

## **Nova Scotia Accessibility Advisory Board Meeting Summary**

Tuesday, November 17, 2020 – 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting by Zoom

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

Regrets: Cynthia Bruce, Linda Campbell

Staff: Dawn Stegen (Interim Executive Director), Terri Lynn Almeda, Caroline Read Kendell, Jenny Sears, Avery Maynard, Lisa Jacobs, Maddi MacDonald, Josh Bates

### **1. Welcome**

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

#### **a. Update from the Chair**

Board members received a letter from Chair Doug Foster, requesting the Vice Chair, Rosalind Penfound, act as his designate until February 2021. Doug Foster will continue to hold the title of Chair and to be an active member of the Board. Rosalind Penfound thanked Doug Foster for his leadership and commitment to the Board and for his service on the Built Environment Standard Committee.

Dawn Stegen, Accessibility Directorate, introduced new staff, Maddi MacDonald, Policy Analyst.

### **2. Board Operations**

#### **a. Review of Agenda**

The Board reviewed and accepted the agenda. The Vice Chair asked that members send additional agenda items in advance of the meeting via an email to the Directorate.

## **b. Approval of Minutes from October 21 Meeting**

**Motion:** Marcie Shwery-Stanley moved to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2020, meeting. Doug Foster seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

## **c. Outstanding Business**

Dawn Stegen, Accessibility Directorate, provided updates regarding outstanding business from the October 21, 2020, meeting. The Executive Directors of the Social Innovation Office are able to speak to the Board in early 2021. Feedback from the Board on the Phase 2 recommendations related to adaptability requirements, need for braille in elevators, and the importance of barrier free entrances was shared with the Standards Development Committee.

The Board Work Planning Committee will begin to schedule speakers related to Board capacity building.

The Accessibility Directorate is beginning to explore the impacts of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities with other government departments.

The Accessibility Directorate has followed up with Communications Nova Scotia on interpreter hiring practices.

There are 12 government websites now in compliance with international web accessibility standards. More departments are expecting to be compliance by the spring of 2021.

**Action:** The Accessibility Directorate will share with Board members the list of government websites in compliance with international web accessibility standards.

**Action:** The Directorate will share with Board members information about the Social Innovation Office.

## **3. Accessibility Advisory Board**

### **a. Standard Development Committee Updates**

**i. Education Standard Development Committee**

Rosalind Penfound, Vice Chair, provided an update on the Committee's meeting on Nov. 4, 2020. Committee members continued to review and make suggestions for Phase 2 recommendations related to Teaching and Learning. Directorate staff are working on drafting the revised recommendations that will be sent out to committee members for input in advance of the next meeting. The committee meets next on Dec 16 and will revisit the Teaching and Learning recommendations and begin to work on recommendations in the area of Accessibility Services. Staff from EECD will also be attending the next meeting to seek input from the committee on standard curriculum for teaching assistant programs and new provincial teaching assistant guidelines.

Rosalind Penfound stressed the importance of working closely with government departments and community in developing recommendations and said that the ongoing engagement of staff from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is a positive example of collaboration.

**ii. Built Environment**

Laurie Cranton, Chair of the Built Environment Standard Development Committee, provided an update to the Board. The Built Environment subcommittees had their final meeting on November 2, 2020. The Interiors, Exteriors, and Parks and Recreation subcommittees opted to have guest speakers attend their meetings to provide insight and subject matter expertise to the subcommittees as they finalize their draft recommendations.

The Emergency Systems and Wayfinding and Signage subcommittees each had in-depth discussions about their draft recommendations and ensuring there is adequate detail provided to build on the Phase 1 recommendations.

Anne Sinclair commended the subcommittee for their work and asked about the discussions on the adaptability requirements in the Building Code. Caroline Read Kendell, Accessibility Directorate, responded that there was significant discussion about this topic and that the subcommittee is exploring potential technical requirements. This will be discussed at the Standards Development Committee in December.

The Standard Development Committee will resume meeting as a larger group in December and January to finalize the draft recommendations that will go for consultation in March 2021.

### **iii. November 4<sup>th</sup> Ministers Briefing**

Rosalind Penfound, Vice Chair, provided the Board with an update on the November 4, 2020 briefing with Minister Furey on the Education and Built Environment recommendations. This briefing was well attended with Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and senior officials from Communities Culture and Heritage, Education and Early Childhood Development, Executive Council Office, Justice, Labour and Advance Education, Lands and Forestry, Municipal Affairs and Housing, and Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. In total there were 23 people at the meeting, not including Directorate staff, Board members, and Standard Development Committee Chairs.

Minister Furey acknowledged the tremendous work of the Board and Directorate in getting the draft recommendations to this stage of development.

Rosalind Penfound and Dawn Stegen made the following comments in response to questions by Board members. Minister Furey has requested Cabinet be briefed on the recommendations before they are made publicly available. Cost and system impact will be taken into consideration in due course. The Policy and Information Management Division of Department of Justice are aware of the recommendations and the Directorate's solicitor has advised that timelines and plans are reasonable.

## **4. Accessibility Directorate Update**

### **a. Awareness Campaign (Arrivals & Departures)**

Arrivals and Departures presented three creative content concepts for the Accessibility Awareness Campaign.

Board members provided feedback. It was emphasized that font size and colour on printed materials are important for people who are visually impaired. A number of members were not comfortable with “*disable* the barriers” phrase and suggested the use of a different word such as “*eliminate* the barriers”. Board members liked the visuals that depicted social interactions and leisure activities. Visuals need to reflect the diversity of the community, including racial diversity, as it is crucial to acknowledge the intersectionality of persons with disabilities. It was also suggested that the campaign could highlight accessibility benefits for society at large, including businesses.

Arrivals & Departures outlined next steps in their presentation, including presenting the concept to Minister Furey on November 24.

Board members who are not present at this meeting can provide feedback in upcoming focus groups.

Rosalind Penfound emphasized the importance of this work to help the general population understand persons with disabilities and to be inspired to eliminate barriers. Dawn Stegen stated that these concepts will be brought back to the Board in early January, including feedback from the Minister and focus group testing.

### **b. Access by Design Outcomes**

Lisa Jacobs, Accessibility Directorate, presented the draft Access By Design outcomes as a continuation of the October 21 discussion. The Board had a brief discussion about the outcomes. One board member had concerns about the ability for organizations, particularly in rural areas, to implement accessibility standards. Another board member said that they would like to see more specificity and the use of benchmarks. Lisa Jacobs said that this will happen when outcome indicators are

developed. She also indicated that improved accessibility (medium-term) and equitable accessibility (long-term) to health care may not be included since accessible health care will likely be addressed under Goods and Services.

**Direction:** Rosalind Penfound directed the Board to vote to approve in principle the short, medium, and long-term outcomes as presented. Approval was given by consensus as per the consensus decision making model.

### **c. Updates on current Directorate activities**

To avoid going over the meeting time, Rosalind Penfound recommended Board members read the Directorate report previously provided and to follow up with Directorate if they have questions.

## **5. Other Business**

Marcie Shwery-Stanley has a meeting with an individual at the Nova Scotia Health Authority on Thursday to discuss COVID-19 from a disability lens. Rosalind Penfound thanked Marcie.

## **6. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, December 2, 2020. The agenda will focus on compliance and enforcement and the third standard.

An additional meeting in early February will be scheduled.

## **7. Adjournment**

Rosalind Penfound adjourned the meeting.