently AWG Council liaisons are taking more items informally to Council for discussion/consideration. The recent Statement of Commitment was a good example of an issue that was forwarded to Council for consideration and was approved by Council.

An accessibility primer should be required for people coming to present at AWG – this may enable people to be better equipped to present and receive information from AWG.

Action: Paul and Steve to draft a document on this in the next few weeks.

C. UPGRADE OF SIDEWALKS FOR WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

Brad is awaiting information from BC Transit on the technical specifications for the in-bus ramps. Steve noted that every bus stops at City Hall, but fewer buses stop at the Chapters/Bay Centre bus zone.

AWG recommends upgrading the two bus zones, in the following order of priority:

- 1. City Hall**
- 2. Bay Centre**

D. ROYAL ATHLETIC PARK ACCESSIBILITY UPGRADES

No update from Chaz Whipp at this time.

Action: Brad will seek an update from Chaz for the March meeting.

E. PILOT PROJECT UPDATES:

- Toronto had a thorough evaluation process for truncated domes – this should be used for the upcoming trial.
- AWG members requested receiving notification on both pilot installations (Accessible Pedestrian Signals, truncated domes), to spread the word, get the message out to constituents, media, etc.

F. ACCESSIBILITY FRAMEWORK TERMS OF REFERENCE:

Most of Robin's input is being incorporated into the draft Terms of Reference

Robin went through a number of points to be incorporated into TOR for accessibility framework (the 7 points from her Jan 30 email). Brad reported that these were received favourably by Fraser Works.

AWG agreed that it is important to have staff accessibility awareness training in 2018 and that this should be a priority deliverable. Robin suggested a targeted education seminar to staff & Council, as well as public contact staff and new employees.

AWG members wondered if a staff-wide training program could be fully implemented in 2018. Staff noted that this may be ambitious, given the timelines for the development of the framework.

Action: Brad will raise with Fraser, the inclusion of accessibility training as a priority deliverable

Brad outlined a desired timeline for the contracting process: RFP out by the beginning of March and contractor retained by the end of March.

G. BALANCING POLLINATOR HABITAT AND ALLERGY-REDUCED PLANTINGS – conversation with the Urban Food Table deferred to April meeting

Items to be discussed then could include a motion to reduce allergenic plantings next to playgrounds. This item is resulting from a Council motion to have both parties meet & share information/positions.

Robin noted that we need the advice of horticulturalists & arborists, and that the answer lies in biology, not policy. In addition to representatives of the Urban Food Table, Parks staff will also be in attendance.

H. CRYSTAL POOL:

Linda spoke with Doug Nutting from RIV about the process to date, and offered the following:

- Recreation Integration Victoria (RIV) has been **very** involved in process, and have raised issues similar to the ones expressed by AWG
- Linda was reassured / fairly optimistic
 - Crystal Pool consultation will be held at March meeting. Linda has invited Doug Nutting to attend.

I. CLERK'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE PROJECT UPDATE

Robin & Paul are working on a document. AWG members discussed whether the AWG should be something other than an advisory committee. Currently, AWG's concept and what the clerk has previously proposed are far apart.

Overarching Policy and Terms of Reference

- is the clerks mandate no longer active?

Brad indicated there was nothing to suggest the policy work is no longer required. He also noted that staff are anxious to complete the Terms of Reference for the Accessibility Framework.

Robin noted that there doesn't seem to be any priority to get the advisory committee governance work completed. Clarity is needed on the direction where this work is going.

The document previously prepared by AWG is now quite dated – AWG would have to amend things substantially to function as an advisory committee.

AWG kind of feels lost, given the lack of communications from the clerk.

Action: Linda to discuss follow up with CLERK with Councillor Loveday.

j. Survey – Brad reported that no further action has taken place regarding the analysis of the survey results. He is considering whether this should be included in the Accessibility Framework or whether an outside service such as Malatest should be contracted.

5. NEW BUSINESS

Website re-vamp/accessibility consultation to be scheduled

6. NEXT MEETING

Monday, March 5, 2018

7. ADJOURNMENT