

Nova Scotia Accessibility Advisory Board Meeting Summary

Wednesday, December 2, 2020 – 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting by Zoom

Attendance: Doug Foster (Chair), Rosalind Penfound (Vice-Chair), Barry Abbott, Cynthia Bruce, Linda Campbell, David Caswell, Gus Reed, Anne Sinclair, Marcie Shwery-Stanley

Regrets: Kevin Russell

Staff: Dawn Stegen (Interim Executive Director), Gerry Post (Strategic Advisor), Terri Lynn Almeda, Josh Bates, Lisa Jacobs, Caroline Read Kendell, Craig MacKinnon, Avery Maynard, Amy Middleton, Jenny Sears, Kristel vom Scheidt

1. Welcome

Rosalind Penfound, Vice Chair, welcomed everyone to the Accessibility Advisory Board meeting.

2. Board Operations

a. Review of Agenda

Agenda additions: Gus Reed has a proposed motion and Marcie Shwery-Stanley will update the Board on her meeting with Nova Scotia Health.

The Board reviewed and accepted the agenda with the above additions.

b. Approval of Minutes from November 17 Meeting

The Board accepted the minutes as circulated.

d. Outstanding Business

Dawn Stegen, Accessibility Directorate, provided updates regarding outstanding business from the November 17, 2020, meeting. Information on government website accessibility was shared with the

Board as requested on December 1, 2020. An overview of the Social Innovation Office was shared with the Board. The Accessibility Directorate will continue to follow-up with government officials on releasing information contained in the Stimulus Funding Briefing Note (July 2020).

3. Accessibility Advisory Board

a. Compliance & Enforcement

Josh Bates, Accessibility Directorate, presented a first draft of the compliance and enforcement framework. Many Board members commented favourably on the collaborative approach being proposed. There was some discussion that the approach will inevitably overlap with municipal and provincial regulatory functions. It was also noted that there may be a need to develop an anonymous complaints process and that this work needs to be aligned with the development of standards given the overlap.

A working group will be formed to develop the compliance and enforcement mechanisms, both in approach and in application to the standards as they become enacted. The timeframe for this work is early winter to spring 2021. There was extensive discussion of ensuring there is diverse representation on the working group, including people with intellectual disabilities, people who are blind or low vision, and people who are deaf and hearing disabled. The Accessibility Directorate will work with the Board in establishing membership of the working group.

There was also discussion about the role that will be played by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission (HRC). There are opportunities to learn from the HRC's processes (e.g. data on complaints relating to disability) and for the HRC to learn from the Accessibility Directorate (e.g. updating their learning materials relating to equity for persons with disabilities).

Some Board members discussed the need for incentives or supports to promote compliance such as training, grants, etc. There was detailed discussion on the need to be mindful of the impacts on public

sector bodies and businesses with respect to workload and administrative costs of enforcement.

b. Next Standard Area Recommendations

Avery Maynard, Accessibility Directorate, presented an analysis and findings on what the next standard areas should be.

A number of Board members expressed initial support for the recommendation of Goods & Services and Employment as the next two standards areas. One Board member emphasized the importance of transportation. Many Board members said that the criteria of a standard's positive impact on increasing accessibility should have greater weight than the amount of resources required to implement and meet the standards, and it was recognized that each standard area is important and will begin over the next four years. The Board noted that the lack of research currently available on Transportation and Information and Communications should be addressed before the standards work begins. One Board member noted that there may be the need for other standards to be developed as well.

The Board requested that the assessment consider other factors such as safety, prosperity, the social determinants of health and the Well-Being Index initiative of Engage Nova Scotia. The discussion will continue at the January 2021 board meeting where a decision will be made.

c. Standard Development Committee Rapid Process Evaluation Results

Lisa Jacobs, Accessibility Directorate, presented the findings from the rapid process evaluation of the standards development process for Built Environment and Education standards. Board members will receive a copy of the report for review. Overall, the findings are positive and there are areas for improvement related to the recruitment of standard development committee members, community consultations, and meeting formats. An overview of the findings will be included in the 2019-2020 Board Report to the Minister of Justice.

The Board is pleased to have the evaluation completed and to use it to improve the standards development processes moving forward. One Board member suggested that facilitation training could be provided to persons with disabilities who wanted to develop skills and confidence in this area.

d. AAB Workplan & Transition

Rosalind Penfound, Vice Chair, led a discussion about AAB agenda items for the remaining two Board meetings. Board terms for all members but one will end in February 2021 so investing in Board capacity building should occur once the new Board is in place. Housing is as an important issue and staff can conduct background research to help the Board frame the issue and decide on potential speakers.

Motion: Gus Reed moved the following: In order to assess whether the provision of services to and employment of people in sheltered workshops are consistent with the purpose of this Act, the Accessibility Advisory Board invite the Deputy Minister of Community Services to attend the January or February 2020 board meeting to discuss the workings of the Disability Services Program, and in particular the general situation of people with intellectual disabilities within the program and sheltered workshops, including the code of ethics and behavior for staff and clients, the progress of Goal 2: Modernized Supports and Services in the *Roadmap for Transforming the Nova Scotia Services to Persons with Disabilities Program*, minimum wage standards, and fiduciary responsibilities (Registered Disability Savings Plans). Motion was seconded by Doug Foster. Motion approved unanimously.

Action: The Accessibility Directorate will contact Community Services to explore the availability of the Deputy Minister and appropriate staff in January or February 2020.

4. Accessibility Directorate Update

a. Updates on current Directorate activities

Dawn Stegen, Interim Executive Director, Accessibility Directorate, presented updates from the Accessibility Directorate.

The Minister of Justice has been briefed on the awareness campaign and approved moving forward with concepts two and three. The Minister was also briefed on approximately 90 applications to the Accessibility Advisory Board. A recommendation by Minister will be made by mid December 2020.

Marcie Shwery-Stanley asked the Directorate about tracking funding relating to initiatives for persons with disabilities. The Accessibility Directorate does not track this, but it does do media scans relating to disability. Community Sector Council - NS maintains a list of COVID-19 related funding programs for nonprofit groups at www.csc-ns.ca, and the Directorate has access to federal and provincial funding initiatives through Intergovernmental Affairs.

5. Other Business

Marcie Shwery-Stanley updated the Board on a meeting she had with the Nova Scotia Health to discuss COVID-19 from a disability lens.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday, January 21, 2021. An additional meeting will be scheduled for Wednesday, February 3, 2021. Agendas will be determined based on the availability of the Minister and/or the Deputy Minister of Community Services.

7. Adjournment

Rosalind Penfound adjourned the meeting.