



## MINUTES – ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

July 11, 2023, 4:30 P.M.

The City of Victoria is located on the homelands of the Songhees and Esquimalt People  
Meeting conducted electronically via Zoom

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

STAFF PRESENT: A. Galiev – Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Lead, L. Berndt – Manager of Energy & Climate Action, S. Mackenzie – Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator, B. Roder – Committee Secretary

### A. Call to Order

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

### B. Land Acknowledgement

The Committee acknowledged that 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** J. Scott  
**Seconded By** N. Moss

That the agenda be approved.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

### D. READING OF MINUTES

#### D.1 **Minutes from the meeting held June 13, 2023**

**Moved By** L. Bartram  
**Seconded By** J. Scott

That the minutes from the meeting held June 13, 2023 to be adopted with the following revisions:

#### F.1 **Accessible Washrooms presentation (Construction and Facilities Management)**

Committee received a presentation from Bert Fawdrey, Senior Planner, regarding Accessible Washrooms in the City and new projects and

improvements that are underway, including a multi-year program to renew all 18 park washrooms to upgrade accessibility features.

*Committee discussed the following:*

1. *Sidewalk washrooms in the City and specific features of the washroom design*
2. *Accessibility features in washrooms, including the following:*
  - a. *Adequate door width*
  - b. *Five-foot turning radius*
  - c. *Toilet location, height, and backrest*
  - d. *Required grab bars*
  - e. *Contrasting colours for contact points*
  - f. *High-contrast signage with braille*
  - g. *An additional handle on the inside of the door*
  - h. *More vibrant colours on the exterior of the structure*
  - i. *Contact information for maintenance to be included*
3. *The washroom design will not address the accessibility need for access to water inside the washroom or the challenge of the need for a sideways approach to the water access on the outside for some wheelchair users. The committee requested that these design shortcomings be passed on by the City to the manufacturer and that future acquisitions of sidewalk washrooms address these accessibility needs.*
4. *Changes to accessible public washrooms in parks based on prior feedback*

## **F.2 Chair's Updates:**

### **F.2.a. Accessibility events in the region and nationally**

*Committee watched a video regarding accessible spots and features in and around the City of Victoria from Tourism Vancouver Island. The Chair delivered an update on recent accessibility events in the region and across Canada, as well as national policies and projects regarding accessibility that are currently underway.*

## **F.3. Committee Roundtable**

*Committee discussed the following:*

1. *The process for delivering feedback to the City regarding public spaces*
2. *Proposed accessibility features for Centennial Square upgrade including*
  - *concerns raised by the former accessibility committee regarding safe access to the Douglas sidewalk adjacent to Centennial Square for those in wheelchairs using the bus ramp (the angle was very steep). This may have been addressed by the introduction of new kneeling buses*
  - *the potential for the Committee to receive a presentation from staff in the future*

3. *Infrastructure changes that could promote accessibility within the City*
4. *Action log and upcoming presentations for the Committee from staff, including presentations from the Legislative Services and Transportation departments*
5. *Sidewalk sign (sandwich boards) placement from an accessibility perspective; ensuring that portable signs are licensed and not creating a barrier or hazard for pedestrians with disabilities maneuvering along the sidewalk*
6. *The Connecting with the summer program 'Feet on the Street' regarding accessibility*
7. *Potential ideas for an educational program or policy regarding businesses storing items in public washrooms impeding accessibility*

### **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

#### **E. Chair Remarks**

The Chair expressed her appreciation for the efforts of the Committee and encouraged all members to continue participating to the best of their ability.

*C. Marks joined the meeting at 4:37 p.m.*

#### **F. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **F.1 EV Charging Cord Cover Licensing (Public Works- Energy and Climate Action). Level of Engagement - Consultation**

The Committee received a presentation from the Manager of Energy and Climate Action regarding a proposed bylaw that would allow curbside EV charging in residential neighbourhoods.

*S. Hough joined the meeting at 4:50 p.m.*

*Committee discussed the following:*

1. *The EV chargers' temporary use while a vehicle is being charged, and is intended to be removed from the sidewalk when it is not in use*
2. *How to ensure the cord cover is secured to the pavement*
3. *Concern for white cane users navigating over the 2cm height of the cord covers, and that it will be a tripping hazard for pedestrians using mobility aids*
4. *Committee had an interest in testing the cord cover with a variety of mobility aids*
5. *Inquired about whether Vancouver had reached out to their accessibility advisory committee to receive feedback on their project implementation*
6. *Concern that blind people are experiencing increasing barriers to independent and safe mobility due to climate action initiatives (e.g. bike lanes) and that this initiative will potentially add another barrier in their immediate neighbourhoods*

7. *Suggestion that charging be conducted during specific hours of the day (ex. 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.)*
8. *Concern for the temporary nature of the cord cover, and whether poor placement could increase the tripping hazard*
9. *Suggested alternative options, such as cords that run overhead, underground, or on the outer edge of the sidewalk*
10. *Cautious that this initiative is a hinderance to individuals with mobility issues and/or disabilities*
11. *Exploring options with BC Hydro to use their existing light poles, but will not be available in the near future*
12. *Suggested charging stations in parks and public places*
13. *Cost concerns involved in embedding the cord into the sidewalk*
14. *This initiative does not comply with the Accessible BC Act as it is potentially creating a barrier*
15. *Inquired about how the City will enforce cord cover usage to ensure they are put down properly and removed when not in use*
16. *If the cord cover is not secured, it may get caught on wheelchairs and drag*
17. *Used the cord covers at the fair grounds as an example for why it is a safety concern and hazard for wheelchairs*
18. *Suggested installing a groove in the sidewalk with a grate overtop to lay the cord in*
19. *Requested that charging for powerchairs and scooters be included*
20. *Requested that research be collected from BC and across Canada regarding the usage of EV cord covers, and how they have been adapted to be more accessible*

## **F.2. Community Roundtable**

J. Scott expressed his enthusiasm for becoming the Program Manager for the WorkAble Program with the Province of BC, and has offered to provide a presentation to the Committee at a future meeting.

P. Singh is working with BC Greens, and was involved in the recent Langford/ Juan de Fuca election. Being involved in the 2023 Pride Parade, she expressed her enjoyment in participating and looks forwards to next year's parade.

C. Paisley spoke in opposition to a trial for the EV cord covers, as she disagrees with the project initiative. She expressed that she believes that the Committee should be consulted at the early stages of City projects. Additionally, she requested that staff be using the Accessibility Framework during the development stage of projects.

L. Bartram expressed the importance of the Accessibility Impact Statement on staff reports being brought to Council, as it is currently being used inconsistently. She

also mentioned the international blind community's successful efforts in advocating for electric vehicles to have an audible warning sound when moving at a slow speed and their unsuccessful efforts in Victoria to remove the safety barriers created by floating bus stops associated with the bike lane network.

N. Moss expressed that people with disabilities must continue to move forward and advocate for their community to ensure their voices are heard, and expressed the importance of considering people with mobility issues and/or disabilities in policy making decisions, treating them with equality.

**G. Next Meeting Agenda & Date – September 12, 2023**

**H. ADJOURNMENT**

**Moved By** S. Jennings  
Seconded by unanimous consent

That the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**