

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday January 4, 2024

4:15 PM

Location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present: Warden Amanda Mombourquette, Allison Martell, Shannon Mury, Shelly Dorey, Chantal Boudreau, Councillor Michael Diggdon, Meghan Hayter, Kelly Hibbert and Danielle Martell

Absent: Jessica MacDougall, Esther McDonnell, Ashley Lavandier, and Natalie Groom

Quorum Present – Yes

Warden Amanda Mombourquette called the meeting to order at 4:20 pm

Items Added to the Agenda (Approval of Agenda):

- No Items added to the Agenda

*Moved by Shelly Dorey, seconded by Councillor Michael Diggdon, that the agenda be approved as presented. **Motion carried.***

Review of Minutes Re: November 2, 2023 Meeting:

- One edit noted for November 2, 2023 Minutes. Concerning Rick Hansen certification. Edit was added to November 2, 2023 minutes “The municipality continues to work towards their Rick Hansen certification goals. They continue to work on necessary upgrades, and it is their hope to obtain the gold standard certification when completed at the administrative building in Arichat.”

*Moved by Councilor Michael Diggdon, seconded by Shelly Dorey that the minutes be approved as amended as presented. **Motion carried.***

At this time, there was a change to items on the Agenda, Danielle Martell was asked for her updates to start off the meeting.

- **Enabling Accessibility Fund Call** – Daneille, Allison and Meghan all attended the Enabling Accessibility Fund Call. The general consensus after the call was that it really does not pertain to our committee, it is geared strictly towards persons with disabilities. During the call, the presenters were asked if the aging population may qualify for the Enabling Accessibility Fund, there was no clear answer given to this question.
- **Creation of Survey** – Daneille created a draft of a survey that could be distributed to businesses. She has designed what could be used as a hard copy of the survey, as well as a digital copy in Google forms. Danielle said that there was mention of the proposed building codes and how they are not going through at this time. Some discussion was held as to how that will affect the 2030 Access by Design. Danielle has reached out to Julie

Glaser, who is the Municipal Accessibility Support Coordinator for the Association of Municipal Administrators, NS(AMANS) to see if she might have some guidance as to what our next steps could be. Danielle shared the survey with the committee. It was noted that we should consider changing question #2 and question # 4. **Question # 2** – “On a Scale of 1 to 5, how accessible do you feel your business is? It was suggested that we may want to change it to a two-part question, one part asking how accessible it is for your employees and the second part asking how accessible it is for your customers/general public. **Question # 4** – “How can we best support your business in navigating your accessibility initiatives?” It was suggested that our role as Accessibility Committee be added, and then ask what we should focus on as a committee? Finally, it was suggested that we should add a comment area to the survey, and it was agreed that surveys could be completed digitally as well as having hard copies. When discussing the survey, Councillor Diggdon mentioned that a local community hall ran into some issues with their planned accessibility renovations. They were informed that once they initiated any interior renovations that they would have to complete all required renovations at once. Warden Mombourquette suggested that we may want to discuss this further with the municipal building inspection as well as John Bain to see if there is a consistent set of rules. Warden Mombourquette emailed John Bain to see if he might have some clarification on this. We may want to send him an invitation to attend our next Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting. We want to ensure that we have the right information before engaging the businesses and organizations. Danielle is also planning to speak with Julie Glaser in the upcoming weeks.

- **Funding Opportunities** – Danielle noted that there are some funding streams now open from Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage. The Business ACCESS Ability Grant and Community ACCESS Ability Grant. As a committee, we could be sharing this information. The deadline for both grants is February 14, 2023. The county has added a “Other Grants and Programs” link to their webpage.
- **Accessibility Training** – There is accessibility training “Accessibility Foundations,” training is slated to begin on January 18, 2024, it is a blended model of training, with group calls and self-paced learning. Currently there are three committee members committed to attending the training at this time, Danielle, Allison, and Jessica.

Acting Priorities on Plan

- The municipality continues to work towards their Rick Hansen certification goals for their municipal administration building in Arichat. The municipality has applied for the Municipal Capital Growth Program so the municipality is waiting to see if the funding will come through, which would enable the completion of larger upgrades noted in the assessment.
- Village – have not started working on their buildings as of yet, but once they start, they will be focusing on the community hub, they are exploring information on chair lifts/elevators for the hub building. Danielle to provide them with some contact information about where they could obtain prices.

Accessibility Week Discussion

- Shannon has not heard back from Jacquelyne Burneau yet about the possibility of Richmond County hosting the award ceremonies again this year, the YMCA did confirm

that they would be happy to partner with the committee again.

Update on Action Items list

- Discussion on the road shows with the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce. Due to time constraints, Warden Mombourquette suggested that we may want to do our own road shows and invite them to attend. Some discussion held that it might be easier if the Chamber would facilitate the road shows.

Committee Memberships

- Still continues to be a challenge.
- Shannon is going to be attending a webinar on committee memberships, she may find some information that will assist the committee in obtaining and retaining members.
- Danielle will be attending an AMANS session which will be discussing how to generate first voice members, which could be helpful with our committee membership.

“Accessible Now” Website

- Daneille shared with the committee the “Accessible Now” website. It is similar to a trip advisor website, where people can rate how accessible businesses and trails are throughout the Province. The province is supporting the launch of this business, and it will give ratings on both trails and businesses.

General Questions

- Allison asked if the Accessibility Advisory Committee minutes have been posted. To date, we have not been posting minutes. Warden Mombourquette stated that the municipality is currently working on a communication plan that will encompass items such as the sharing of meeting minutes. She will make sure that the Advisory Committee meetings will be included in these discussions as well. Action Item to be added to our Action Item list – Ensure AAC Packages are part of the communication plan.

Next meeting

- Our next meeting will be a virtual meeting on Thursday February 1, 2024 at 4:15 pm.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm, by Warden Amanda Mombourquette.