

**Town of Markham  
Advisory Committee on Accessibility  
Wednesday, January 18 2012, 3:30 p.m.  
Canada Room  
Minutes**

**Committee Members Present:**

Councillor Valerie Burke  
Councillor Don Hamilton  
Councillor Alan Ho  
Jaqueline Bell  
Sidney Polak, Chair  
Kristen Hayes  
Robert Hunn  
Arlene Juanillo  
Brian Lynch

**Staff Present:**

Warren Rupnarain, Accessibility Coordinator  
Don Taylor, Manager, Executive Operations  
Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator

**Regrets:**

Joan Jenkyn  
Cindy Jones Shrek  
Margit Swift

The Advisory Committee on Accessibility convened at 4:42 p.m. with Sidney Polak presiding as Chair.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

There was a suggestion to remove the following sentence from page six of the November 24, 2011 minutes:

“It was suggested that the Committee’s Terms of Reference be updated to say periodic audits as a situation arises”.

Moved by Councillor Don Hamilton  
Seconded by Councillor Alan Ho

That the minutes of the November 24, 2011 Advisory Committee on Accessibility be adopted as amended.

**CARRIED.**

**2. RECREATION SPECIAL NEEDS COMMITTEE**

Ms. Marsha Mariani, Recreation Services, Program Outreach Coordinator, provided a presentation on the Recreation Special Needs Committee. A brief history of the Committee was provided; an overview of the programs it provides; and information on how the Committee’s may work together.

### Discussion

There was an inquiry whether the adapted yoga program organized through the Recreation Special Needs Committee is the same yoga program that was offered to persons with Multiple Sclerosis. Staff advised that this is a different program.

A Member noted that there are adapted swim programs offered at the Thornhill Therapeutic Pool.

There was a question regarding why Markham children are being sent to Bloorview Hospital for recreational services. A Member of the Recreation Special Needs Committee advised that Bloorview has the expertise to provide a full range of therapeutic and adapted programs for children with a disability. It was questioned if this expertise exists within Markham. It was advised that this expertise is limited within Markham, although, the York-Simcoe Children's Network provides a similar service. It was questioned if the Town's facilities satisfy the needs of persons with a disability. It was reported that Markham's facilities are improving with time.

It was questioned if these recreational services are for adults or for children. It was reported that currently a majority of the programs organized through the Recreation Special Needs Committee are for children. However, the committee would like to provide more adapted recreational programs for adults.

There was a question regarding the Chinese participation in the adapted recreational programs in Markham. It was confirmed that there is a high participation rate of both physically and mentally challenged Chinese residents. It was questioned how staff manage language barriers between Chinese families and staff. Staff advised that communication gaps are managed through the Contact Centre. There was an inquiry regarding how the adapted recreational programs are promoted. It was noted that the programs are typically promoted through the Childs Treatment Network, Occupational Therapist, Medical Practitioners and Markham Life.

Moved by Councillor Don Hamilton

Seconded by Arlene Juanillo

That the Clerk's Office and the Accessibility Coordinator investigate the feasibility of having the Recreation Advisory Committee for Persons with a Disability as a Sub-Committee of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility.

CARRIED.

### **3. ASSISTED WASTE COLLECTION PROGRAM**

Ms. Kimberley Dunsmoor, Community Outreach Coordinator, provided a presentation on the Town's assisted waste program "Helping Hand". The following information was presented:

background information on the program; an overview of how the program works; and information on the promotion of the program.

#### Discussion

There was a question regarding the qualifying criteria for the program. It was noted that the criteria is available online or through the contact centre and that the resident must have a temporary or permanent physical disability to qualify for the program

There was inquiry regarding whether the contractor could enter the home to collect the garbage. It was clarified that the contractor cannot enter the home or a closed garage to collect the garbage. The garbage can either be left on the front or side entrance of the home or in an open garage.

There was an inquiry regarding whether this applies to both garbage and recycling. It was confirmed that the service is for all waste types (e.g. garbage, recycling and organic waste).

It was noted that although this is an excellent program it could be open to abuse and that it is ideal to have neighbours helping neighbours. Staff advised that this program is intended as a last resort for residents with a disability and that neighbours and families are typically asked to assist first. It was noted that the home visit and a follow-up call will help control any abuse of the program.

There was an inquiry regarding how residents will be referred to the program. Staff advised that residents will be referred to the program through agencies such as Meals on Wheels and through Health practitioners. It was noted that there will be minimal promotion of the program in order to manage the response rate. The program will be advertised through Councillor Newsletters and possibly in local Markham newspapers. It was suggested that an information pamphlet be provided to the Councillors to include with their Newsletters.

#### Discussion on Super Mailboxes

A Member noted that it can be difficult to access mailboxes for persons with a disability. Staff advised that there is a need to establish standards regarding super mailboxes to ensure all residents receive a similar level of service.

Moved by Kristen Hayes

Seconded by Arlene Juanillo

That the Advisory Committee on Accessibility recommend that staff investigate the possibility of establishing standards for super mailboxes in Markham.

CARRIED.

There was a discussion on having door-to-door mail service for persons with a disability in Markham.

Moved by Councillor Valerie Burke

Seconded by Robert Hunn

That the Advisory Committee on Accessibility request that Warren Rupnarain investigate the possibility of having door to door mail service in Markham for residents with a disability.

CARRIED.

#### **4. OTHER BUSINESS**

##### **a. Parking Reserve**

Mr. Warren Rupnarain, Accessibility Coordinator, advised that the City of Richmond Hill allocates 50% of its parking revenue obtained from patrons parking illegally in accessible parking spots into a reserve fund. These funds are then used for accessibility retrofitting projects throughout Richmond Hill.

Mr. Don Taylor, Manager of Executive Operations, advised that the Town uses a different method of allocating funds to accessibility retrofit projects. In 2012, the Town has allocated \$200,000 to accessibility improvements. The Committee felt that the Town's method of allocating funds towards accessibility retrofit projects was working and it recommended the status quo. However, it recommended that Councillor Carolina Moretti come to the February meeting to provide her insight on having a parking reserve in Markham, as perhaps there was something the Committee had overlooked.

##### **b. Appointment to Cycling & Pedestrian Advisory Committee**

The Committee discussed appointing an Advisory Committee on Accessibility Committee Representative to the Cycling & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (CPAC). The Committee requested that Councillor Don Hamilton represent the Committee's interest at meetings, as there were no members able to attend CPAC meetings at this time.

##### **c. Accessible Gas Stations Article**

Mr. Warren Rupnarain, Accessibility Coordinator, advised that the article on Accessible Gas Stations, which was published in a Multiple Sclerosis newsletter, recognizes the Town of Markham for its work pertaining to accessible gas stations. It was noted that Markham's goal is to have a grid of accessible gas stations on Markham's website stipulating each gas station's level of accessibility.

Mr. Rupnarain reported that Esso is revisiting its policy which requires patrons with a disability to provide 24 hours notice in order to receive accessible customer service. A more comprehensive update on accessible gas stations will be provided at the next meeting.

**d. Update on Times Required to Review Site Plans**

Mr. Rupnarain reported that it will typically take from 15 minutes to over an hour to review a site plan depending on the complexity of the plan. The Committee was advised that Planning Staff will help the Committee review the site plans.

The Committee discussed their concern regarding the location/re-location of several accessible parking spots, some of which included: the accessible parking spots at the Tim Hortons located at Kennedy & Major Mackenzie; the accessible parking spots at the plaza on 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue & Castlemore; and the accessible parking spots at a Markham health clinic located at 8 Cox Boulevard. Members were concerned there may be an issue with the site plan process. It was suggested that the Town consider passing a by-law stipulating where accessible parking spots be located.

A Member suggested that there should be accessible parking spots in school parking lots. It was explained that all schools have accessible parking spots. However, parents cannot enter the parking lot during the 20 minute rush period for safety concerns.

It was noted that all site plans need to be approved by the Planning Department. This includes the relocation of accessible parking spots. It was recommended that staff discuss the Committee's concerns regarding the site plan process and the location of accessible parking spots with Planning Staff and report back at the next meeting.

**e. Update on Auditing Facilities Scheduled for Accessibility Retrofit**

Mr. Rupnarain confirmed that the Advisory Committee on Accessibility will be able to audit Town facilities scheduled for accessibility retrofit.

**f. Background Information on Retrofitting Of Heritage Properties**

The Committee Clerk circulated minutes from the October 27, 2010 Advisory Committee on Accessibility meeting, as Regan Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning, provided a presentation at this meeting on accessibility retrofitting and heritage properties. The Committee will decide its next steps at the next meeting.

**g. Work Plan**

The Committee reviewed a draft work plan, noting that some of these items can be assigned timeline and others will be ongoing. The following items were discussed:

Barriers Sub-Committee

The following persons were appointed to the Barrier Sub-Committee:

Kristen Hayes  
Councillor Valerie Burke  
Jacqueline Belle  
Arlene Juanillo

#### Board of Trade Accessibility Award

It was reported that the Board of Trade accessibility award nomination form is typically available in February or March. The Committee was encouraged to nominate as many businesses as possible. Mr. Rupnarain will email the Committee the nomination form when it becomes available.

#### Working with Business Improvement Areas

Mr. Rupnarain was requested to ask the Unionville Business Improvement Area and the Markham Village Business Improvement Area if a representative from the Committee could come to an upcoming meeting to present the benefits of having an accessible business. It was noted that the presentations should be made in the first quarter of 2012.

#### Accommodation Audit

It was reported that audits will occur on an ongoing basis. The Committee may also make recommendations to add an accommodation to the Access Canada Guide.

#### Accessible Gas Stations

It was reported that accessible gas stations will be discussed on an ongoing basis.

#### Collaboration with key stakeholders

It was noted that key organizations will be invited to come to upcoming meetings to make presentations on areas of interest to the Committee. The Committee can use these opportunities to build partnerships.

#### National Access Week

It was noted that a Promotion Sub-Committee was appointed at the October 19, 2011 Advisory Committee on Accessibility meeting. It was requested that Sidney Polak be added to the membership of the Promotion Sub-Committee.

The Committee approved the draft work plan.

#### **h. Romulo S. Romero Workshops**

The Committee briefly discussed this item. It was noted that Mr. Romero was offering his services for free. The Committee was not sure if his workshop was a good fit for this Committee, but deferred further discussion on this item to the next agenda.

**h. Thornhill Square Update**

Mr. Brian Lynch reported that the Committee's accessibility concerns regarding Thornhill Square have been addressed.

**i. Excellence Canada Award**

Mr. Rupnarain reported that the Town of Markham received the Excellence Canada Award.

**j. Board of Trade Award**

It was noted that the Ministry came and videoed why the Second Cup located at Warden and Highway 7 provides excellent accessible customer service.

**5. NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility will be held on February 15, 2012 at 3:30 p.m. in the Ontario Room.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

The Advisory Committee on Accessibility adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

**Attachment: Outstanding Items List (updated September, 2011)**

**1. Promotions and Business Initiatives Subcommittee**

- a) Board of Trade Awards: invite winner to AAC meeting to celebrate the achievement.

**2. Promotions Subcommittee**

- a) Councillor Alan Ho to liaise with other organizations in such events as roundtable meetings and breakfast meetings - ongoing
- b) Joining the Coalition of Ontario Accessibility Advisory Committees. Warren will provide more information regarding the benefits of joining – Completed, information was sent out by email.

**3. Barriers Subcommittee**

- a) The developer of the new development on Highway 48, south of Major Mackenzie Drive, has agreed to implement the Committee' suggestion regarding its accessibility concerns - Warren Rupnarain will provide update in 2012
- b) Warren Rupnarain and Biju Karumanchery will talk on an ongoing basis regarding major Town projects
- c) Warren to Rupnarain to ask Biju Karumanchery how much time it takes to review a site plan/ plans for a major renovation – completed by January 2012
- d) Appoint Sub-Committee - January 2012 meeting.

**4. Lack of accessible parking on Main Streets in Unionville and Markham.**

Markham BIA has attended to discuss parking issues. AAC members were encouraged to attend a future BIA meeting and submit an article for their newsletter. (Sidney to attend)  
- Upcoming Markham Seminar

Unionville BIA attended in September, 2010 and encouraged AAC to work on parking and washroom issues with the Town – Upcoming Unionville Seminar



**5. Main Street Environmental Assessment**

Warren and Markham BIA to coordinate efforts to ensure accessibility issues are not missed.

Dale MacKenzie will present digitally enhanced drawing at the next stage in design process – March 2012

Town engineering staff will encourage existing business owners to explore accessibility opportunities – Dale Mackenzie, throughout 2012

Committee plans to make presentation to the BIA in 2012.

**6. Heritage/Accessibility**

- Staff to provide info on coordination of accessibility (Warren) - ongoing
- Update on the BIA mandate to be provided following Council/BIA workshop

**7. National Access Week Event**

Start the Planning and Execution of a larger scale event for the 2012 National Access Week in the fall of 2011 – All Committee Members.

8. Provide update on accessibility concerns at the Hilton Hotel – Warren Rupnarain
9. Investigate the feasibility of having the Recreation Advisory Committee for Persons with a Disability as a Sub-Committee of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility – Laura Gold and Warren Rupnarain
10. Investigate standards for super mailboxes in Markham – Waste Management Staff
11. Investigate having door-to-door mail service for persons with a disability in Markham – Warren Rupnarain
12. Invite Carolina to the February meeting to provide her insight on having a parking reserve in Markham – Laura Gold
13. Provide a more comprehensive Accessible Gas Station update at the February meeting – Warren Rupnarain
14. Discuss the Committee's concern regarding the site plan process with Staff – Warren Rupnarain

15. Decide what the Committee next steps are with respect to accessibility retrofitting of heritage properties – All Committee Members
16. Email the Committee the Board of Trade nomination form when it becomes available – Warren Rupnarain
17. Schedule a date to present the benefits of making businesses accessible with the UBIA and MVBIA – Warren Rupnarain
18. Add Romulo S. Romero's Work Shop to the next agenda – Laura Gold