

Nova Scotia Accessibility Advisory Board Meeting Summary

June 11, 2020, 10:00 am – 3:30 pm

Virtual Meeting By Zoom

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

Staff: Dawn Stegen (Interim Executive Director), Gerry Post (Leadership Transition), Terri Lynn Almeda, Amy Middleton, Caroline Read Kendell, Jenny Sears, Carla Bezanson

1. **Welcome**

Rosalind Penfound, Vice-Chair, chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone to the first virtual Accessibility Advisory Board meeting.

Dawn Stegen was introduced as Interim Executive Director, and provided an overview of her experience in accessibility work through her previous role with the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

2. **Board Operations**

a. **Review of Agenda**

The Board reviewed and accepted the agenda.

b. **Approval of Minutes from January 31, 2020 Meeting**

Motion: Cynthia Bruce moved to approve the minutes of the January 31, 2020 meeting. David Caswell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

c. **Approval of Minutes from May 5, 2020 Email Meeting**

Motion: Cynthia Bruce moved to approve the minutes of the May 5, 2020 email meeting. Linda Campbell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

d. **Monitoring and Reporting Program Update**

Terri Lynn Almeda, Accessibility Advisory Board, advised that the monitoring and reporting program work plan has been impacted by the pandemic and provided an update on the work that has been completed to date. The updated project plan with a revised scope and timeline is under development to ensure completion of this important project.

e. **2020-2021 AAB Work Plan and Priorities**

Rosalind Penfound provided an overview of the importance of work planning as a practice for Agencies, Boards and Commissions to plan for the meetings and topics over the coming year.

Terri Lynn Almeda, Accessibility Directorate, thanked Board members for their comments provided by email regarding the draft work plan and for providing their suggestions for additional potential priorities. The Board reviewed the updated draft work plan and the list of potential priorities, as well as work underway, including standards development, awareness and capacity building, evaluation and monitoring, and collaboration and support. The Board noted that their work plan is reviewed at each meeting to update as needed and agreed that presentations and discussions from Deputy Ministers is a priority, with an interest in inviting the new Department of Justice Deputy Minister to meet with the Board soon.

The Board agreed to hold half-day virtual meetings monthly throughout the summer and fall, with two meetings in July to review the recommendations from the Standard Development Committees.

The Board discussed the importance of diversity and representation from visible minority groups on the Board and Standard Development Committees, and agreed that the Board would work with Directorate staff to identify recruitment strategies.

The Board also discussed their role and mandate, including their focus on recommendations on accessibility standards as well as assessing existing measures, policies, practices, and requirements. As there are a number of additional potential priorities, the Board agreed to review further in advance of a discussion at an upcoming meeting.

Action: The Accessibility Directorate will develop a format to assist Board members to complete an individual review of the potential priorities.

3. Awareness and Communications

a. Awareness Campaign

Martin Delaney, Arrivals and Departures, provided a presentation with an overview of the awareness campaign objectives and the work completed to develop the proposed campaign strategy, including consultation, literature and jurisdictional research, identification of target audiences and key messaging, and the communications strategy.

The Board suggested adding the education, health care, and not for profit sectors to the target audiences and provided feedback on the recommended metrics of success. The Board also discussed the importance of First Voice participation in all aspects of the campaign development and expressed some concern with the message *"Together we thrive if everyone participates"*, as this may imply that participation is a choice, whereas the reality is often that people are unable to participate due to a lack of access. The Board emphasized that people do not need accommodation, they need access.

The Board was invited to provide additional feedback on the proposed campaign strategy and their feedback will be incorporated into the campaign strategy. The Board will have opportunities to provide further input as development of the awareness campaign continues.

4. Standard Development

a. Education Standard Development Committee

The Education Standard Development Committee has one vacancy, which was intended to be filled by a member who is Deaf. Through targeted recruitment, a recommendation for membership to the Education Standard Development Committee was provided to the Accessibility Advisory Board for their consideration.

Motion: Linda Campbell moved to approve the recommendation for the Education SDC membership. Motion was seconded by Cynthia Bruce. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Other Business

a. Public Health and Safety – Stimulus Package

The Board reviewed the following motion which was circulated in advance of the meeting:

Background

- The novel Coronavirus pandemic has magnified gaps in the application of public health and safety regulations
- Employees, patrons, adults, children and people from all walks of life depend on fair and effective administration of such regulations
- Business is the lifeblood of Nova Scotia's economy
- Fairness is the highest pursuit of government

I would ask the Board to adopt the following resolution:

Mindful of the importance of public health and safety to social and economic activity

Mindful of barriers to the equitable application thereof

Mindful that 30% of Nova Scotians have a disability, a significant portion of the population

We urge the province to include, in any stimulus package, a very generous program to help in the fair application of such standards.

Such a program might include tax breaks, direct grants, cost sharing or any other method to inject money into this vital area.

Motion: Gus Reed moved to approve the motion as presented. Motion was seconded by David Caswell. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Gerry Post – Retirement Recognition

The Board presented Gerry Post with a retirement gift to thank him for his leadership and vision. Gerry thanked the Board thanked the Board and the Directorate staff for their hard work and support during his tenure as Executive Director.

6. Adjournment