



Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

MINUTES

A meeting of the Stratford Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) was held on Tuesday, January 7, 2025, at 11:30 a.m., Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road W., Stratford ON

Committee Members Present: Roger Koert – Chair Presiding, Diane Sims, Jamie Pritchard, Andy Mark, Jen Weber, Joan Jones

Staff Present: Oonagh Vaucrosson – Accessibility, Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator, Nathan Bottema – Project Engineer, Casey Riehl – Recording Secretary

Regrets: Kathleen Barry, Councillor Bonnie Henderson, Brittany McCabe, Vicky Trotter – Council Committee Coordinator

1. Call to Order

Roger Koert, Chair presiding, called the AAC meeting to order at 11:36 a.m.

Reading of the Land Acknowledgement and a Moment of Silent Reflection.

Reading of the Respectful Workplace Policy.

2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None declared.

3. Adoption of the Previous Minutes

Motion by Andy Mark

Seconded by Diane Sims

THAT the minutes from the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting dated December 3, 2024 be adopted as printed. Carried

4. Infrastructure Services Update

Nathan Bottema, Project Engineer provided the following update:

- Albert Street project – Phase 2 (Front Street to Queen Street) to be completed;
- reconstruction of Avondale/Avon from John Street around to Huron Street;
- working on a draft list of asphalt resurfacing;
- drafting a list of the sidewalk and multi-use trail projects;
- will bring the final project list to the February AAC meeting once the 2025 budget has been finalized

Roger Koert inquired if the sidewalk installation on Gordon Street is scheduled to be completed. Mr. Bottema stated that yes, it is a 2025 project that will be completed. Mr. Koert stated that a site plan was reviewed for the new Starbucks that is opening on the corner of Ontario and Gordon Street and questioned if there was a sidewalk included in the initial plan. Mr. Bottema stated that there was not one included for Gordon Street. Staff requested that a sidewalk be included from Ontario Street to the front of the building. Staff has requested quite a few changes, so the developers will need to do some redesigning. There will be road widening, which will affect the overall layout.

Jen Weber inquired if there were any plans for curb cuts at the T-intersection of Short Street and Culliton Street as a very large number of pedestrians, mainly students, cross at that street and there are no curb cuts. This makes it difficult for wheelchairs, people with walkers or strollers having a curb there. Mr. Bottema noted there is an existing list of pedestrian crossovers to be installed in the City. This area was not included, however could be added in the future for consideration as it is an area that would benefit from one. Mr. Bottema will take the curb cut suggestion and discuss it with staff. He noted they are making good progress on the current list of pedestrian crossovers, with 16 crossovers listed and 11 have been completed to date.

Roger Koert suggested that the AAC could do a review of all the T-intersections in Stratford to generate a list of curb cuts that could be shared with the contractor.

Roger Koert noted that the new paved pathway through Arboretum Park is not being plowed this winter and is not usable. Mr. Koert will send the location information to Mr. Bottema to follow up with Community Services staff.

5. Site Plan Review Sub-Committee Update

Oonagh Vaucrosson, Accessibility, Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator, provided an update that the Review Sub-Committee reviewed the following plans in December:

- 525 O'Loane Avenue
- 22 Wingfield Avenue
- 662-666 Ontario Street

The review committee intends to meet virtually twice per month in order to meet the required deadlines to submit feedback on site plans. Jen Weber and Diane Sims have volunteered to be a part of the review committee, joining Roger Koert, Councillor Henderson, Jamie Pritchard and Oonagh Vaucrosson.

Sites to be reviewed so far in January:

- 976 Erie Street
- 429 Huron Street (2nd review)

6. Update from the Accessibility, Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator

Oonagh Vaucrosson updated the AAC that she will be stepping into the role of the Accessibility, Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator for now until a decision on the position has been made by Human Resources.

Oonagh Vaucrosson provided the following updates:

- The steering committee is meeting later in January and will be reviewing the terms of reference;
- The DEI Department has been dealing with an issue relating to accessibility and inclusion at City of Stratford community day camps. A parent whose child requires inclusivity while at camp, filled out an application form that indicates the camps are accessible and inclusive, however when the application was submitted and outlined what accommodations are needed, they were told those accommodations could not be met. The parent addressed this with DEI staff to discuss with the AAC and how the City can consider these requests in the future. If the City is stating on the application that they are inclusive, they need to figure out how to be inclusive for everyone;
- There has been discussion on how to streamline the booking process for the mobility bus and transition to an accessible online booking platform. Members stated that it would be helpful to be able to look online to see what pick up times are available. Discussions with the Transit Manager and input from ONAP

contacts on what they do in their communities for transit bookings with be a good start. Jamie Pritchard suggested that if the Transit Manager has any apps that they are considering, AAC members could test them on a trial basis. Ms. Vaucrosson also suggested the City may need to look into the demand and feasibility of accessible taxis;

- There is an upcoming spring ONAP conference;
- The Ministry of Accessibility and Seniors is still working on the AAC Forum, hopefully it will be re-launched later this year;
- The Mobi-Mats operating procedures are currently being worked on in collaboration with Community Services staff;
- Continuing to organize a Public Accessible Spaces Simplified (PASS) group training session to include staff and AAC members. Roger Koert suggested priority training for site plan review committee members;
- The Stratford Public Library will no longer be included in the City's AODA compliance reports and will assume their own reporting starting in 2025.

Roger Koert stated that he had suggested to Community Services staff that the Mobi-Mats could be used during the LightsOn event on Tom Patterson Island. The area is very wet and muddy and would be an asset to help with accessibility in the area around the displays. Jamie Pritchard contacted staff; however, they felt that the mats would be a hazard for able-bodied people slipping and falling on them. Mr. Koert noted that this is the exact application they intended the mats to be used for. Instead of not using the mats, perhaps there could be a trial area to see if the mats would work. Roger Koert will contact the Parks & Forestry Manager to inquire if a trial could be arranged. This is a great resource that should be used all year round at events. Shorter stakes, snow removal and salt usage should also be investigated for winter use.

Mr. Koert inquired whose role is it to ensure that the City is in compliance with AODA. Oonagh Vaucrosson stated that it is the Accessibility, Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator's role to do so. Ms. Vaucrosson stated that part of working with the Steering Committee is to have their help as well with AODA compliance. The City continues to use the online tool to ensure that the website is AODA compliant. It is connected to the website and does a scan on a weekly basis and sends out comprehensive reports to Ms. Vaucrosson to share with staff on what needs to be resolved. The goal for the City is to work towards a more proactive approach to AODA compliance.

7. Update from Council

Deferred to next meeting.

8. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

8.1 Launch of the FADM with Perth-Huron Builders Association

Oonagh Vaucrosson will try reconnecting with the PHBA to arrange a date to hold a presentation. The same information can also be made available to the community.

8.2 Update on Accessibility Audits for City of Stratford Facilities

Oonagh Vaucrosson reported that there are audits to be scheduled for the Family Services Perth-Huron office and the Stratford Public Library.

8.3 Update on Doorbell Program and AAC Promotional Items

Jamie Pritchard reported that the doorbell kits have been put together and (13) businesses have requested kits. Roger Koert will follow up with ramp requests.

The new AAC promotional items have arrived. Jamie Pritchard shared samples of the mugs, notepad/pen combo, bags and pens that were purchased. The items will be stored at the Clerk's Office in the storage room.,

8.4 Police Station Update

Diane Sims reported that she has contacted Mayor Ritsma and the contractors have returned to site to continue work on the front entrance. Mayor Ritsma has requested an update on the ramp installation from the Director of Community Services. Ms. Sims will keep the AAC updated.

9. New Business

9.1 National AccessAbility Week

Oonagh Vaucrosson stated that the theme for this year is to increase awareness of accessibility and disability inclusion in Canada. The goal is to improve understanding, reduce stigma and share best practices.

Roger Koert stated that nominations for the Annual Accessibility Award will also open up during AccessAbility Week.

9.2 Change to AAC Meeting Time

Members discussed the possibility of changing the time the committee meets from an 11:30 a.m. start to 12:00 p.m. This will assist with scheduling for members using the mobility bus service. Members present at the meeting did not have any issues with moving the meeting time.

Motion by Jamie Pritchard

Seconded by Andy Mark

THAT the monthly Accessibility Advisory Committee meetings be changed to begin at 12:00 p.m. Carried

9.3 Council Presentations

Members previously discussed doing presentations at Council to keep them up to date with what the committee is doing and also informed about accessibility issues. Currently the AAC visits Council twice a year, once during National AccessAbility Week and again for International Day of Persons with Disabilities to present the Annual Accessibility Award. Andy Mark suggested that the AAC could plan for quarterly presentations to bring more visibility to accessibility. Roger Koert suggested the addition of two advocacy opportunities at Council in approximately March and September.

Diane Sims and Andy Mark have volunteered to lead this project. Members are asked to forward any ideas for the presentations to them and Ms. Sims and Mr. Mark will draft a summary of ideas.

10. Date of Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the AAC will be held on Tuesday, February 4, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. at the Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road W., Stratford ON

11. Adjournment

Motion by Jen Weber

Seconded by Joan Jones

THAT the January 7, 2025, Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting adjourn. Carried

Start Time: 11:36 A.M.

End Time: 1:00 P.M.