

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

Tuesday, September 15, 2020 – 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting by Zoom

---

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), Gerry Post (Strategic Advisor), Terri Lynn Almeda, Amy Middleton, Caroline Read Kendell, Jenny Sears, Avery Maynard, Laura Beth MacPherson, Lisa Jacobs

### **1. Welcome**

Doug Foster, Chair, welcomed everyone to the Accessibility Advisory Board meeting.

### **2. Guest Presentation**

Deputy Candace Thomas, and Associate Deputy, Lora MacEachern, Department of Justice, presented to the Board. Deputy Thomas and Associate Deputy MacEachern discussed their respective backgrounds and knowledge of, and previous work related to, accessibility, and they affirmed the Department's commitment to advancing Access By Design and continuing to work towards increased accessibility. Deputy Thomas noted that she is leading the newly formed Office of Social Innovation and Integrated Approaches. This office will likely be working very closely with the Directorate, as well as offices such as African Nova Scotian Affairs and the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women. The Deputy and Associate Deputy thanked the Board for their dedication and work.

**Actions:** (1) Provide Board members with high level description of the mandate of the new Office of Social Innovation and Integrated Approaches.

(2) Schedule a presentation to the Board from the Executive Director of the Office of Social innovation and Integrative Approaches once it is operating.

### **3. Board Operations**

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

The Board reviewed and accepted the agenda.

#### **b. Approval of Minutes from August 18 Meeting**

Rosalind Penfound noted that the minutes to be reviewed were not correctly labelled as August 18.

**Motion:** Rosalind Penfound moved to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2020, meeting. David Caswell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **c. Outstanding Business**

Dawn Stegen, Accessibility Directorate, provided updates regarding outstanding business from the August 18, 2020, meeting, including advancing the Board's request for information on the stimulus funding and the follow up with Legal counsel about options available to use the phrase "persons with disabilities, Deaf and/or neurodivergent" in place of "persons with disabilities". There are three options: changing the Accessibility Act, including this in next year's Accessibility Act Review, and adding this to Act regulations.

Promotional materials for the recruitment of new Board members now includes an ASL video and many applications have already been received. Directorate staff are scheduled to meet with Executive Council Office staff to discuss how the Agencies, Boards and Commissions application process can be fully accessible. In the interim, Directorate staff will provide application assistance.

**Action:** Accessibility Directorate will send Board members a list of major Directorate work areas/topics and the staff member(s) assigned.

#### **4. Domestic Violence and Persons with Disabilities**

Suzanne Rent and Sherry Costa presented the results of the “Not Without Us Project”, which was overseen by Easter Seals Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunity. This research project focused on identifying the significant challenges and barriers experienced by women with disabilities who experience domestic violence. These barriers include not being able to access women’s shelters because most shelters in Nova Scotia are not accessible, and the current policy that home care services cannot “follow” individuals if they have to leave their place of residence to reside elsewhere. The report also stated that women with disabilities are very vulnerable because they are often abused by their partners and/or caregivers. The report includes a list of recommended actions. The Board discussed the issues related to funding, housing and transportation.

#### **5. Accessibility Advisory Board**

##### **2020-2021 AAB Work Plan and Priorities**

Directorate staff, Lisa Jacobs, presented the results of the Board work plan priorities survey, which eight Board members completed. Board members discussed the results, noting that some of the items are related to Board capacity building, while others are more issue specific. The Board also identified housing for persons with disabilities as another issue to be addressed. A subcommittee was created to develop a draft Board workplan. Cynthia Bruce, David Caswell, Doug Foster, and Rosalind Penfound volunteered to be on the subcommittee, along with Directorate staff. A draft plan will be presented to the Board at the October Board meeting.

**Action:** Directorate to convene subcommittee members to draft Board work plan.

#### **6. Accessibility Directorate Update**

Directorate staff, Dawn Stegen and Avery Maynard, provided an update on the Awareness Campaign. Interviews with several board members were completed and feedback has been incorporated. The strategy will be provided to Minister for review and approval to proceed with Phase 2, development of the creative content. The design will be informed by focus groups, and community engagement, and the Board will have the opportunity to review products developed in Phase 2.

## **7. Next meeting**

Doug Foster, Chair, confirmed that the next meeting will be on Wednesday, October 21, 2020.

## **8. Adjournment**