

**Nova Scotia Accessibility Advisory Board**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, November 30, 2023 – 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**  
Virtual Meeting by Zoom

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Rosalind Penfound (Chair), Max Chauvin (Vice Chair), Birgit Elssner, Ellen Johnson, Melissa MacKenzie, Lewis Pope, Denise DiGiosia, Anne Sinclair, Earl Muise, Marcie Shwery-Stanley

Regrets: Linda Campbell

Guests: Honourable Brad Johns, Minister of Justice; Candace Thomas, Deputy Minister, Michelle Higgins, Associate Deputy Minister, Adriana Meloni, Solicitor, Department of Justice; Lianne Sarson, Vice President of Research, Thinkwell Research

Staff: Dawn Stegen, Kristel vom Scheidt, Jordan Keddy, Cris Adams, Amy Middleton, Meghan Murphy, Jordan Keddy, Lashauna Smith

**1. Welcome**

Roz Penfound, Chair welcomed everyone to the Accessibility Advisory Board meeting with a Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian land acknowledgement and noted that December 3 is International Day of Persons with Disabilities and encouraged all members to join one of the events happening throughout the province to recognize this day. She also reminded the Board that this is the second part of a two-part meeting, which started last week.

**2. Board Operations**

**a. Review of Agenda**

The agenda as previously circulated was accepted.

**a. Outstanding Business**

Dawn Stegen, Executive Director reviewed outstanding actions from previous meetings and gave updates. An upcoming community breakfast in Halifax for International Day of Persons with Disabilities will be attended by senior leaders from the Department of Justice, including opening remarks by Minister Johns. A proclamation was recently signed by the Premier to recognize this day in Nova Scotia. In addition, the first week of December is Human Rights Week, organized by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission in recognition of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

Dawn flagged that Statistics Canada will be releasing current disability data from the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability on December 1 and the Directorate will be sharing the data with interested parties and partners.

Dawn highlighted that the Board's work plan ends in December, and we are looking for direction from members on priorities for February meeting as well as suggestions on the approach for orientation of new members.

**Action:** Board members will receive follow-up communication.

At the Board's last meeting they approved the Terms of Reference for the Information and Communication SDC and now the Directorate is looking for Board members to form a sub-committee to support the recruitment and recommendation process.

She also noted that a conference hosted by the Wabanki Council on Disability March 2024 in Membertou will focus on accessibility and disability from Indigenous perspectives. Dawn and will update the Board in February on this event.

### **3. Business**

#### **a. Preparation for Meeting with Minister**

Roz took a few minutes to discuss the upcoming conversation with Minister of Justice, Brad Johns. She reminded the Board that as per the Accessibility Act, they meet with the Minister at least once a year to discuss their current priorities and to review advice submitted.

#### **b. Meeting with Minister of Justice, Brad Johns**

Roz welcomed the Minister of Justice Brad Johns, and the Minister introduced Deputy Minister of Justice, Candace Thomas, and Associate Deputy Minister, Michelle Higgins.

Roz introduced all Board members in attendance and gave an overview of the Board's work in the past year, including connecting with several government departments, community organizations and the Halifax Regional Municipality to learn about their policies and programs for persons with disabilities. She explained the time they devoted to reviewing the Accessibility Act Review Report and Recommendations, and the advice given. Roz also reviewed the Board's priorities, which include the Quality-of-Life Index for people with disabilities, enhancing external communication to increase awareness and understanding of what accessible Nova Scotia by 2030 means, the collaborative standard development process and timelines the Board and government follow.

Roz spoke about the Board's role in providing leadership to SDCs, including the newly formed Goods and Services SDC and the plans for recruitment of the Public Transportation and Information and Communication SDCs. She explained the Board has recommended that SDCs for Goods and Services, Public Transportation and Information and Communication have a focused scope, with a mandate to deliver only regulation specific recommendations within a set time frame. The Board also advised it is important to clarify what is meant by the goal of an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030 and that the timelines currently posted in Access by Design 2030 need to be revised.

The Minister thanked the Board for their focus on standards development and their advice.

#### **4. Standards**

##### **a. Built Environment: Public Engagement**

Jordan Keddy, Junior Policy Analyst has worked closely with Maddi Adams, who is on leave, gave a presentation to review the feedback received during the public review of the proposed Built Environment Standard. Jordan was also joined by Adriana Meloni, solicitor in the Department of Justice, Amy Middleton, Director of Policy and Standards and Dawn Stegen, Executive Director.

Jordan provided an overview of the aggregated demographic information for those who participated in public review, including key themes from the feedback, and next steps. He reviewed the feedback specific to standard regulations, guidelines, building code amendments, fire safety amendments and government actions.

The next steps are to finalize the education and awareness plan as well as a compliance and enforcement plan, advance the final regulations to the registry of regulations, and begin briefings.

A Board member asked for more information who is completing this work. It was explained this work is being led by the Directorate and Board will be updated at each meeting.

##### **b. Employment Recommendations Consultation**

Roz introduced Lianne Sarson, Vice President of Research with Thinkwell Research. Lianne proceeded to facilitate a discussion to gather the Board's feedback on the draft Employment SDC's recommendations. This is one of several sessions that have been underway with target audiences. The Board proceeded to review the draft Employment SDC recommendations in detail.

#### **4. Adjournment and Closing**

Roz thanked the Board for the important discussion and wished everyone a relaxing end to 2023, with a reminder that two half day virtual meetings set for January 18th and February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.