

**Advisory Committee on Accessibility
Minutes**

Date: Monday, April 25, 2022
Time: 5:00pm
Location: Zoom
Chair: Nahid Verma

Members present:

Nahid Verma (Chair)
Michelle Del Carmen
Dasola Dina
Edward Lau
Jewell Lofsky
Elham Mahootchi

Regrets:

Kim Adeney
Ayush Patel
Kaushi Rangunathan
Michelle Tremblay
Councillor Isa Lee

Staff:

Mona Nazif, Senior Manager of Human Resources
Bev Shugg Barbeito, Committee Secretary (PT)

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
1. Call to Order	The Advisory Committee on Accessibility convened at 5:15PM with Nahid Verma in the Chair. The City's Indigenous Land Acknowledgement was read.	
2. Approval of Advisory Committee on Accessibility Minutes & Review of Action Items	<p>Moved by: Edward Lau Seconded by: Michelle Del Carmen That the Minutes of the March 21, 2022, Advisory Committee on Accessibility, be approved as presented.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Carried</p> <p>Review of Action Items: The list of the Civic Centre Audit outstanding items, and the list of Civic Centre Audit completed tasks.</p>	Deferred to the May 16, 2022 meeting

<p>3. Auditor General's Accessibility Audit</p>	<p>Mona Nazif, Senior Manager of Human Resources provided an update on the AODA Compliance Audit Report. As a large Ontario municipality, the City of Markham (“City”) must comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (“AODA”) and its standards as defined in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (“IASR”). These standards have come into force in a phased manner over the past decade.</p> <p>In 2020, Markham’s executive leadership team decided to conduct a review of the City's compliance with AODA to identify any gaps and obtain recommendations for remediation. The City's Auditor General, MMP, completed this review by reviewing documentation and holding interviews with City staff. In fall 2021, the Auditor General analyzed the data, and then produced its findings as eight observations. Markham staff created responses which were provided to the Auditor General for review. The Auditor General presented its findings and the responses from Markham staff to General Committee in March 2022.</p> <p>To enable the City to set priorities in their action plans, MNP reported the observations in one of three categories, “Low”, “Medium” or “High” based on the assessment of the severity of each non-compliance finding. Markham had one observation rated as “high” relating to outdoor play spaces, 4 medium findings, and 3 low priority findings.</p> <p>Mona Nazif reviewed the findings.</p> <p>High – <u>Playground Spaces</u> - Between 2016 and 2020, either as new playgrounds were built or old playgrounds were refurbished, sand was used for playground surface areas, and sand is not stable, creating the possibility of injuries. It was determined that 80 such playgrounds and that the City would refurbish the 80 playgrounds in an order that was equitable across all wards, so there wouldn't be any ward without a park having a stable playground surface. At a subsequent meeting in April 2022, an additional 57 parks, that were scheduled for refurbishment, were added to the existing list of 80 parks. Markham Council has asked for a plan encompassing the entire scope of all of the City's playgrounds.</p> <p>Mona Nazif reviewed the other findings, including:</p>	<p>Committee members had a follow up question: Will accessible parking spots have proximity for alignment with an electric vehicle Charger? Dana Hansberger may respond as well when attending this Committee.</p>
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- design of public spaces - one of the issues has been that the City has not trained staff on the guidelines, and so that is part of management's response to the updated accessibility design guidelines, and to make sure the design of public spaces would be accessible. The goal is that by the end of the year all relevant City departments have been trained on the accessibility design guidelines so that everybody has a common understanding of what the law is, and the standard that the City is trying to meet.
- accessible parking - although the City exceeds the requirement in terms of number of accessible parking spaces, there are not enough Type A spaces which are large enough to accommodate vans; the City intends to reallocate its parking spaces to have the right balance of Type A and Type B parking spaces and ensure that there's appropriate signage at each accessible parking space. Markham site plan staff will review submitted site plans from developers to ensure that a sufficient number of accessible parking spaces are included in all site plans. Markham will also amend the zoning bylaw to ensure the requirements for accessible parking are clear.
- duties of taxi cabs and municipalities - the City does not currently license any accessible taxicabs because it doesn't have an agreement yet with Lift or Uber, so the City still relies predominantly on York Region for its mobility transportation. However, the audit finding was that the City needed to update its bylaws to ensure that, should the City license accessible taxi cabs, that all the IASR requirements related to taxicabs are included in the bylaws.
- Accessible web content - A plan has been developed to address the Pdf documents, and the City has engaged with a vendor called Able Docs.
- Notice of temporary disruption - although the City does provide notice of temporary disruptions, it doesn't have a procedural document in an accessible place on the portal. So, the City will provide that, improve the process, and ensure that how a disruption is conveyed is more consistent throughout the organization.
- Two policies, an IASR policy and an accessible customer service policy, need to be updated and indicate what the review cycle is for each
- Annual reporting process – a process will be established and reports for 2020 and 2021 will be completed.

	<p>The audit is very helpful in terms of informing where gaps are in the City’s processes, and also in terms of indicating what the City is doing well. The Auditor General found that the City works closely with the Accessibility Committee, that the Committee is used as a forum for discussing and gathering information, and that the Advisory Committee on Accessibility provides input to the City based on their lived experience. Other strengths included the accessibility design guidelines (albeit out of date), the City’s AODA training, and finally the City’s leadership and commitment in the area of AODA initiatives.</p>	
<p>4. Speaker/Panel Event – National AccessAbility Week</p>	<p>Edward Lau provided an update on plans for the National AccessAbility Week event to be held on June 1, 2022. He advised that the event has been planned and coordinated by the Markham Advisory Accessibility Advisory Committee and subcommittee, along with staff at the Markham Library, making this a true collaboration. The Markham Public Library (“MPL”) has assisted in a number of ways: producing a communication app for us, so that we can share information about the event on social media. They also have distributed the event information through E plus.</p> <p>The keynote speaker is Michael Jacques He is currently the president of Community Living Ontario and he’s very actively connected with the sector and the provincial government. The title of the discussion is called <u>Can’t Read, Can’t Write, The Journey</u>. Michelle del Carmen will be the facilitator. It’s expected that the event will last about an hour.</p> <p>There were problems in coordinating this event because it has been a collaboration and it has been the first time of working together. There have been lessons learned which will be used for future events. Edward reported that Committee members are working diligently for the Outreach subcommittee to have materials ready. A “dress rehearsal” will be arranged in order to ensure that the equipment and Zoom will work on the day of the event. Edward thanked everyone for all their hard work to make the event successful.</p> <p>Committee members advised that they had seen the ad for the event in the <u>Markham Economist & Sun</u>. There was no update yet of registrants, and Committee members were reminded that they should also register. Committee</p>	<p>It was recommended that the Committee share the event information with advisors or caregivers, or other community institutions they are affiliated with.</p>

	<p>members mentioned that they have begun to share the event information on social media; it was recommended that the Committee share with advisors or caregivers, or other community institutions they are affiliated with. Mona Nazif advised that she can send out the link and the poster, and that there will be another email blast by the City to disability related contacts</p> <p>It was noted that there might not be a readily visible link for registration; Mona Nazif will work with the Communications Department to have the link added to the events in the portal.</p> <p>A request for the proclamation has been submitted.</p>	
<p>5. Subcommittees Plan Updates</p>	<p><u>Audit Committee:</u> Dasola reported that the subcommittee moved a motion to finalize the subcommittee terms of reference which will allow it to move forward with its work.</p> <p>The audit committee met and discussed the completed audit of the Civic Center and how we want to move forward. The Civic Center audit produced a template that could be used for future audits. The subcommittee discussed the possibility of auditing the Thornhill Community Center because it offers services for the elderly. Following Committee discussion, Edward Lau recommended that, subject to change, the Committee plan an accessibility audit at the Thornhill Community Center and let the subcommittee develop the scope of the audit. He volunteered to lead the audit after the National AccessAbility Week event. It was noted that Kaushi Ragunathan is chair of this subcommittee, and the audit should be coordinated with her.</p> <p>The subcommittee discussed the idea of having a centralized method of sharing documents and thought it was an issue for all of the subcommittees to consider.</p> <p><u>Community Outreach Committee:</u> Edward Lau advised that the priority of the Community Outreach Committee has been to work on the National AccessAbility Week celebrations.</p> <p>Mona advised that she is working on a tent, a banner and a logo. Jewell Lofsky advised that she was informed by Laura that the banner can be found in a</p>	

	<p>cupboard in the office on the main floor across from the accessible washroom. Mona advised that a 10 x 10 foot tent is being purchased. There will be an ability to have a City of Markham logo and also the ability to hang Markham Accessibility Advisory Committee banners on two different areas of the tent. She further advised that she is trying to acquire this in time for summer events after COVID.</p> <p><u>Social Media & Communications Committee:</u> No update was available..</p> <p><u>Invisible Disabilities Committee:</u> Michelle Del Carmen advised that she had a meeting with a representative from Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital with respect to another presentation called <u>Dear Everybody</u> which could be considered to be presented for the Committee’s December event.</p>	
<p>6. New Business</p>	<p>(a) Election Correspondence Committee members were reminded that this year, two government elections are scheduled to take place: the 2022 Ontario Provincial Election (on June 2) and the 2022 Markham Municipal Election (October 14 to 24). The Committee was advised that, if a member of a City of Markham advisory committee intends to become a candidate in either election, they do not need to resign from their committee seat. However, Committee members were advised of rules to follow should another committee member become a candidate, including not discussing the candidacy or campaigning during meetings, using any personal or confidential information acquired in their capacity as an advisory committee member to support their election campaign, or using the City of Markham’s corporate logo, affiliate logos, or corporate program logos in their campaign materials . In addition, advisory committees cannot publicly endorse or oppose a particular candidate, or supply a candidate with any resources which would not be similarly accessible to any other candidate or member of the public.</p> <p>(b) Diversity Action Plan Update</p>	

	<p>Mona Nazif, Senior Manager of Human Resources advised that the City of Markham’s Diversity Action Plan and Anti-Black Racism Action Plan was endorsed by General Committee at its April 19th meeting and is to be presented to Markham Council on April 26. It was noted that this is a historical milestone, because it’s both an updated diversity action plan that has accessibility included in it as well as a newly created, separate, anti-black racism action plan which also has accessibility, included throughout it. Mona Nazif congratulated Edward Lau who gave a moving deposition of what diversity and accessibility action plans mean to him as an individual lived experience.</p>	<p>Mona Nazif will distribute a copy of Edward Lau’s deposition to Committee members.</p>
7. Adjournment	<p>The Advisory Committee on Accessibility adjourned at 6:26 PM.</p>	
Next Meeting Date	<p>The next meeting of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility will be held on May 16, 2022.</p> <p>It was noted that the Committee will meet in June, have a hiatus for July and August, and then meet again in September.</p>	