



Inclusion Advisory Committee Minutes

October 7, 2020

11:30 a.m.

Virtual

Present:

Taylor Stocks, Chair - LGBTQ2S
Mayor Danny Breen
Councillor Deanne Stapleton, Council Representative
Debbie Ryan, CNIB
Duane Morgan, CNIB
Donna Power, Metrobus/GoBus, Accessible Transit
Margaret Tibbo, Public Representative
Megan McGie, NL Association for the Deaf
Sarah White, Autism Society
Grant Genova, NL Association of Architects, Universal Design
Kimberly Yetman-Dawson, Empower NL
Brittany Hiscock, CHHA NL
Trevor Freeborn, Coalition of Persons with Disabilities
Renata Lang, Association for New Canadians
Natalie Godden, Manager of Family & Leisure Services
Sherry Mercer, Inclusion Coordinator
Trisha Rose, Fieldworker III, Inclusion Services
Shanna Fitzgerald, Legislative Assistant

Regrets:

Heidi Dixon, First Light NL
Kim Pratt Baker, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
Joby Fleming, Empower NL
Tess Hartmann, Autism Society
Nancy Reid, Coalition of Persons with Disabilities
Hope Colbourne, NL Association for Community Living

Others:

Tina Bankovic, Empower NL (Work Term Student Observer)

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

City staff outlined accessibility features in Microsoft Teams that will allow committee members to see the ASL (sign language) interpreters as well as how to turn on the closed captioning feature and use the raise your hand feature. Attendees must enter their names before entering the meeting. Members were encouraged to update to the latest version of Microsoft Teams software to avail of all features. Inclusion staff are available to review features as needed.

When speaking to a committee member who is deaf and using an interpreter, members were reminded to speak to that committee member and not to the interpreter. All content must be forwarded to the Legislative Assistant to be distributed to the group in advance of the meeting.

There is now a call-in number available in the meeting invitation to allow for people to call in only. It was advised that the call-in number is not a local number (Toronto area code). If calling into the meeting via phone (either home or cell) it is required to have free long distance within Canada otherwise there may be a long distance fee charged for the call.

The Committee welcomed Mayor Danny Breen to the meeting.

3. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

3.1 **Adoption of the Agenda**

Moved By Kimberly Yetman-Dawson

Seconded By Margaret Tibbo

That the agenda be adopted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

4. **ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES**

4.1 **Adoption of Minutes - September 29, 2020**

Moved By Debbie Ryan

Seconded By Trevor Freeborn

That the minutes of the meeting held on September 29, 2020 be adopted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

5.1 Sidewalk Snow Clearing - Concerns from Citizen

Background "What We Heard Document" is attached. Please refer to page 28-31 in WWH Sidewalk Snow Clearing 2020 for specific reference to Inclusion.

Mayor Danny Breen addressed the Committee and thanked them for their continued work throughout the pandemic and for providing feedback to Council on important City matters. The engagement process was outlined for the members and how feedback helps form the decision-making process. The following was noted:

- During the Committee of the Whole meeting a premature motion was introduced to increase the snow clearing budget in advance of the referral to the budget consultation. The motion was not approved in the meeting, which was misinterpreted by some, as a rejection of the feedback from the engagement process.
- Sidewalk snow clearing was referred to the 2021 budget process for consideration and the feedback from engagement will be reviewed during that process. This feedback is collected from multiple sources and reviewed as part of a greater decision-making process.
- Surplus funds are available to aid in balancing the budget for 2020. By law there must be a balanced budget presented for 2021. Council must consider a number of options for balancing the budget including: tax increases, service reductions or a combination of both. The impact on the budget and taxation will need to be reviewed in context of the budget as a whole.
- 1.4 million dollars in snow clearing fleet upgrades were implemented in the Spring of 2020. The newer equipment and additional salting should improve the sidewalk snow clearing process this year. Staff is reviewing the priority system currently in place. There is commitment from Council to improve sidewalk snow clearing.
- The information in the public engagement is integrated into the recommendations from City staff. Members were reminded that the Inclusion Committee were consulted on the snow clearing routes previously and changes were made to allow for accessibility.

- The type of snow and the freeze and thaw will dictate how well the sidewalks are maintained during the winter. The Newfoundland climate creates a challenge for snow clearing.
- The Council champion on an advisory committee is not required to vote the way the committee feels they should. Council can advocate but decisions are made by Council members with all information considered.
- The message in the media on this issue is not accurate. The miscommunication has caused anxiety among members of the public.
- VOCM published a short piece on the public statement from the IAC and there was positive feedback from community members who published the letters reviewed at the previous meeting.
- Concern was expressed that in the recommendations from Public Works, the messages from public engagement are not being fully integrated in the new plans.
- People with vision loss have challenges navigating the unknown with snow and ice covered sidewalks. There is concern that people will feel further isolated than they already do this year.

The committee was encouraged to suggest ways to improve communication between the committee and Council.

5.2 Pedestrian Mall Presentation & Discussion

At the Inclusion Advisory Committee meeting of September 29, the Committee discussed the downtown pedestrian mall and was invited to submit feedback. The matter was referred for further discussion and a working group was formed to bring specific examples back to the Committee for review. The working group was comprised of Debbie Ryan (CNIB), Trevor Freeborn (CODNL), Joby Fleming (Empower NL), Duane Morgan (CNIB), Grant Genova (Universal Designs) and Taylor Stocks (Chair). The document prepared was distributed to the members for additional comment. Members were invited to add items to the list which would help expedite discussion. This document was displayed during the meeting and reviewed for continued discussion on the Pedestrian Mall.

During discussion, it was noted that Downtown St. John's are committed to working with City staff and IAC members to develop an Inclusion 101 for downtown businesses. An email will go out to people who signed up to be a part of that project. Downtown St. John's are also committed to the

Ramps Up Working Group. The Chair and the Mayor will draft a request to Service NL to ask if a member will sit on the working group to participate in those meetings. This group will address the issues regarding access into the buildings downtown.

The Panel concluded that the list compiled is comprehensive, but members will review and provide additions to the google document before noon Friday. These recommendations will be shared with the Manager of Organizational Performance and Strategy and other managers involved in the Pedestrian Mall. Members were reminded that Council passed a directive that all projects should be vetted through the IAC and they are committed to engagement on all project including the pedestrian mall. Councillor Stapleton will also share these concerns with the members of Council. The final copy of the document has been attached to the agenda for ease of reference.

Moved By Kimberly Yetman-Dawson

Seconded By Margaret Tibbo

That Council review the recommendations put forward by the Inclusion Committee for the Downtown Pedestrian Mall and share with all relevant parties. Recommendations include considering implications for those with vision loss such as wayfinding, indication of an upcoming ramp and obstacles on sidewalks; ensuring ramps meet code, are slip-resistant and lead to a deck that can be maneuvered by a wheelchair; access to accessible washrooms for Pedestrian Mall users; accessible parking located inside the mall was hazardous; and a need for inclusion education amongst business and security staff in the area.

MOTION CARRIED

6. OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Member Updates

The Committee was advised about the Be Kind campaign. The campaign poster will be emailed out to members.

CHHA launched a mask campaign to wear clear masks or masks with a clear window to aid with lipreading. Members were provided with a link to purchase masks. <https://chha-nl.ca/clear-masks-newfoundland/>

7. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:58 pm.

CHAIRPERSON, TAYLOR STOCKS