

# Nova Scotia Accessibility Advisory Board Meeting Summary

Friday, January 31, 2020, 10:00 am – 3:30 pm

Room A238, NSCC Institute of Technology Campus, 5685 Leeds Street, Halifax

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## Attendance

**Board:** Doug Foster (Chair), Rosalind Penfound (Vice-Chair), Barry Abbott, Cynthia Bruce, Linda Campbell, David Caswell, Alex Peeler, Gus Reed, Kevin Russell, Anne Sinclair

**Regrets:** Marcie Shwery-Stanley

**Staff:** Gerry Post (Executive Director), Donna Chislett, Craig MacKinnon, Amy Middleton, Caroline Read Kendell, Kristel Vom Scheidt

**Regrets:** Terri Lynn Almeda, Jenny Sears

## 1. Welcome

Doug Foster, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## 2. Board Operations

### a. Review of Agenda

The Board reviewed the agenda and noted that the meeting date of the Minutes to be approved was incorrect and should be changed to November 29, 2019. The Board accepted the agenda as amended.

### b. Approval of Minutes from November 29, 2019 Meeting

**Motion:** Cynthia Bruce moved to approve the minutes of the November 29, 2019 meeting. Alex Peeler seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

### c. Review Draft 2020-2021 Work Plan

The Board reviewed the draft workplan, including the work underway that will continue into 2020-2021, such as the built environment and education standards, and the monitoring and reporting program. The Board discussed plans for an annual meeting with the Minister and the importance of prioritizing areas of work. The Board will further discuss their priorities as they continue to develop their 2020-2021 work plan.

## 3. Standard Development

### a. Built Environment

Laurie Cranton, Chair, Built Environment Standard Development Committee, provided an overview of the committee's work. The committee has held two meetings since the last update to the Board. In December, the committee reviewed draft standard recommendations for six topics: emergency systems, accessible parking, site selection, pedestrian facilities, wayfinding and signage, and exterior approaches. Additionally, they received a presentation on the consultation about proposed changes to the National Building Code, and a presentation on parks and recreation. In January, the committee reviewed the

revised recommendations from the December meeting, and discussed in detail the recommendations for the remaining four topics: interiors, washrooms, housing and residences, and parks and recreation. The committee has completed draft recommendations for Phase 1 of the standard development process. Consultations on the draft recommendations will be held in March 2020, and the committee received an overview of the upcoming consultations.

## **b. Education**

Rosalind Penfound, Chair, Education Standard Development Committee, provided an overview of the committee's work. The Education SDC has completed their first full draft of recommendations, which include imperatives for success (conditions that must exist for the commitments to be implemented) and foundational commitments the education system must enact in order to realize equitable access to education as a fundamental human right. Commitments are being recommended in the areas of capacity building, teaching and learning, accessibility services, research, accountability, and communication and navigation. This foundational framework will inform the development of more specific recommendations for standards in the next phase of work. At the last meeting, the SDC discussed what they will recommend to government regarding implementing these commitments – i.e. whether they should become regulations or guidelines or something else. They will be discussing further after the consultations.

## **4. Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan**

### **a. Lands and Forestry**

Julie Towers, Deputy Minister, Department of Lands and Forestry, provided a presentation on accessibility initiatives in provincial parks. The Department has completed accessibility audits of campgrounds, district offices, and day use parks, and has developed renovation plans based on these audits. The Board discussed signage in parks and at trails, as well as events that are hosted at parks and trails, including options for making these events accessible as well.

## **5. Board Operations (continued)**

### **a. MoveIt – Shared Folder**

Kristel vom Scheidt, Accessibility Directorate, provided an overview of the file sharing website that the board will use to access, and share documents. Board members now have accounts and can access Board materials on the site.

## **6. Collaboration and Support**

### **a. Rural Transportation Association – Accessible Transportation Assistance Program**

Susan Taylor and Jessie Greenough, Rural Transportation Association (RTA), provided an overview of the RTA, current issues and recommended changes to the Accessible Transportation Assistance Program (ATAP). The RTA currently has 19 organizations across the province that provide rural, pre-booked, door-to-door transportation services in their communities. Clients with mobility issues who do not use a wheelchair experience barriers entering and exiting the wheelchair accessible vehicles because the vehicles are higher off the ground, have dropped floors, and the running boards can be trip hazards. The RTA has noted that non-accessible vans work best for clients with mobility issues who do not use

wheelchairs, which is a significant portion of their clientele. The RTA is recommending a change in ATAP program criteria so that they can maintain the current number of accessible vehicles and that any additions to the fleets are at the discretion of the service provider, to enable them to purchase the vehicles that best meet the needs of their clients. The RTA is seeking the Board's support of the recommended change. The Board agreed to consider the request and will respond to the RTA.

## **7. Awareness and Communications**

### **a. Awareness Campaign**

Working with Communications Nova Scotia, the Accessibility Directorate has engaged Arrivals + Departures to support the development and execution of an awareness campaign that will highlight the barriers that exist for persons with disabilities, create awareness that accessibility is a human right, and provide information about the Accessibility Act and Government's commitment and progress toward accessibility. Martin Delaney and Jennifer Sutherland, Arrivals + Departures, provided an overview of the project and consulted with Board members to inform the development of the campaign. The Board provided input around the challenges and opportunities for consideration in development of the campaign, the target audience, key messages, and ensuring there is first voice involvement throughout the campaign.

## **8. Accessibility Directorate Update**

Gerry Post, Accessibility Directorate, provided an update on several activities, including: in December, the Directorate released toolkits to provide information and guidance to prescribed public sector bodies on developing accessibility plans and establishing accessibility advisory committees; Phillip Rizcallah, Canadian Accessibility Standards Development Organization, did a presentation to the community on federal research funding opportunities; and the provincial post-secondary accessibility framework, developed collaboratively by post-secondary institutions and Nova Scotia Community College, which will be submitted to the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents for endorsement in the coming weeks.

## **9. Monitoring and Evaluation**

David Caswell, Accessibility Advisory Board, provided an update on the procurement process for the monitoring and reporting program. The Sub-Committee has reviewed the four proposals received and recommended a vendor. Once the vendor has accepted the contract, work will begin to develop an evaluation framework, and develop and implement a monitoring and reporting program for 2019-2020.

## **10. Other Business**

The Board requested the selection of the next area of standards development be added to the upcoming agenda for discussion.

## **11. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned.