



AMENDED MINUTES – ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

October 11, 2022, 4:30 P.M.
VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

The City of Victoria is located on the homelands of the Songhees and Esquimalt People

PRESENT: S. Jennings (Chair), L. Bartram, C. Marks, P. Singh, J. Scott,
C. Paisley, N. Moss

ABSENT: S. Hough (Co-Chair), D. Sands

COUNCIL LIAISON: Councillor Potts

STAFF PRESENT: A. Galiev – Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Lead, J. Dutton –
Senior Planner of Social Policy, B. Roder – Committee
Secretary

A. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

B. Land Acknowledgement

The Chair acknowledged the City of Victoria is located on the homelands of the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations communities, and thanked them for allowing us to live, work and play on their lands.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved By L. Bartram
Seconded By J. Scott

That the agenda be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

F.1 **Presentation from Jayne Ducker – Director, Engagement - Accessibility Directorate (BC Ministry of Social Development & Poverty Reduction) on accessibility requirements for municipalities (30 minutes plus questions)**

J. Ducker, Director of Engagement – Accessibility Directorate, provided a presentation to the Committee regarding the Accessible British Columbia Act and answered questions from the Committee.

Committee discussed the following:

1. *Disability Alliance BC's fund distributions*

2. *How individuals can find out about the requirements in their own municipality or community*
3. *Local governments have until September 1, 2023 to meet compliance*

D. READING OF MINUTES

D.1 Minutes from the meeting held September 13, 2022

Moved By C. Marks
Seconded By L. Bartram

The following revisions were made to the September 13, 2022, minutes:

E. 2. Process of distribution of completed monthly minutes

Replace paragraph with:

The Committee discussed the process of distribution of completed monthly *****minutes****. The Chair requested clarification on the process and was provided information by the Committee Secretary. *****Staff will look further into how the current process could be made more accessible and efficient****.

F.5 Scent free & pet restriction policies in City buildings

Replace bullet 3 with:

3. *****Contrary to the written report from staff read at the meeting, the Accessibility Working Group did not have an opportunity to review the policy and did not adopt it prior to it being put into practice by the City****

Move bullet 9 to separate paragraph:

Committee requested for staff to present on the scent free policy.

F.6. “To Do” List

Replace sentence with:

Committee recognizes that the official Terms of Reference cannot be revised until the new committee structure is in place. They wish however, to discuss them with the new members as they are out of date and do not accurately reflect what the committee is actually working on. The committee also noted that the website still indicates that the Terms of Reference will be updated based on the motion passed earlier this year and perhaps this should be removed from the site.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

E. Remarks from the Chair

The Chair expressed her appreciation for the Committee's efforts and looks forward to the work to come in 2023.

F. Business Arising

F.2 Scent reduction & pet restrictions policies in City buildings

- **What type of questions is the committee interested in asking the city administration on this topic**

Committee discussed the following:

1. *Since this issue was raised by the Accessibility Working Group (AWG) 7 years ago, changes have been made to City procedures, including the types of cleaning products used in City facilities*
2. *The AWG's and now AAC's intention of such a policy is for scent reduction in city buildings rather than achieving a scent free environment as this is probably not possible to accomplish.*
3. *The City's current scent free policy was originally created for employees, and it appears to have been slightly modified to apply to the public after this issue was raised by AWG*
4. *AAC noted that the current scent free policy was not brought forward to either AWG or AAC for feedback as is required by the Accessibility Framework before it was deemed on the Short-Term Action Plan as being complete*
5. *There are members of the public who are not able to attend City facilities as the current policy is not strong enough*
6. *The current policy takes a Reactive rather than a proactive approach*
7. *AAC members provided the following questions regarding the current policy and poster as requested:*
 - a. *What level of engagement is the city planning to have with the AAC regarding this issue?*
 - b. *This policy focuses on protecting employees with sensitivities. What measures are included in the policy to protect the public which was the main concern when AWG brought this issue to the city's attention several years ago?*
 - c. *Where can the public find this policy? Is it on the website?*
 - d. *The policy is for all city facilities. How would the public find out which venues this includes as the policy does not list the facilities?*
 - e. *The policy indicates it applies to visitors and presumably this is the general public. What roles and responsibilities do visitors/the public have and how are these communicated as they are not included in the policy.*
 - f. *What recourse does the public have if this policy is not followed by other members of the public?*
 - g. *Who can the public contact to ask for accommodations or report a concern?*
 - h. *If someone is reported to be wearing highly scented products, would they be asked to leave the facility?*
 - i. *What steps does the city plan to take to educate the public?*
 - j. *Why can employees not Self identify as having a scent sensitivity rather than having to provide a medical note?*
 - k. *Why has the city chosen to take a soft approach with the poster wording? The poster only states "be considerate" and "avoid use of*

scented products wherever possible". Why does the poster not say "to refrain from using or wearing scented products" as is stated in the policy?

- l. What are the exceptions implied by the phrase on the poster "whenever possible" and who will determine what is "possible"?*
- m. The poster states "may affect a person's comfort, and for some people, scented products may present a health hazard". Why does the poster say "may" when it should just say something like "scented products are a health hazard to some people" as this is a proven fact?*
- n. Where are these posters to be posted?*
- o. Why has implementation of a pet free policy not been considered despite this issue being raised 7 years ago?*
- p. Why are some City facilities pet free and how was this determined?*

The Committee agreed to move the pet restriction policy to the March 2023 meeting.

G. NEW BUSINESS

G.1 International Day for People with Disabilities

The Chair suggested that the Committee allocate funds to host an event promoting International Day for People with Disabilities, December 3, 2022. The Committee formed a subcommittee consisting of members, N. Moss, P. Singh, and S. Jennings, with staff support from the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Lead, and Senior Planner, to further discuss opportunities.

Committee discussed the following:

- 1. Proposed submitting a proclamation to Council*
- 2. This year's theme is 'Not All Disabilities are Visible'*
- 3. Focus on educating the public*
- 4. Suggested setting up a booth to provide information, including educational material*
- 5. Suggested an online open house, or a panel for the Committee to share their lived experiences*
- 6. City host a training and education session for staff and new Council members*
- 7. Inclusion of mental health*
- 8. What kind of message does the Committee want to share?*
- 9. Provide a delegation to Council*

Councillor Potts recommended a town hall, partnering with other organizations, and/or meeting with local media.

Staff recommended incorporating the event with the December Committee meeting, and/or inquiring with other jurisdictions for collaboration opportunities.

N. Moss left the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

G.3 AAC representation in broader community (promotional material)

The Chair discussed the importance of Committee brand awareness, and she suggested business cards and more involvement in City events.

Committee discussed how the usage of a public feedback mechanism can help to promote awareness of the Committee and their work.

G.2 Informal discussion on Terms of Reference

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Lead noted that a revision of the Terms of Reference will take place after the Governance Review.

For the sake of the new AAC members, the committee discussed how the current terms of reference do not reflect what AAC is actually doing. Some of the items listed in the mandate have been completed and some are not relevant. This list is heavily weighted towards meeting the City's needs and the ability for persons with access needs to raise their accessibility concerns through AAC members is missing. A draft with an updated mandate has been shared.

H. Next Meeting Agenda & Date – November 8, 2022

J. ADJOURNMENT

The Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.