

ST. JOHN'S

Inclusion Advisory Committee Minutes

June 3, 2020

11:30 a.m.

Virtual

Present:

Taylor Stocks, Chair - LGBTQ2S
Councillor Deanne Stapleton, Council Representative
Debbie Ryan, CNIB
Donna Power, Metrobus/GoBus, Accessible Transit
Heidi Dixon, First Light NL
Kim Pratt Baker, Can Hard of Hearing Assoc
Margaret Tibbo, Public Rep
Megan McGie, NL Assoc for Deaf
Sarah White, Autism Society
Joby Fleming, Empower NL
Trevor Freeborn, Coalition of Persons with Disabilities

Regrets:

Dave Saunders, Public Rep
Grant Genova, NL Assoc of Architects, Universal Design
Kimberly Yetman-Dawson, Empower NL
Nancy Reid, Coalition of Persons with Disabilities
Tess Hemeon, Autism Society
Tilak Chawan, Association for New Canadians
Hope Colbourne, NL Association for Community Living

Staff:

Natalie Godden, Manager of Family & Leisure Services
Vanessa Bambrick, Acting Inclusive Services Coordinator
Trisha Rose, Fieldworker III, Inclusion Services
Shanna Fitzgerald, Legislative Assistant
Victoria Etchegary, Manager - Organizational Performance & Strategy
David Crowe, Manager - Roads

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Moved By Debbie Ryan

Seconded By Margaret Tibbo

That the agenda be adopted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

3.1 Adoption of Minutes - March 5, 2020

Moved By Debbie Ryan

Seconded By Trevor Freeborn

That the minutes of March 5, 2020 be adopted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

6. OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Inclusion Advisory Committee (IAC) Terms of Reference Review

The Advisory Committee Terms of Reference documents are reviewed every two years. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the operations and function of each committee are still aligned with its defined purpose.

As recommendations to change the IAC Terms of Reference are suggested by committee members and the general public, the Lead staff gathers them and facilitates discussion and input from the IAC. As part of this process the IAC makes recommendations to Council regarding changes to the Terms of Reference.

The current Committee Structure is made up of:

- Coalition of Persons with Disabilities NL and the four (4) organizations that they nominated during the initial creation of the IAC including:
 - Empower
 - Independent Living Resource Centre
 - Association for Community Living

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- NL Association for Deaf
- GoBus
- Staff persons representing agencies relevant to persons with disabilities and persons facing other barriers to participation in the community.
- Efforts are made to include the following sectors/areas:
 - Hearing Barriers
 - Visual Barriers
 - Developmental and cognitive barriers
 - Visible minorities and newcomers
 - Mental Health
 - Poverty
 - Indigenous and Aboriginal
 - Universal Design
 - LGBTQ
 - Physical and Neurological Disabilities
- Youth Representatives – at least one public member between the age of 19-35 years will be appointed or identified from existing IAC members
- Public Representatives – no more than 3 residents who are members of the inclusion community, their caregivers and/or persons facing other barriers.

Although IAC members often possess expertise in more than one area/sector it has been challenging to ensure adequate representation of all the sectors/areas mentioned in the current terms of reference. The following perspectives have been identified as needing representation on the IAC or as a working group that reports to the IAC:

- Women
- Anti-racism

During discussion, the following was noted:

- Members recommended The Status of Women's Council as a women's representative. The Women's Council represent women of all diverse groups including vulnerable populations.
- Specific issues require Service NL at the working group level.
- A public request was received for anti-racism perspective to be represented on the Panel. After discussion, members agreed that a public representative be an individual with lived experience and a broad understanding/knowledge of anti-racism/racism in our community. The committee felt that it was important that the anti-racism representative be an individual with the freedom to discuss broader difficult issues. It was recommended that contact be made with the Anti-racism Coalition NL, the Association for New Canadians, and the Women's Multicultural Association to encourage individuals with lived experience to apply.
- The youth perspective should be considered. Under 35 is represented on the Committee by Taylor Stocks at this time. Joint meetings with the Youth Advisory Committee or the Youth Engagement Action Team as well as the Seniors Advisory Committee were suggested.
- The poverty lens is partly represented by Empower and some of the other cross sector organizational representatives.
- To fill the mental health lens, the Canadian Mental Health Association was recommended to appoint a representative on the Panel. This would be an organizational representative term position.
- Secondary lived experience should be captured in the application for new members.
- Number of public residents must increase in the terms of reference.

The Committee reviewed the proposed changes to the terms of reference as presented by the Manager of Family and Leisure Services and following discussion a motion was proposed:

Recommendation

Moved By Joby Fleming

Seconded By Margaret Tibbo

That Council approve the following changes to the IAC Terms of Reference:

Under Section 3.1 Composition

Change the committee composition to read:

The Advisory Committee will be comprised of a minimum of 11 and a maximum of 18 total members from the following stakeholder groups:

The Committee will be comprised of no more than 10 staff persons/board members representing agencies relevant to persons with disabilities and persons facing other barriers as follows:

1. Coalition of Persons with Disabilities NL (CODNL)
2. Empower
3. Association for Community Living
4. NL Association for the Deaf (NLAD)
5. GoBus (Metrobus)
6. CNIB
7. Autism Society NL
8. Canadian hard of Hearing Association - NL
9. Association for New Canadians
10. First Light NL

Representatives of seven (7) organizations or individuals that support persons facing other barriers to participation in the community. Efforts will be made to include the following sectors:

1. Mental Health
2. Poverty
3. Universal Design/Accessibility
4. LGBTQ2S
5. Physical and Neurological Disabilities
6. Anti-Racism
7. Women

The Committee will be comprised of no more than 5 residents serving as public members who are members of the inclusion community, their caregivers and/or persons facing other barriers.

Under Section 5.2 Eligibility and Selection

Change point 2 to read:

Organizational representatives must be based in or serve/do business within the City of St. John's and have decision making authority with the agency they represent.

Under section 7.2 Meetings and Schedules

Change the meeting location to read:

Unless otherwise specified (generally one week prior to a meeting) advisory committee meetings shall be held at City facilities or via accessible video/virtual meeting platforms and shall be closed to the public

Section 7.2 Meetings and Schedules:

Unless otherwise specified advisory committee meetings shall be held at City facilities or via accessible video/virtual meeting platforms.

MOTION CARRIED

6.2 Paratransit Update June 3, 2020

Donna Power of GoBus gave an update to the Committee.

Service Levels

GoBus has seen a significant decrease in demand since the pandemic began. Ridership declined by approximately 85-90% between mid-March and May. They have seen a small increase after the move to Alert Level 4 and expect further increase as public health restrictions are relaxed.

In light of physical distancing recommendations, GoBus has primarily been providing direct travel for customers to help increase safety for both drivers and customers. They will be moving back to shared-ride service at Alert Level 3. A maximum of 5 passengers (subject to change) will be transported at a time. Every effort will be made to keep the number of passengers on board to a minimum while still completing the required number of daily trips.

Drivers are all equipped with appropriate PPE as physical distancing is often not possible. All customers are being encouraged to wear a non-medical mask/face covering when they travel on GoBus. Enhanced

cleaning/disinfecting protocols for buses that were implemented at the beginning of the pandemic will remain in place.

MVT experienced significant layoffs due to the decreased demand but staff/vehicles will be brought back as demand increases again. They will be monitoring demand closely as things progress.

They will continue to provide information to customers as any changes are implemented.

Eligibility Assessments

All assessments since mid-March have been rescheduled but anticipate being able to resume scheduling assessments at Alert Level 3 (pending confirmation). Horizon will advise people of any COVID-related procedures they need to be aware of at the time of booking.

6.3 Engagement & Communication Presentation/Discussion

Committee Chair, Taylor Stocks, updated members on a working group meeting that took place on May 22, 2020. The focus of the meeting was improving engagement and communication from the IAC with the public that they represent. The Committee Chair requested input from committee members regarding this topic.

During discussion, the following was noted:

- Members could attend Council meetings to speak to items brought forward from the Inclusion Committee.
- There is ongoing inclusion training through City departments.
- There should be development of accessible documents, images and/or videos that capture the conversations within the committee to be communicated to the populations represented on the Committee as well as Council, City departments, and the public.
- Creation of accessible documents and graphics that can be shared around that are easily understood by all people would improve the visibility of the Inclusion Advisory Committee.
- There is opportunity to develop communication tools that serve everyone.
- Expertise will be required for descriptive video/audio and ASL.

The Chair suggested the formation of a small working group to discuss how to make engagement and communications more visible. This working group will report back to the Committee. It was requested that members recommend technical and artistic people who can translate information into a universal language. The working group will be led by Taylor and comprised of Debbie and Trevor. The group was invited to suggest members outside the Committee with a technical or artistic background or other related expertise by email to Natalie and Taylor.

6.4 Sidewalk Snow Clearing Public Engagement

Victoria Etchegary, Manager of Organizational Performance and Strategy and David Crowe, Manager of Roads joined the Committee to discuss sidewalk snow clearing public engagement with the group.

There is a voice within the community advocating for improved service in sidewalk snow clearing. Messages have focused on the importance of sidewalks for those who rely primarily on active transportation and those who use public transit to get around. The key decision point for Council is how to improve the service levels in a way that is effective, i.e. there is a recognition of improvement, and the decision considers the cost of making the improvements. To make these decisions it is imperative that the City understand what the issues are, and for whom, in the current level of service and where the improvements will have the greatest impact.

From now until June 19, the City of St. John's is inviting feedback on the current and future level of service for sidewalk snow clearing. The engagement page at engagestjohns.ca includes information on current sidewalk snow clearing practices and priorities, a mapping tool where residents can add comments, and surveys for the public and the business community. The City is also meeting with key stakeholders throughout the process such as the NL English School District, Metrobus and the business community as well as the Seniors Advisory Committee and the Youth Engagement Action Team. 54 people of the approximate 700 who have filled out the survey to date have indicated they have a disability.

During discussion, the following was noted:

- The City map for the prioritization of streets is challenging and it is unknown if the mapping system is accessible to JAWS or ZoomText. Low vision or no vision cannot access a map without using a platform like JAWS or ZoomText. Victoria to review and flag that with the engagement team for an add on to those mapping tools.

- Empower host a Facebook live on Wednesdays where the public engagement page can be shared with the public and people can be advised on alternate ways to participate.
- Frequently asked questions within the engagement page are kept to a minimum so there is not too much information to review.
- Engagement can be received by email or by phone. The survey is designed to get different perspectives.
- For engagement held in MS Teams, the closed captioning is noted to be quite small and the speakers must speak clearly.
- For members with disabilities or mental health issues engagement presentations can be reviewed with smaller working groups separately where a member of the City is not present. Questions could be reviewed and answered in an environment safe for them which will allow for more engagement.
- Members can organize focus groups within their representative groups and provide group responses to the survey. Victoria will provide a link to anyone who wishes to avail of that and asked that members reach out to her directly at vetchegary@stjohns.ca.
- If there are issues participating, Victoria requested that people call 311 or email the engage email at engage@stjohns.ca so Victoria can have a one on one conversation to receive their participation.

At the conclusion of the engagement process a 'What We Heard' document will be shared publicly to assist Council and staff as they make important decisions regarding sidewalk snow clearing levels in the future. The City of St. John's will be relying more heavily on online engagement to gather feedback from the public. All news related to this project will be shared electronically via e-mail with registered participants as well as through regular City communication channels.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:40 pm.

CHAIRPERSON, TAYLOR STOCKS