



MINUTES – ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

February 13, 2024, 4:16 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 1 CENTENNIAL SQUARE
The City of Victoria is located on the homelands of the Songhees and Esquimalt People.
Meeting conducted electronically via Zoom and in-person

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

STAFF: A. Galiev - Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Lead, A. Mahimwalla – Senior Cultural Planner, A. Klus – Legislative Coordinator, A. Heimbürger – Legislative Coordinator

A. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:16 p.m.

B. Land Acknowledgement

Committee member N. Moss acknowledged that the City of Victoria is located on the homelands of the Songhees First Nation and Esquimalt First Nation 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

D. READING OF MINUTES

D.1 Minutes from the meeting held January 9, 2024

Moved By S. Hough
Seconded By C. Marks

That the minutes from the meeting held January 09, 2024 be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

E. Welcome Remarks from the Chair

The Chair expressed concerns for safety and security for those facing accessibility needs in the downtown core.

F. NEW BUSINESS

F.1 Access and Accessibility in Arts, Culture & Events (Arts, Culture and Events – City of Victoria)

Committee received a verbal presentation from the Senior Cultural Planner with Arts, Culture, and Events Division, and were provided an overview of the program.

Committee discussed the following:

- 1. Overview of Arts, Culture, and Events program (annual grant programs such as Festival Investment Grant and Cultural Infrastructure Grant, arts initiatives – Public Arts, arts, music and culture event programming, permits and regulation, etc.)*
- 2. Importance of physical, financial, digital, cognitive accessibility within Arts, Culture and Events initiatives*
- 3. Focusing on needs of individuals with specific disabilities to ensure meaningful engagement with arts realm (tactile, audio, experiential)*
- 4. Incorporation of technology including GIS - based such as Blindsquare.*
- 5. Developing criteria for inclusion for artists with disabilities -having a broader definition to accessibility be incorporated into grant applications and scoring rubric including accessibility considerations*
- 6. Working closely with community with lived experiences and involving the AAC in arts programming.*

F.2 Chair updates (Suzan Jennings)

The Chair noted that updates were reflected in the Welcome Remarks from the Chair.

F.3 Accessibility Assessments

F.3.1. City Hall accessibility assessment – recap (Sandra Hough and others)

Committee discussed the following:

- 1. Assessment being based on the RHF new scoring methodology, and includes considerations of mind-friendly environments and technology*
- 2. The RHF scoring update also includes bonus points for specific disability groups*
- 3. Recommendations to improve wayfinding and signage for*

- persons with low vision or no vision*
- 4. Audio signals for automatic doors help with safely entering and exiting the building*
 - 5. In addition to the AAC members' assessment, the City Hall is being assessed by a RHFAC (Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification) professional*
 - 6. Interest in inviting the RHFAC professional to report on findings to the committee in the future*
 - 7. Six City employees representing Facilities, Transportation, Facilities Construction, Public Works are taking RHF training that covers topics on universal design and meaningful access.*
 - 8. Next steps include considerations of soft accessibility improvements*

F.3.2. Victoria Conference Centre accessibility assessment (Equity Diversity, and Inclusion Coordinator)

The Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Lead provided a review of the VCC accessibility assessment in the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Coordinator's absence.

Committee discussed the following:

- 1. Feb 27th – field trip to VCC for assessment/field study, using a new scoring system from RHF.*
- 2. Will be joined by Facilities and VCC staff*

F.3.3. Rick Hansen Foundation certified accessibility assessment

Committee discussed the following:

- 1. Continuing applying the RHFAC principles into city spaces and the built environment*
- 2. Accessibility Reserve Fund: contributed to programs including the Accessible Washrooms project, the Social Policy, Equity and Accessibility Grant program and others. Accessibility improvements are now part of capital project planning and built into existing capital project budgets.*

F.4 BlindSquare – TransCanada Trail/CNIB project update

Committee discussed the following:

- 1. A navigation (step-by-step) app that addresses needs of blind community on the Trans Canada Trail section (9km of trail)*
- 2. Will provide more accessible navigation, potentially incorporate secondary messages on arts and culture and will be universally designed*
- 3. AAC will have an opportunity to provide feedback*

F.5 Community roundtable (Suzann)

Committee discussed the following:

1. *Importance of consideration for visual impairments in accessible infrastructure design*
2. *Provincial Government's Passenger Transportation Accessibility Program*
 - a. *Funding available under program*
 - b. *Eligibility of applicants*
 - c. *Current participation of taxi operators in Province's TaxiSaver program*
3. *Welcoming City Conference*
 - a. *February 28 – 29, 2024*
 - b. *Held at City Hall from 2:30 p.m.- 6:30 p.m.*
4. *Accessible taxi services*
 - a. *Disconnect between dispatch and service to provide accessible rides*
 - b. *Potential for service audits to be completed on taxi operators*
5. *BC Transit's Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC)*
6. *Accessible housing*
 - a. *BC Housing funding concerns*
 - b. *Financial barriers for individuals seeking accessible accommodation*
7. *Changes to provincial accessibility legislation (late 2024 / early 2025)*

G. Next Meeting Agenda & Date – March 12, 2024

H. Adjournment

The Committee, by unanimous consent, adjourned the meeting at 5:53 p.m.