

**DATE:** THURSDAY, APRIL 8, 2021

**MEETING NO.** 04-2021

**TIME:** 1:01 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. D. Earle	Deputy City Clerk
Mr. S. Garner	Municipal Accessibility Specialist
Ms. F. Track	Council & Committee Clerk

**GUESTS**

Ms. C. Robinson	President – Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce
Mr. W. Schwar	Supervisor – Parks & Open Spaces
J. Bogacki	Program Supervisor – Adult Fitness, Wellness & Inclusion Services
	Community Services

**AGENDA**

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm 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 April 8, 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 Centennial Park Playground

Mr. W. Schwar, Supervisor – Parks & Open Spaces, provided an overview and responded to questions relative to new playground equipment at Centennial Park.

Document entitled “Centennial Park Playground Presentation to AAC April 8, 2021” was distributed separately on Tuesday, April 6, 2021, and provided a conceptual overview. Formal drawings for construction will be provided by the contractor prior to construction.

- Parks & Open Spaces is planning upgrades to three (3) city parks – Boulevard (2023), Centennial (2021), and Vickers Park (2022).
- Public consultation was conducted in 2019.
- Vickers Park and Boulevard will be accessible hub playgrounds with the intent to install playground equipment beyond the requirements of the AODA – Design of Public Spaces Standard. The AAC will be consulted to determine design.
- Theme for Centennial Park will be woodland adventure, 50% of the structure will be AODA compliant and will include inclusive activities.
- Committee member noted the viewing area feature.
- Ground level of the playground area will be wood fibre.
- The design and language were included from public consultation and park attendees
- A variety of seating will be included in the design – benches, picnic tables, boulders, hammocks. Committee member stressed the importance of ensuring there is seating available with arms.
- Colours included in the Centennial design will be wood, muted and earth toned colours. Alternatively, public consultation for Boulevard Park suggested brighter colours be used.
- Concerns that bicycle traffic around playground area.
- In-ground garbage containers will be installed and will be animal-proof.
- No plan for daytime caretaker to be present.

- Access for attendees using mobility devices and aides from walkways to playground surface.
- Earth tones and muted colours may present a challenge for those with visual impairments. There should be some colour contrast.
- Signage may be updated to ensure that the public doesn't approach wild animals. The signage exists right now and will be reviewed for replacement.
- Public consultation may not have involved accessibility community as the park currently has an access challenge, and may not have been present.
- Suggestion to visit schools in surrounding areas to consult directly with neighbourhood children.

#### 4.2 Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce

At the March 11, 2021 meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee a resolution was passed with respect to masks and advocacy for the exemptions for persons with disabilities. An open letter was 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.

Discussion to be held relative to wording for universal signage that allows accommodation for both the person with a disability and the business owner/employees.

- The Chamber wants to educate their business representatives.
- Some businesses are concerned about customers not wearing masks and how to provide proper accommodations to employees and customers.
- Big box stores seem to have a standardized form while smaller stores have created their own.
  - The health unit has created standardized signs and the Chamber has encouraged businesses to use these resources.
- Concern that the placement of sign is not accessible to all shoppers.
- Businesses have offered other service options including online, phone, curbside and car-side service as an accommodation to those who can't wear a mask indoors.
- Some employees have been requested to remove their mask to assist with lip reading for the customer. Information sent to Chamber regarding masks with clear windows.
- Need to follow up about why face shields don't meet the threshold of a mask for those who can't wear a mask.
- Telephone and online service presents further barriers.
- Resources available through service agencies, such as CNIB, on how to provide accessible signage.
- You can't discriminate because someone can't wear a mask.
- Accessibility training may be beneficial to increase the customer service provided to people with different disabilities – visually impaired, hard of hearing, etc.

- The legislation was reviewed to determine what exemptions for mask use are being questioned and how best to assist with competing rights. For example, an employee has the right to safe work and the Ontario Human Rights Code says that a person with a disability shall be accommodated up to undue hardship. What is the threshold for undue hardship during a pandemic?
- Chamber request for the Committee to provide documentation.
- The Chamber and Administration will reach out to other municipalities to discuss best practices and determine if there are similar concerns.

The meeting recessed at 2:52 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 3:08 p.m.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting No. 03-2021 Accessibility Advisory Committee, held on March 11 2021, to be confirmed.

MOVED BY: Randy Sponchia  
SECONDED BY: Tara Lennox

THAT the Minutes of Meeting No. 03-2021 of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, held on March 11, 2021 be confirmed.

CARRIED

6. ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE

Discussion was held relative to the above noted.

- A virtual event can be held in 2021 in either an open house or pre-recorded event.
- Potential topics: COVID-19, accessibility during a pandemic, public transit.
- It was the consensus of the Committee to create and send a survey monkey to gather feedback on requested topics in June with an event potentially scheduled for September or October.

7. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The AAC's current Terms of Reference were ratified by City Council on February 11, 2019. As per the Committees Terms of Reference an annual review is required and was scheduled to take place at the March 2020 AAC meeting, which was cancelled due to COVID 19. The Terms of

Reference will be provided to members in advance of the next AAC meeting, scheduled on May 13, 2021 for discussion.

8. ROUNDTABLE OF ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

Committee members reported on accessibility issues encountered in the community.

- Suggestion to invite a representative from the TBDHU to a standalone meeting to address accessibility concerns. Administration will organize and poll the committee.
- Concerns previously addressed about COVID-19 testing for children has been addressed through the local Autism Chapter. New signage will be launched in the coming months. School boards have partnered and will be absorbing costs associated with production.
- Suggestion to include wheelchair accessible picnic tables in parks when they are upgraded.

9. NEW BUSINESS

10. 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, May 13, 2021  
Thursday, June 10, 2021  
Thursday, September 9, 2021  
Thursday, October 14, 2021  
Thursday, November 18, 2021

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:53 pm.