

Nova Scotia Accessibility Advisory Board Meeting Summary

Wednesday, October 21, 2020 – 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting by Zoom

Attendance: Doug Foster (Chair), Rosalind Penfound (Vice-Chair), Barry Abbott, Cynthia Bruce, Linda Campbell, David Caswell, Gus Reed, Kevin Russell, Anne Sinclair, Marcie Shwery-Stanley

Guests: Laurie Cranton, Chair, Built Environment Standard Development Committee

Staff: Dawn Stegen (Interim Executive Director), Gerry Post (Strategic Advisor), Jenny Sears, Terri Lynn Almeda, Caroline Read Kendell, Avery Maynard, Josh Bates, Laura Beth MacPherson, Lisa Jacobs

1. Welcome

Doug Foster, Chair, welcomed everyone to the Accessibility Advisory Board meeting.

2. Board Operations

a. Review of Agenda

The Board reviewed and accepted the agenda.

b. Approval of Minutes from Sept. 15, 2020 Meeting

Motion: Marcie Shwery-Stanley moved to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2020, meeting. David Caswell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

c. Outstanding Business

Dawn Stegen, Accessibility Directorate, provided updates regarding outstanding business from the Sept. 15, 2020, meeting. The Directorate is engaged with the new Social Innovation Office and the Executive Director could be invited to present at an upcoming Board meeting. The Directorate met with and will continue to work with the Executive Council Office to ensure the Agencies, Boards and

Commissions application process is fully accessible. Board members said that there are many accessibility barriers that need to be removed, including the application process and hard to access meeting spaces.

Directorate staff met with staff from the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women to discuss issues raised in the Not Without Us report about domestic violence and women with disabilities.

Directorate staff briefed the Minister of Justice on the Education and Built Environment recommendations. He is looking forward to meetings with the Chair of the Board and the Chairs of the Built Environment and Education standard development committees to discuss the Board's recommendations. Ministers from relevant departments will attend these meetings.

Action: Directorate to schedule a presentation by the Executive Director of the Social Innovation Office at a future Board meeting.

3. Accessibility Advisory Board

a) Standard Development Committee Updates

i. Education Standard Development Committee

Rosalind Penfound, Vice-Chair, provided an update. The Education Committee met on Sept. 16, 2020, to begin work on Phase 2 recommendations. A draft of the Phase 2 work is expected to be completed for consultations to take place in October 2021. The next Committee meeting is November 4, 2020.

ii. Built Environment Standard Development Committee

Laurie Cranton, Chair, Built Environment Standards Development Committee, provided an update. The SDC broke out into five subcommittees for their September meeting, and will meet in these smaller groups again in November. The subcommittees were formed based on a combination of subject matter expertise and interest and cover the following subject areas: Interiors, Exteriors, Emergency Systems, Wayfinding, Signage, and Site Selection, and Parks and

Recreation. At their September meeting, each subcommittee reviewed the Phase 1 recommendations and identified areas that required additional technical detail and also barriers that were not addressed in Phase 1. They identified areas requiring additional research and potential subject matter experts that they would like to hear from at their November meetings. They identified areas for Phase 2 recommendations that they will revise and expand on at their November meetings. The SDC is working towards having a complete set of draft recommendations ready for public consultation in March 2021.

The Board discussed some of what the subcommittees identified as potential Phase 2 recommendations. There were questions relating to the Building Code's adaptability requirement, braille in elevators, and barrier free entrances.

Potential topics and Board meeting speakers suggested by Board members: Update on how the national housing strategy is being implemented in Nova Scotia. Potential speakers: Nancy MacLellan, Deputy Minister of Seniors and former Deputy Minister, Municipal Affairs and Housing; Cathy Berliner, Deputy Minister, Municipal Affairs and Housing. Anne Sinclair offered to speak to the Built Environment Committee about building audits.

Action: The Directorate will share with the Built Environment Standard Development Committee the Board's comments regarding the adaptability requirements, need for braille in elevators, and importance of barrier free entrances.

Action: The Directorate will email board members information about the Nov. Lunch and Learn Breaking Barriers Series Webinar: Auditing Buildings and Outdoor Spaces for Accessibility, by Siobhan Evans, Dalhousie University.

iii. Built Environment Amended Submission

Directorate staff, Caroline Read Kendell, reported that the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) supports reference to the CSA B-651 standard in the recommendations document, but they do not want specific text included in the appendices, citing copyright concerns.

The wording of the recommendations themselves does not need to change, but the submission to the Minister of Justice must be altered to remove the wording of the CSA B-651 standard from the appendices.

Motion: Cynthia Bruce moved that the Accessibility Advisory Board submit a Recommendations for an Accessibility Standard in the Built Environment document to the Minister of Justice that maintains the wording of the recommendations as approved on August 12, 2020, with reference to the CSA B-651 Standard, but does not include the appendices. Rosalind Penfound seconded the motion.

Gus Reed moved to amend the motion to include the following words at the end: “because the CSA does not make the standards publicly available.” Linda Campbell seconded the amendment.

Amended Motion: The Accessibility Advisory Board submit a Recommendations for an Accessibility Standard in the Built Environment document to the Minister of Justice that maintains the wording of the recommendations as approved on August 12, 2020, with reference to the CSA B-651 Standard, but does not include the appendices, because the CSA does not make the standards publicly available. Motion carried.

b) 2020-2021 AAB Work Plan and Priorities

Rosalind Penfound, Vice Chair, reported on the results of the working group tasked with organizing Board priorities. Items in Categories A and B (Priority and Emergent Issues, and Board Capacity Building) will be scheduled into upcoming Board meetings. Emergent priority and capacity building issues will be brought to the attention of the Board. The Board discussed several of the items, including the need to ensure Universal Design is included in curriculums, the need to have consultants with lived experience.

Potential speakers suggested by Board members: Regarding rural capacity: 1) a representative from the Federation of Nova Scotia Municipalities; 2) John Bain, Director, Eastern Planning Commission,

Decision: Board Chair and Vice Chair work with Directorate staff to schedule Category A and B work items into upcoming Board meeting agendas.

Decision: Universal Design will be moved to Category B: Capacity Building, for Board work plan priorities.

c. Monitoring and Evaluation program update

David Caswell provided an update on the monitoring and evaluation program. The Directorate continues to work with the consultant to complete activities. An Evaluation Framework is being developed and the consultant is completing a rapid evaluation of the Standards Development process.

Action: Directorate staff will send monitoring and evaluation program update to all Board members.

4. Accessibility Directorate Update

a. Access By Design Outcomes

Lisa Jacobs, Accessibility Directorate, presented draft Access By Design outcomes. The Board did not identify any significant changes. The Board discussed whether the scope of some outcomes should be expanded beyond persons with disabilities. Further discussion of the outcomes is needed.

Decision: Access By Design outcomes will be presented to the Board for further discussion in November.

b. COVID-19 Report

Terri Lynn Almeda, Accessibility Directorate, facilitated a discussion about the provincial government's COVID-19 report about responding to the needs of Nova Scotians with disabilities. Board members agreed that this is a priority issue and challenges experienced by persons with disabilities needs to be carefully monitored. A disability lens needs to be applied to all pandemic policies to ensure they do not discriminate against persons with disabilities who may require

specific supports in their daily living. Examples provided were policies that do not permit more than one person to attend appointments, and challenges person who are blind or visually impaired experience around social distancing requirements and visual signage, and training and personal protective equipment for interpreters working in medical settings.

Action: Accessibility Directorate will follow up with Barry Abbott, Linda Campbell and Marcie Shwery-Stanley for more information on the concerns they raised, to bring these forward within government.

Action: Accessibility Directorate will follow up with Communications Nova Scotia for more information on their practices for hiring interpreters for COVID-19 media briefings.

c. Update on GNS initiatives

Laura Beth MacPherson, Accessibility Directorate, provided an overview of accessibility initiatives within the Government of Nova Scotia. The Board was overall pleased with the level of work being undertaken by the Directorate and across government. Issues introduced briefly by the Board included: contract tendering processes, representation on the Interdepartmental Committee, and accessible government Websites.

Action: Accessibility Directorate will contact Communications Nova Scotia to get an update on accessible government websites.

5. Next Meeting

Doug Foster, Chair, confirmed that the next meeting will be on Wednesday, November 17, 2020.

6. Adjournment