

**Nova Scotia Accessibility Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, August 10, 2021 – 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting by Zoom

Attendance: Rosalind Penfound (Chair), David Caswell (Vice-Chair), Cynthia Bruce, Linda Campbell, Birgit Elssner, Andrew Jantzen, Ellen Johnson, Marcie Shwery-Stanley, Anne Sinclair

Regrets: Jenny-Rachel Lind

Staff: Dawn Stegen (Interim Executive Director), Carla Bezanson, Lisa Jacobs, Dustin Lyons, Avery Maynard, Caroline Read Kendell, Lashauna Smith

Guests: Laurie Cranton (Chair, Built Environment Standard Development Committee), Lindsey Wadden (Chief Operating Officer, Housing Nova Scotia).

1. Welcome

Rosalind Penfound, Chair, welcomed everyone to the Accessibility Advisory Board (AAB) meeting with a Mi'kmaq land acknowledgement, acknowledgement of African Nova Scotian history in Nova Scotia and acknowledgement of Emancipation Day (August 1, 2021).

2. Board Operations

a. Review of Agenda

The Board reviewed and accepted the agenda as circulated.

b. Announcement

Rosalind Penfound advised that Jenny-Rachel Lind is resigning from the AAB, due to a move to Newfoundland and Labrador, and on behalf of the Board, extended appreciation to Jenny-Rachel for her contributions to accessibility.

c. Outstanding Business

Rosalind Penfound provided updates regarding outstanding business from the July 13, 2021 meeting. Rosalind advised that the approval of

July 13, 2021 meeting minutes was deferred to the September 21, 2021 meeting.

3. Accessibility Advisory Board

a. Recommendations on Accessibility Standards in the Built Environment

Rosalind Penfound introduced Laurie Cranton, Chair of the Built Environment Standard Development Committee. Laurie provided a high-level overview of the recommendations that were not covered in the discussion at the July 13 meeting.

The main objective of these further recommendations is to ensure schools and libraries are designed and built with accessible strategies and technologies.

Caroline Read-Kendell, Senior Policy Analyst with the Accessibility Directorate, supported the discussion, providing clarification on amendments made to some of the preliminary recommendations from the July 13, 2021 presentation and addressing questions raised by members of the Board.

Additional guidance comprised of requirements to ensure accessible elevators, seating, and paths of travel are incorporated in administration areas, outdoor spaces, and classrooms, as well as playgrounds are fully accessible to patrons, students, teachers, and parents.

Motion: Birgit Elssner moved to advise the Minister of Justice that the Accessibility Advisory Board recommends Minister accept the Phase 2 recommendations as submitted by the Built Environment Standard Development Committee with the amendments agreed upon in this meeting. Motion was seconded by Ellen Johnson. Motion carried.

b. Affordable Housing Commission Report

Rosalind Penfound introduced Lindsey Wadden, Chief Operating Officer, Housing Nova Scotia, who provided a presentation on the Affordable Housing Commission Report.

The Report was informed by extensive engagement opportunities with community and stakeholders to understand key issues. Recommendations included immediate and long-term initiatives that focus on governance changes, legislative amendments, engaging key partners and adjusting existing programs to better incentivize more affordable housing construction. Accessible housing was an important consideration. Further options and recommendations will be brought forward in subsequent submissions and will include Requests for Legislation, some of which will be advanced by other areas of government.

The Board discussed the need for increased responsiveness to address the housing crisis as well as a need for increased representation of diverse communities. The Board emphasized the need for accessible and affordable housing.

Action: The power point presentation given by L. Wadden will be shared with the AAB.

c. Monitoring and Evaluation Quarterly Report-Accessibility Act Review Update

Lisa Jacobs, Senior Policy Analyst with the Accessibility Directorate presented findings from the February 2021 public opinion survey on accessibility and disability.

Lisa also provided an update on the development of an evaluation framework informed by the Canadian Index of Wellbeing and Engage Nova Scotia's Quality of Life Survey. Lisa advised that the first step in developing this framework is to analyze the existing Engage Nova Scotia database and draw comparisons between Nova Scotians with disabilities and Nova Scotians without disabilities.

This framework, as well as the public opinion survey will be used to evaluate the success of outcomes outlined in Access by Design 2030

and evaluate the impact and reach of the Accessibility Awareness Campaign.

Lisa updated the Board that an initial Accessibility Act Review is expected to proceed in Autumn 2021.

d. External Awareness Campaign Update

This agenda item was deferred to the September 21, 2021 meeting.

4. Other Business

e. Provincial Election, Commitments

Dawn Stegen advised that the Directorate is tracking electoral candidates' platform commitments that have direct or indirect alignment with those of the Accessibility Directorate and provided some high-level commitment examples.

The Board discussed accessibility issues in relation to the provincial election, including barriers to participation and engagement. Barriers identified included built environment and policy considerations at polling stations and at a candidate's office, lack of inclusion of accessibility issues, and perspectives in campaign platforms and candidate discussions.

Action: The Directorate advised that the barriers experienced at the polling stations will be brought forward to Elections NS.

5. Adjournment

Rosalind Penfound adjourned the meeting. The next Board meeting will be held September 21, 2021.