

Nova Scotia Accessibility Advisory Board Meeting Summary

Friday, October 4, 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, Cynthia Bruce, David Caswell, Alex Peeler, Kevin Russell, Marcie Shwery-Stanley, Anne Sinclair

Regrets: Gus Reed

Staff: Gerry Post (Executive Director), Terri Lynn Almeda, Jessica Briand, Craig MacKinnon, Amy Middleton, Lashauna Smith, Kristel vom Scheidt

Guests: Paul LaFleche, Shannon Delbridge, and Kim Cooke, Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal

1. Board Operations

a. Review of Agenda

Motion: Barry Abbott moved to approve the agenda as circulated. David Caswell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Action: The Accessibility Directorate will review the content and timing of documentation provided to the Board in advance of their meetings to best inform the Board's discussions.

b. Approval of Minutes from June 7, 2019 Meeting

The Board reviewed the actions from the June 7, 2019 meeting.

Motion: Marcie Shwery-Stanley moved to approve the minutes of the June 7, 2019 meeting. David Caswell 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 confirmed their interest in the agenda topics planned for the upcoming meetings. The Board also indicated interest in receiving presentations related to the four remaining standard areas and information regarding Cynthia Bruce's research underway on the Bill 59 Alliance.

d. Board Role – Presentations and Support Letters

The Board reviewed their role with respect to receiving presentations and providing letters of support. The Board discussed the general information that would be useful to have regarding presentations coming to the Board.

Action: The Accessibility Directorate will develop a draft document that outlines information and processes regarding presentation requests for the Board’s review and discussion at their next meeting.

2. Standard Development

a. Built Environment Standard Development Committee

Laurie Cranton, Chair, Built Environment Standard Development Committee, provided an overview of the committee’s work to date. The committee has met three times since the last update to the Board (June, August, September) and while the committee is making progress, there may be a need for additional meetings before draft recommendations are finalized for the Board’s review in June 2020. The committee has reviewed the results of the jurisdictional and literature review and the consultations with Nova Scotians through the online survey, and established the focus areas pertaining to the built environment. The committee has received presentations and began discussions on areas related to exteriors, wayfinding and signage, emergency systems, and site selection.

b. Education

Rosalind Penfound, Chair, Education Standard Development Committee, provided an overview of the committee’s work. The committee met three times since the last update to the board: June, August, and September. The committee reviewed the scope of their work and have revised their work plan to reflect a staged approach to developing standards recommendations. They will begin with recommendations for foundational, core commitments, followed by more specific recommendations. The Board agreed with this approach. The committee has received presentations and discussed recommendations on areas related to capacity building and teaching and learning.

3. Awareness and Communication

a. Sub-Group Report

Terri Lynn Almeda, Accessibility Directorate, provided an overview of the report from the Board’s Awareness and Communication Sub-Group’s June 18, 2019 meeting. The Sub-Group agreed that they have completed the tasks pertaining to the communications-related activities from the December 2018 retreat as directed by the Board, and as such, the Sub-Group is dissolved with appreciation to the members for their work.

Action: The Accessibility Directorate will coordinate the Board’s input by email on what they would like to know about anti-bias and anti-ableism education.

4. Collaboration and Support

a. Municipalities and Prescribed Public Sector Bodies

Gerry Post, Accessibility Directorate, provided an overview of the Accessibility Directorate’s work with municipalities and other public sector bodies. Prescribed public sector bodies will have one year from their prescription to develop their accessibility plans. Staff are developing resources to support public sector bodies to establish accessibility advisory committees and develop accessibility plans. Staff have provided

five regional workshops for municipalities and are working with the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents to support the development of a post-secondary accessibility framework.

b. Simulation Exercises

The Board discussed the inclusion of disability simulation exercises as suggested awareness-building activities in resources developed by the Accessibility Directorate. The Board acknowledged that there are different perspectives from disabled persons regarding disability simulation exercises and research from disabled scholars that indicates disability simulations can result in long term, harmful impacts. It was discussed that, while some individuals value simulation exercises as an opportunity to educate others about barriers to accessibility, only persons living with a disability can experience disability. The Directorate's resources will note that there are conflicting opinions about disability simulation exercises, and that, if they are provided, they should be structured, facilitated and informed by persons with disabilities in the community.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

a. Monitoring Progress

Terri Lynn Almeda, Accessibility Directorate, provided an overview of a proposal for the Board to develop an independent monitoring and reporting program. The Board discussed their interest and capacity to undertake this work, and agreed to establish a sub-committee to draft a terms of reference for discussion at the next meeting.

Action: The Accessibility Directorate will follow up with members interested in participating in the sub-committee regarding the development of a draft terms of reference.

6. Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan

a. Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal

Paul LaFleche, Shannon Delbridge, and Kim Cooke, Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, provided an update on the department's work to implement the Department's actions identified in the Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan 2018-2021; to review existing spaces to determine accessibility issues and develop an action plan, and to incorporate clauses into new Government of Nova Scotia leases that stipulate landlords must meet current Nova Scotia Building Code accessibility requirements.

7. Other Business

The Board expressed their unanimous appreciation to Gerry Post for his work and leadership as the inaugural Executive Director of the Accessibility Directorate.

8. Adjournment