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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, January 22, 2019

A meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, January 22, 2019 in Meeting Room 1-A, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby at 1:01 PM.

Present: R. Atkinson, Whitby
C. Boose, Ajax
D. Campbell, Whitby
K. Galloway, Oshawa
D. Hume-McKenna, DMHS
Councillor R. Mulcahy
M. Roche, Oshawa attended the meeting at 1:20 PM
M. Sutherland, Oshawa, Chair

Absent: S. Sones, Whitby, Vice-Chair

Staff

Present: S. Austin, Director of Corporate Policy and Strategic Initiatives
J. Traer, Accessibility Coordinator, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
N. Prasad, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services

S. Austin called the meeting to order.

1. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

S. Austin called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Moved by R. Atkinson, Seconded by C. Boose,
That M. Sutherland be nominated for the position of Chair of the
Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Moved by D. Campbell, Seconded by K. Galloway,
That nominations be closed.

CARRIED

S. Austin asked if Ms. Sutherland wished to stand. M. Sutherland indicated she would stand.

M. Sutherland was acclaimed as the Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

S. Austin called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Moved by M. Sutherland, Seconded by D. Campbell,
That S. Sones be nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Moved by R. Atkinson, Seconded by M. Sutherland,
That nominations be closed.
CARRIED

S. Sones was not in attendance and it was the consensus of the Committee to accept the nomination.

S. Sones was acclaimed as the Vice-Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

[Note: Following the meeting, S. Sones confirmed in writing that she wished to stand.]

M. Sutherland, Chair, assumed the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by D. Hume-McKenna, Seconded by D. Campbell,
That the minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting held on November 27, 2018, be adopted.
CARRIED

4. Presentations

A) Mary Ann Bent and Gregor Barnes, CNIB re: BlindSquare, Indoor Navigation Technology

M. Bent and G. Barnes, Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding "BlindSquare Enabled" and a video regarding "BlindSquare – Painting a Picture of the World through Sound".

G. Barnes stated that the CNIB Foundation is a non-profit organization driven to change what it is to be blind today. He added that the CNIB celebrated 100 years in 2018. He stated that CNIB has a new strategic plan called "Harness the Power of Technology" which consists of three key parts: Employment and Education; Technology; and Advocating for Accessibility in all aspects of life.

G. Barnes stated that the following are common barriers for people with sight loss:

- Lack of wayfinding information
- Lack of communication of potential hazards
- Unsafe pedestrian crossings
- Confusing and contradictory environmental information
- Furniture and other objects that do not reach the floor
- Visual patterns with too much information to process
- Excess noise

G. Barnes stated that ShopTalk is a community hub in Toronto that is a welcoming, innovating, open space, that offers programs to meet the social and emotional needs of people with sight loss. He stated that BlindSquare is a paid accessible GPS app developed for people who are blind or partially sighted and advised that CNIB has partnered with BlindSquare to promote a new technology designed to assist people with sight loss with accessible navigation for indoors and outdoors. He advised that CNIB has created a pilot project called “ShopTalk: Blindsquare Enabled” which calls on businesses in the neighbourhood to help make the Yonge and St. Clair area the most inclusive and accessible neighbourhood in Canada. There is hope that the project will help other communities run similar projects across Canada.

M. Bent stated that BlindSquare EVENT is a version of the BlindSquare app that is provided for free to the end-user when a BlindSquare event is created using a geofence. A BlindSquare Enabled Event is a permanent location sponsored by the business/organization to provide accessibility in their buildings to accommodate for the individual’s visual impairments, blindness, print disabilities, language barriers, and/or other special needs. She stated that the BlindSquare app works with a small battery powered beacon which is located inside doorways and common areas of businesses and public areas. The beacon silently communicates with the app to provide more comprehensive navigation. She stated that as of May 2018, CNIB is the sole distributor of BlindSquare beacon installations in Canada.

Discussion ensued with regards to the cost of the BlindSquare app and use of the free app; the cost of the beacons; feedback from organizations; accuracy of distance and location when using the beacons; and the use of the app in other municipalities.

The committee recessed at 2:05 PM and reconvened at 2:10 PM.

5. Introduction of Committee Members

Committee members provided an overview of their background and experience.

6. Correspondence

There were no items of correspondence to consider.

7. Information Items

A) Education Sub-Committee Update

J. Traer advised that there will be an education sub-committee meeting after the AAC meeting on January 22, 2019. She confirmed that C. Boose, M. Sutherland and D. Campbell are members of the sub-committee.

It was suggested that a member of the Durham Region Transit Executive Committee be invited to attend a future AAC meeting to discuss specialized and conventional bus services.

B) Update on the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC)

M. Sutherland advised that there was no TAC update to be provided as there has not been any TAC meetings since June 2018. M. Sutherland advised that she is no longer a representative on the TAC and J. Traer inquired whether anyone else was interested. M. Roche stated that he will continue to sit on TAC.

C) Update from the Accessibility Coordinator

- J. Traer advised that International Day for Persons with Disabilities was December 3, 2018. She advised that there was a display set up in the upper gallery of Regional Headquarters which highlighted the upcoming parasport games scheduled for February 2019.
- J. Traer advised that the Durham Region 2019 Ontario Parasport Games will be held on February 8 to 10, 2019. She stated that there will be 11 sports and over 350 athletes plus coaches, support staff, family and friends.
- J. Traer advised that the video featuring M. Sutherland, C. Boose and D. Campbell on Accessibility was shown at the Council Orientation Session held on November 20, 2018 and was well received. She advised that a copy of the video will be forwarded to committee members for them to view. Discussion ensued with regards to the possibility of creating more videos to provide further information on accessibility issues.

- J. Traer stated that January 30, 2019 is Bell Let's Talk Day and advised that Mr. Daniel Cullen will be speaking at Regional Headquarters about mental health issues and his experience with being homeless for approximately 25 years. She stated that Mr. Cullen is scheduled to speak on January 30, 2019 from 12 – 1 PM in Meeting Room LL-C at Regional Headquarters.

D) 2019 Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule

A copy of the 2019 Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule was provided as Attachment #2 to the Agenda and was received.

8. Discussion Items

A) Roundtable Discussion regarding Accessibility Experiences at Businesses, Restaurants, Churches etc. in Durham Region and Toronto

This item was not discussed due to time constraints.

9. Reports

There were no Reports to consider.

10. Other Business

A) Access NOW App

D. Campbell provided an overview of the AccessNOW app as well as a video presentation of how the app works. She stated that the app uses crowdsourcing to pin-point the accessibility status of locations on an interactive map. It allows users to search for specific places or browse to see what accessibility features are nearby. A green pin on the map represents an accessible location while a yellow pin represents a location that is partially accessible. An orange pin represents a location that is patio accessible only and a red pin represents a location that is not accessible.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, March 26, 2019 in Meeting Room 1-A, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, at 1:00 PM.

12. Adjournment

Moved by C. Boose, Seconded by M. Roche,
That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 3:05 PM

M. Sutherland, Chair
Accessibility Advisory Committee

N. Prasad, Committee Clerk