

# Nova Scotia Accessibility Advisory Board Meeting Summary

Friday, November 29, 2019, 10:00 am – 3:30 pm

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

---

## Attendance

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

Regrets: Cynthia Bruce, Marcie Shwery-Stanley

Staff: Valerie Pottie Bunge, Terri Lynn Almeda, Joshua Bates, Jessica Briand, Donna Chislett, Jenny Sears, Lashauna Smith, Kristel vom Scheidt

Regrets: Gerry Post (Executive Director), Craig MacKinnon, Amy Middleton

## 1. Welcome

Doug Foster, Chair, introduced and welcomed Linda Campbell, who was recently appointed to the Accessibility Advisory Board.

## 2. Board Operations

### a. Review of Agenda

The Board reviewed and accepted the agenda as amended.

### b. Approval of Minutes from October 4, 2019 Meeting

**Motion:** Rosalind Penfound moved to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2019 meeting. Barry Abbott seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

### c. Review Work Plan

The Board reviewed the agenda topics identified on the work plan as well as additional topics that have been identified at previous meetings. The Board will review the outstanding topics as they develop their 2020-2021 work plan.

### d. Presentations Process

The Board reviewed and agreed to use the presentation request form for organizations and individuals interested in presenting to the Board. The Board also discussed their interest in holding a meeting that would be open to the public. The Board will further discuss this as they develop their 2020-2021 work plan, including considerations such as format, location, and accessibility.

### **e. Other Business – Implications of Power Outages for People with Disabilities**

The Board discussed their concerns with potential increases in power outages due to extreme weather and the impacts of power outages on people with disabilities who require electricity for medical equipment. While the Built Environment Standard Development Committee’s work includes considerations for emergency management, the Board is interested in learning more about the current work of Emergency Measures and Nova Scotia Power pertaining to people with disabilities. The Board will seek presentations from these organizations as part of their 2020-2021 work plan development.

### **f. Other Business – Prescribed Public Sector Bodies**

Joshua Bates, Accessibility Directorate, provided an update on the work to prescribe public sector bodies under the Accessibility Act. Municipalities, towns and villages; universities and Nova Scotia Community College; and regional libraries will be prescribed as of April 1, 2020. Other public sector bodies will be prescribed as of April 1, 2021. Prescribed public sector bodies will be required to establish an accessibility advisory committee and develop an accessibility plan within one year. The Accessibility Directorate has worked collaboratively with partners to develop resources, including two toolkits, that will be available on the Directorate’s website. The Directorate is also finalizing interim accessibility guidelines for the built environment, that will be available in January 2020. Board members were invited to the public announcement that will take place on Tuesday, December 3, 2019. The Board recommended that invitations for accessibility-related events specify accessibility information (e.g. ASL interpreters and CART provided).

## **3. Monitoring and Evaluation**

### **a. Monitoring and Reporting Program**

Terri Lynn Almeda, Accessibility Directorate, provided an overview of the draft Terms of Reference for the Monitoring and Reporting Program Sub-Committee. The mandate of this sub-committee will be to assist the Board in developing and implementing an annual monitoring and reporting program regarding the implementation of the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act across all sectors.

**Motion:** David Caswell moved to approve the Monitoring and Reporting Program Sub-Committee Terms of Reference as circulated. Rosalind Penfound seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**Action:** The Accessibility Directorate will send an email to invite Board members to participate in the Monitoring and Reporting Program Sub-Committee, with responses required within seven days.

## **4. Standard Development**

### **a. Built Environment Standard Development Committee**

Ramzi Kavar, Vice-Chair, Built Environment Standard Development Committee, provided an overview of the committee’s work to date. The Committee met in November, where they received presentations on deaf space and accessible washrooms, and an overview of three topics: interiors, accessible bathrooms, and housing and residences. Additionally, the Committee discussed undertaking a phased approach to their work. The Committee has revised their work plan to reflect a phased approach, that will begin with initial recommendations, to be followed by technical recommendations. The Board agreed with this

approach. The Committee plans to have their first phase of commitments drafted by January 2020, and plans to consult on these in March 2020.

## **b. Education**

Rosalind Penfound, Chair, Education Standard Development Committee, provided an overview of the committee's work. The committee met once since the last update to the Board, in November. The Committee has reviewed draft core commitments on capacity building and teaching and learning, and is working on commitments pertaining to accessibility services. The Committee plans to have core commitments in five areas drafted by January 2020, and plans to undertake targeted consultations in March 2020.

## **5. Collaboration and Support**

### **a. Accessible Canada Act – Government of Canada**

Benoit Gendron, Director, Accessibility Secretariat, Employment and Social Development Canada, provided an overview of the Accessible Canada Act. The Act applies to the Government of Canada, Parliament, the Canadian Forces and Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and federally regulated sectors. The Act is intended to realize a barrier-free Canada on or before January 1, 2040 by identifying, removing and preventing barriers to employment, information and communication technologies, transportation, built environment, communication, design and delivery of programs and services, and procurement. The Act created the Canadian Accessibility Standards Development Organization to develop and revise standards, an Accessibility Commissioner within the Canadian Human Rights Commission, and a Chief Accessibility Officer to advise the Minister on accessibility issues, which will be required to report annually. The Act also legislated the week starting on the last Sunday in May as National Accessibility Week and set the first parliamentary review of the Act by 2026, with regular independent reviews thereafter. The Board and Mr. Gendron discussed the application of the Act to First Nations and interprovincial ferries, and ensuring first voice representation in the implementation of the Act. The Board also discussed opportunities to collaborate with the federal government to harmonize standards; it was noted that the Accessible Canada Act requires the Minister to make every reasonable effort to collaborate with provinces and territories.

### **b. Canadian Accessibility Standards Development Organization**

Philip Rizcallah, Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Accessibility Standards Development Organization (CASDO), provided an overview of the organization, which is responsible to develop accessibility standards, fund and support research through a grant program, and share information on accessibility. While CASDO currently has 10 staff, with a goal of 30 staff in place by March 31, 2020, the organization has a budget of \$6.5 million, which includes 55 staff, 11 Board members and a grant/contributions fund. CASDO is establishing technical committees by spring 2020 to develop technical standards, with current priorities on employment, plain language, outdoor space, and emergency egress, as identified during previous consultations. CASDO is interested in collaborating with provinces and territories, and will be reaching out to determine areas for collaboration, reduce duplication and work toward national standards. The Board was pleased to hear the focus on collaboration, and provided a recommendation regarding deaf space and blind space in architectural principles to improve space usage and incorporate in the development of designs and plans.

## **6. Adjournment**