

**Advisory Committee on Accessibility
Minutes**

Date: Monday, February 28, 2022
Time: 5:00pm
Location: Zoom
Co-Chairs: Robert Hunn & Nahid Verma

Attendance: Councillor Isa Lee, Dasola Dina, Edward Lau, Jewell Lofsky, Kim Adeney, Michelle Del Carmen, Michelle Tremblay, Mona Nazif, Senior Manager HR (Staff Liaise), Nahid Verma (Co-Chair)

Guests: Michael Blackburn, Scott Chapman, Janet Reid, Dana Honsberger

Regrets: Ayush Patel, Elham Mahootchi, Kaushi Regunathan

Scribe: Bindi Patel

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
Call to Order	The Advisory Committee on Accessibility convened at 5:02PM with Nahid Verma in the Chair. The City’s Indigenous Land Acknowledgement was read.	
Markham Elections Presentation	<p>Michael Blackburn, Election Communications & Community Engagement Manager and Scott Chapman, Election Manager shared a presentation from Elections Markham on the upcoming 2022 Municipal Election and requested feedback from the Committee members.</p> <p>There was discussion on the following relative to the staff presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elections Markham would like to engage a sample of committee members to perform user testing on the online voting system to provide feedback from an accessibility lens. - Voting information will be readily available to all voters and posted in advance of Voting Days, along with clear signage at designated Voting Places. - Poll workers will receive training on accessible customer service and accessible voting options, with training for front-door staff to be mindful of voters with non-evident disabilities. <p><u>Accessible Voting Options</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any voter who is unable to cast an online ballot or access a Voting Place can request a ballot through Elections Markham’s Home Assistance Program. A staff person will hand deliver a ballot to the voter’s home and can assist with marking if needed. - A special ballot process will be in place for voters at retirement residences and long-term care facilities due to ongoing public health precautions in these settings. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The following accessible voting features will be available for paper ballot Voting Days (October 20 to October 22):<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Magnifierso Audio assistanceo Paddleso Information in multiple languageso Large-grip penso Sip & puffo Brailleo Assistance marking your ballot (bring someone you know or ask an election worker)- The following accessible voting features will be available for in-person online voting on Final Voting Day (October 24):<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Text zoom functiono Stylus peno Compatible with personal assistive softwareo Assistance marking your online ballot (bring someone you know or ask an election worker – in-person only) <p><u>Portal Details:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- In partnership with Essential Accessibility there will be free assistive software available for download- New election website will be launched and meet current WCAG/AODA guidelines. There will be a dedicated accessible voting page on the website with all the information. <p><u>Website Image Descriptions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- There is good use of the alternate text on the website, but there was feedback from the committee on social media posts needing to include this as well. <p><u>Accessibility for Candidates:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A candidate information campaign will be launched that provides information on how to run for Council and that supports diverse representation in council.	
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	<p><u>Candidate Contribution Rebate Program (CCRP)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To assist candidates in campaign fundraising, the City administers a Candidate Contribution Rebate Program (CCRP). - Through the CCRP, Markham voters and permanent residents living in Markham who donate to a participating Markham City Council candidate’s campaign can claim a rebate from the City after the election - The CCRP is designed to remove barriers to electoral candidacy faced by persons from underrepresented communities and support diverse representation on Council 	
<p>Community Garden Master Plan Feedback</p>	<p>Dana Honsberger, Manager of Sustainability & Asset Management, and Janet Reid shared background on Community Garden Master Plan and asked the Committee for feedback on the “<i>Community Garden Concept Plan: Kirkham Drive Allotment Gardens & Orchards Development Master Plan</i>”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are currently 8 community gardens, 4 on city property, and there are 57 families on a waiting list. - Preliminary Review of Kirkham started in 2013 – dedicated to Food Security Plot - This project is community driven, in partnership with York Region Food Network <p>The following items were discussed to make the community garden more accessible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Walkways/sidewalks to improve access to gardens - Signage to show access to this location (currently very hidden) - Bringing in people of different ages - Adding open ended Benches, and accessible picnic tables or round tables - Accessible planters – Having planters at different heights, standing level as well as wheelchair level - Accessibility of water spouts - Incorporating a sensory garden throughout the space, rather than in one specific area - Having different terrains within the space: pebbles, mulch etc. - A possible partnership with York University in a horticulture or farming program. - The importance of universal washrooms in public spaces <p><u>Wild life Management:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wildlife already exists in that space, this is unavoidable 	<p>Community Garden workshops – Email Janet Reid at jreid@markham.ca</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The biggest challenge is managing compost, as that is what attracts the unwelcome wildlife and causes issues. - Mange – contaminated wildlife could contaminate the community garden as well. 	
<p>Approval of Advisory Committee on Accessibility Minutes & Review of Action Items</p>	<p><i>Moved By:</i> Jewell Lofsky <i>Seconded By:</i> Councillor Isa Lee That the Minutes of the January 17, 2022, Advisory Committee on Accessibility, be approved as presented.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Carried</p>	
<p>Subcommittees Plan Update</p>	<p><u>Outreach Committee:</u> <i>Moved By:</i> Nahid Verma <i>Seconded By:</i> Michelle Tremblay That Edward Lau be named the chair for the outreach committee.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Carried</p> <p><u>Social Media & Communications:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ayush absent, will send an update via email </p> <p><u>Audit Committee:</u> Edward Lau provided an update on the Audit Committee in Kaushi’s absence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kim agreed to review the terms of reference with her experience at York Region. - Working on an inspection checklist for accessibility, will be circulated once it is complete. - Staff involved in the previous audit – get an update on what has been done so far. Audit recommendations National Accessibility Week Celebration is scheduled for June 1st <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will be a virtual celebration with a Keynote speaker and panel discussions - Focus will be on non-evident disabilities </p> <p><i>Moved By:</i> Councillor Isa Lee <i>Seconded By:</i> Edward Lau That the Outreach Committee to proceed with the National Accessibility Week Celebration scheduled on June 1st</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Carried</p>	<p>Audit Committee - Share checklist with all members once ready</p> <p>Mona Nazif – Invite staff to a future meeting to see what recommendations have been put into place at the Civic Centre</p> <p>Nahid Verma – coordinate with chairs regarding overlapping items</p> <p>Mona Nazif – Virtual banner with event logo & locate the old banner</p>

	<p><u>Non-evident Disabilities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working on terms of reference and definition of non-evidence disability 	
Diversity Action Plan	Mona Nazif, Senior Manager HR will provide an update on the Diversity Action plan at the next meeting.	Bindi Patel – add to March Agenda
Accessibility (AODA/IASR) Compliance Training for Staff	<p>Mona Nazif, Senior Manager HR wanted advice from the committee on providing accessibility training to all board members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When you join a board, you would receive accessibility training - Required training as a priority, whether live or online - Preference expressed by Committee to focus on legislation as a priority and where possible, to involve experts with lived experience with a disability - 	
New Business/Questions	<p><u>Robert Hunn:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Robert Hunn will be retiring from his role on the Accessibility Committee, he has been on the committee since 1995 - We will ask him to join us in March so we can all thank him - There are a number of volunteer awards, and the committee would like to look into nominating Robert for these awards. <p><u>Recruitment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently recruiting for members and would like to have representation from all disabilities. Would be beneficial to look at existing gaps. <p><u>Markham Theatre:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing lift is not adequate enough, look at how the facility can be made more accessible for those who cannot use the stairs. <p><u>Commemorative Tree – Bryan Lynch:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In conversation with staff on a Virtual commemoration, Councillor Isa Lee will provide more details as they become available. 	
Next Meeting Date	The next meeting of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility will be held on March 21, 2022.	
Adjournment	The Advisory Committee on Accessibility adjourned at 6:56 PM.	