

**DATE:** THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2021

**MEETING NO.** 03-2021

**TIME:** 1:03 P.M.

**MEETING LOCATION:** MS TEAMS

**MEMBERS**

**SECTOR REPRESENTATIVE**

Ms. A. Antenucci	Parent to a Child with a Disability
Mr. T. Brownlee	Caregiver to a Person with a Disability
Mr. J. Gobeil	Citizen Representative
Ms. R. Harrison	Service Agency Representative
Councillor R. Johnson	Council Representative
Ms. T. Lennox	Learning Disability Representative
Mr. M. Rubenick	Senior with a Disability Representative
Ms. T. Soderberg	Visually Impaired or Blind Representative
Mr. B. Spare	Hard of Hearing/Late Deafened Representative
Mr. R. Sponchia	Development Disability Representative
Mr. J.R. Wheeler	Brain Injury Representative

**OFFICIALS**

Ms. K. Power	City Clerk
Ms. D. Earle	Deputy City Clerk
Mr. S. Garner	Municipal Accessibility Specialist
Ms. F. Track	Committee Coordinator

**GUESTS**

J. Bogacki	Program Supervisor – Adult Fitness, Wellness & Inclusion Services Community Services
Ms. S. Smart	Program Supervisor – Children, Youth & Junior Inclusion Services Community Services
Ms. K. Bonazzo	Staffing & Development Consultant, Human Resources

**AGENDA**

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair called the meeting to order and a roundtable of introductions followed.

2. COMMUNICATION PROCESS

The Chair explained the communication process.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

MOVED BY: Tara Lennox  
SECONDED BY: Brian Spare

WITH RESPECT to the March 11, 2021 meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, we recommend that the Agenda as printed, including any additional information and new business, be confirmed.

CARRIED

4. PRESENTATIONS

4.1 Inclusion Services

At the February 11, 2021 meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee it was requested that members of Administration be invited to discuss accessible issues identified during a previous roundtable.

J. Bogacki, Program Supervisor – Adult Fitness, Wellness & Inclusion Services and Ms. S. Smart, Program Supervisor – Children, Youth & Junior Inclusion Services - Community Services provided an overview relative to Inclusion Services and responded to questions.

- Pre-pandemic, Junior Inclusion Services (JIS) provided one on one support for participants at the City's 3 indoor pools
- Swimming lessons resumed in September 2020 as indoor pools were re-opened
- Provincial guidelines were reviewed to determine requirements. Up to Swimmer 4, a parent or guardian needed to participate with the swimmer
- There are no personal protective equipment available, i.e. masks, that can be worn in the pool that would protect the instructor and the participant
- Surgical masks have been identified as the best option but are not as effective when wet
- Staff have been provided gloves, masks, and goggles for contact with participants in all activities that are not in the pool
- Physical distancing is encouraged in as many services as possible
- Junior Inclusion will support participants when programming re-opens
- Thunder Bay District Health Unit was involved in re-opening strategy
- Staff who don't feel safe with the provided PPE and requirement to come in contact with participants, are not working
- Junior Inclusion is currently scheduled to be included in any summer programming, such as playgrounds
- At this point in planning, a parent will be involved in any swimming lesson. This will be determined at the time of re-opening. There may be an option for someone 13 years or older, within the participants bubble, to support the participant

- Legislation – Creating a New Inclusive Ontario – includes 4 objectives. How is Inclusion and Junior Inclusion services ensuring their program is as inclusive as possible?
  - Junior Inclusion Services works with services agencies to connect to as many families as possible. Such as Children’s Aid, Dilico, and are disability specific
  - Newsletter is sent to all registered families and agencies.
  - Advertise in programming about all levels of support that is provided
  - Work is ongoing to include forms online
  - Programming in different neighbourhoods to ensure access to all
  - Development of relationships with community partners are a focus, such as Underground Gym, Boys & Girls Club. Some of this work has slowed due to the pandemic
- Participants would not be expected to wear masks in the pool. Every effort is being made to ensure that the staff are protected and have effective PPE
- During the pandemic and in direction with the re-opening guidelines, the number of participants is determined by the size of pool. Ratios are very low. Pool use must be booked to ensure that capacity is not exceeded
- Masks are required in the building, unless they meet the approved exemptions, until they are ready to enter the water or using exercise equipment
- Inclusion Services tailors their support service to individual requests – swimming, dancing, walking, outdoor activities

#### 4.2 “You Can’t Ask That!”

Ms. K. Bonazzo, Staffing & Development Consultant, Human Resources to provide an overview relative to a documentary series CBC launched called “*You Can’t Ask That*”. Based on a successful series from ABC Australia, the show offers insight into the lives of Canadians with various disabilities, challenges stereotypes, and gives people with disabilities the opportunity to speak for themselves.

- Human Resources & Corporate Safety is developing a retention and outreach plan which includes 4 main goals: increase the number of applicants from equity groups, hire more people from equity groups, educate city staff, and retain employees
- Accessibility and diversity training includes AODA training, diversity training. Training is available virtual, self-directed or in person pre- and post- pandemic
- Documentary series topics include wheelchair, turrets, visually impaired, autism. Videos are approximately 20-22 minutes in length and provide information on how to respond to and ask appropriate questions
- HR supervisor saw video and made suggestion that it may be a good resource to staff. It’s an easily accessible video series that may be useful to share in light of pandemic and virtual learning. There are currently two seasons available online
- Video links will be re-sent to the group

- Older adults have not been identified as one of the equity groups, but City policies are in place to ensure that people are not discriminated against. Ms. K. Bonnazo will bring the comment to planning team
- Recommendation that older adults be a focus as they will be one of the largest demographic groups available for the workforce
- Recommendation that the Committee watch the videos prior to making any decisions or recommendations. Could the Committee watch a sample video at a future meeting
- Suggestion that if the Committee supports, that we can work with Human Resources to promote the videos to supervisors and watch in team meetings
- Children, Youth & Junior Inclusion Services staff have already watched and shared with team members

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting No. 02-2021 Accessibility Advisory Committee, held on February 11 2021, to be confirmed.

MOVED BY: Randy Sponchia  
SECONDED BY: John Gobeil

THAT the Minutes of Meeting No. 02-2021 of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, held on February 11, 2021 be confirmed.

CARRIED

6. ADVOCACY – MASKS

Ms. K. Power, City Clerk provided an update relative to the above noted.

- Suggestion that the Committee write a letter on behalf of the Committee to remind the public that, while masks are mandatory per the legislation, there are exemptions for persons with disabilities. The exemptions would be included in the letter. And, that the letter should be sent to the Chamber of Commerce, and shared with Council, the newspaper, CBC, and TBNewswatch
- A person with a disability is protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code and does not have to disclose their disability
- Additionally, there should be comment made that while services are being moved online, some of those online services may not be accessible
- Recommendation that there be a corresponding press release, social media campaign
- Municipal by-law officers have been re-directed to Transit terminals to educate the importance of wearing masks and physical distancing. Administration will follow up with Licensing & Enforcement to find out if officers have masks
- Masks and funding for masks have been provided to community groups and organizations

- The letter can include wording for the Chamber of Commerce and businesses that can be included on any signage
- There is a need to be aware that there may be competing rights

MOVED BY: J.R. Wheeler  
SECONDED BY: Brian Spare

WITH RESPECT to advocacy for the exemptions for persons with disabilities, that the Accessibility Advisory Committee provide a memorandum on an upcoming Committee of the Whole Agenda on this topic for City Council's information;

AND THAT an open letter be sent to the Chamber of Commerce and business community advocating for the importance of adhering to the legislation that allows for exemption of masks for those with a disability;

AND THAT the letter be shared through submission to local print publications as a Letter to the Editor.

CARRIED

## 7. ROUNDTABLE OF ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

Committee members to report on accessibility issues encountered in the community.

Inaccessible vaccination locations:

- Concern from community members that signage at COVID-19 testing centres could be more inclusive to include pictures, not just in writing
- Concern that movement around testing centres is difficult and not accessible
- As a member of the Board of Health, Councillor Johnson will bring the concern forward, and recommends a message from the AAC
- The local Autism Ontario chapter is developing resources that will help parents when they need to go for COVID-19 testing
- Vaccination centre concerns:
  - messaging the Health Unit has provided advises people attending the centre to stay in vehicles, and not to arrive early, with no consideration for individuals utilizing public transit;
  - Access to the Coliseum by bus is not accessible: There is no sidewalk on the North side of Northern Avenue between Simpson Street and May Street, causing challenges for individuals with visual impairments and/or utilizing mobility devices, to access the vaccination centre via the Northern Avenue entrance;

arriving via Northbound Simpson Street route requires individuals to cross Simpson Street to Northern Avenue; to access the Coliseum via the May Street entrance, individuals must navigate the parking lot which is challenging and dangerous for individuals with visual impairments and/or utilizing mobility devices; and individuals arriving via the South bound Memorial Route, have to cross May Street

- There is nowhere for pedestrians to safely wait at the Coliseum
  - There are no accessible parking spaces near the Coliseum building. Accessible parking near the entrance reduces the distance and danger, to individuals utilizing assistive devices, when navigating a parking lot
  - Appointments for vaccinations are only available through online booking and advertising seems to only be online. There should be a phone line available. Online is not accessible
  - TBDHU is transitioning booking system to the provincially run system starting the week of March 15 which will include online and phone
  - Concerns that LIFT may not be available. Passengers should call and find out if a trip is available Administration will follow up to find out what capacity is like
- Research is continuing on advocacy for tactile plates
  - What are the most current version of the terms of reference
  - Roundabout and visibility planning for plants, etc. Suggestion to set a maximum height of plants and foliage. A memo is being presented to Council on March 22. Request to Engineering that the AAC be consulted
  - Roundabout pedestrian access on Redwood needs to be signed properly
  - Accessibility of new Centennial Park Playground. Request that Parks & Open Spaces staff be invited to the next meeting
  - There is no legislation that defines the number of accessible playgrounds
  - On March 15, Special Olympic athletes who won medals at the February 2020 Games will be recognized at Council on behalf of the Official Recognition Committee
  - Concerns continue to be raised with the current proposed roundabout location

8. NEW BUSINESS

9. 2021 MEETING SCHEDULE

At the January 14, 2021 meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee it was the consensus of the Committee to schedule future monthly meetings from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm, as follows:

Thursday, April 8, 2021

Thursday, May 13, 2021

Thursday, June 10, 2021

Thursday, September 9, 2021

Thursday, October 14, 2021

Thursday, November 18, 2021

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:49pm.