

**Advisory Committee on Accessibility  
Minutes**

**Date:** Monday, June 20, 2022  
**Time:** 5:00pm  
**Location:** Zoom  
**Chair:** Nahid Verma

**Members present:**

Nahid Verma (Chair)  
 Michelle Del Carmen  
 Dasola Dina  
 Babak Esmailzadeh-faal  
 Edward Lau  
 Jewell Lofsky  
 Lee Perry  
 Kaushi Ragunathan  
 Michelle Tremblay

**Guests:**

Niina Felushko, Chair Main St. BIA  
 Jacqueline Tung, Community Engagement Coordinator  
 Jennifer Wong, Sustainability Coordinator  
 Melanie Yu, Community Engagement Assistant

**Staff:**

Janet Ashfield, Manager of Human Resources  
 Bev Shugg Barbeito, Committee Secretary (PT)

**Regrets:**

Kim Adeney  
 Elham Mahootchi  
 Ayush Patel  
 Councillor Isa Lee

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<p><b>1. Call to Order</b></p>	<p>The Advisory Committee on Accessibility convened at 5:02 PM with Nahid Verma in the Chair. The City's Indigenous Land Acknowledgement was read.</p> <p>Chair Nahid Verma welcomed new members Babak Esmailzadeh-faal and Lee Perry, and introductions were performed.</p>	
<p><b>2. Approval of Advisory Committee on Accessibility Minutes &amp; Review of Action Items</b></p>	<p><b>Moved by: Michelle Del Carmen</b>  <b>Seconded by: Edward Lau</b>  <b>That the Minutes of the May 16, 2022, Advisory Committee on Accessibility, be approved as presented.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Carried</b></p> <p><b>Review of Action Items:</b>          The list of the Civic Centre Audit outstanding items, and the list of Civic Centre Audit completed tasks.</p>	<p><b>The lists were referred back to the Audit Subcommittee for review.</b></p>

<p><b>3. Accessible Garden Plots</b></p>	<p>Jacqueline Tung, Community Engagement Coordinator, gave a presentation entitled “Kirkham Garden Overview”. She provided information about the history of Kirkham Gardens, the overall Expansion Concept and the 2022 Garden Expansion Plan, general garden guidelines, standard garden plots, and accessible raised planters.</p> <p>Committee members advised that the expansion should incorporate AODA guidelines and that accessibility features need to be considered as part of the overall planning and design process. Committee members questioned the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- design of the accessible planters, e.g., are there adjustable legs? It was noted that legs with wheels could be dangerous. Also, water underneath the accessible planter could freeze in late fall weather, requiring items to be harvested sooner than in a standard plot</li><li>- size of the planters, since the size of two planters does not appear to compare with the size of a standard plot</li><li>- rotation of planters per demand among those that require an accessible option</li><li>- proximity of accessible planters to (i) water and (ii) parking</li><li>- surface of parking lot to the plots and to the accessible planters</li><li>- accessibility of sheds</li><li>- availability of washroom facilities</li></ul> <p>It was suggested that consideration be given to waive fees for medical reasons.</p> <p>Jewell Lofsky has a contact, a former Markham employee for ideas related to accessible graders. Jewell can be reached via Laura Gold to obtain the contact information if required.</p> <p>Jacqueline Tung, Jennifer Wong, and Melanie Yu, left the meeting at 5:50 pm.</p>	<p><b>J. Tung will send the presentation to Laura Gold for distribution to Committee members.</b></p>
<p><b>4. Subcommittee Membership</b></p>	<p>New members were advised that they would join a subcommittee at the September meeting. The subcommittee Chairs described what the subcommittee does and provided an update of recent activities.</p>	

<p><b>5. Unionville Festival</b></p>	<p>Chair Nahid Verma welcomed Niina Felushko, Chair Main St. BIA. Ms. Felushko advised that the BIA would like more engagement on the revitalization aspect of Main Street Unionville and she invited Committee members to the public meeting about it on June 23, 2022.</p> <p>She also advised that the BIA recognizes the growing needs of the community and the BIA would like to implement initiatives in relation to accessibility issues. This is the first year that the BIA is hosting the Unionville Festival and comments from Committee members would be welcome about how the BIA could make more accessible the messaging on its website and the experience of those visiting its events. Committee members comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Main Street Unionville is a historical area which presents barriers to accessibility</li><li>- It will be important to coordinate efforts with the Old Unionville Community Centre and Fred Varley Art Gallery to provide access to accessible washrooms</li><li>- Ramps will be needed</li><li>- Wayfinding signage would be helpful to give people an idea of how far they might be from parking areas, specific stores/restaurants, etc.</li><li>- Better triage of directing traffic might be helpful</li><li>- Consider having a “quiet tent” for those who might get overstimulated by all that’s going on at an event like the Unionville Festival</li><li>- Consider making messaging more accessible, possibly devoting a portion of the website to accessible matters.</li></ul> <p>The Committee suggested that the website for Toronto Sign Language Interpreter Service (<a href="https://www.tslis.ca">Toronto Sign Language Interpreter Service (tslis.ca)</a>) be consulted for information; sign language interpreters were used successfully as part of the National AccessAbility Week event.</p> <p>Ms. Felushko wondered about having an expert to attend BIA events to provide feedback about initiatives that could be undertaken; Committee members agreed this would provide the most reliable feedback. It was noted that the Committee does not meet during the summer but individual members</p>	<p>Information about ramps may be found at <a href="#">StopGap Foundation – Helping communities discover the benefit of barrier free spaces and providing support to create them.</a></p> <p>Additional ideas can be sent to Dasola, who will forward them and the Accessibility Checklist to Ms. Felushko.</p> <p>Additional ideas may also be shared at:</p> <p><a href="mailto:Niina@InsightfulFinancial.ca">Niina@InsightfulFinancial.ca</a></p> <p>Or</p> <p><a href="https://unionvilleinfo.com">https://unionvilleinfo.com</a></p>
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	<p>could volunteer to attend the BIA events and provide feedback on accessibility issues. It was also suggested that the BIA connect with schools to best reach the community, possibly helping to organize field trips that would integrate accessibility into the curriculum. It was noted that there used to be parking maps for both Markham and Unionville that showed accessible parking spots at that time; if they could be found, they could be used as a starting point for updates.</p> <p>Ms. Felushko thanked the Committee members for sharing their ideas; she left the meeting at 6:20 pm.</p>	
<p><b>6. Subcommittees Plan Updates</b></p>	<p><b><u>Audit Committee:</u></b>          Dasola Dina reported that, prior to Covid, the subcommittee completed an audit of the Markham Civic Centre. It recently proposed that the subcommittee audit the Thornhill Community Center and Thornhill Seniors Club in fall 2022.</p> <p><b><u>Community Outreach Committee:</u></b>          Edward Lau advised that the Outreach Subcommittee, in partnership with the other subcommittees and also Markham Public Libraries, plans and hosts events to celebrate the National AccessAbility Week during the first week of June and United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3. The virtual event held in June required considerable group effort but the event was well received.</p> <p>Edward Lau left the meeting at 6:45 pm.</p> <p><b><u>Social Media &amp; Communications Committee:</u></b>          No report was available.</p> <p><b><u>Invisible Disabilities Committee:</u></b>          Michelle Del Carmen advised that this subcommittee has been drafting terms of reference and goals. It supports the Outreach Subcommittee’s efforts for</p>	

	the National AccessAbility Week celebrations and supports the Audit Committee in its work.	
<b>7. New Business</b>	<p>Janet Ashfield, Manager of Human Resources, advised that Mona Nazif has left the City of Markham and a liaison for the Committee will be assigned in fall 2022. Committee members mentioned that Mona Nazif was a great champion of the Committee’s efforts and she will be missed. The Committee expressed hope that this change would not affect the momentum that had been created; the Committee advised that it would need a true partner with the capacity to support the Committee, particularly with planning for the upcoming audit of the Thornhill Community Center and Thornhill Seniors Club. It was proposed that the Committee draft a letter listing the competencies and expertise needed.</p> <p>Chair Nahid Verma advised that she will reach out to members who have not been regularly attending Committee meetings to determine their interest in continuing to work with the Committee.</p>	<p>Janet Ashfield will advise the committee members of the new staff liaison for the Committee.</p> <p>Nahid Verma will draft the letter; Michelle Tremblay, Michelle del Carmen and Kaushi Ragunathan will assist with editing.</p>
<b>8. Adjournment</b>	The Advisory Committee on Accessibility adjourned at 7:00 PM.	
<b>Next Meeting Date</b>	The next meeting of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility will be held on <b>September 19, 2022.</b>	