

Town of Markham
Advisory Committee on Accessibility
Thursday, November 24, 2011, 3:30 p.m.
Council Chamber
Minutes

Committee Members Present:

Councillor Valerie Burke
Councillor Don Hamilton
Councillor Alan Ho
Jaqueline Bell
Sidney Polak, Chair
Kristen Hayes
Robert Hunn
Joan Jenkyn
Cindy Jones Shrek
Arlene Juanillo
Brian Lynch
Margit Swift

Staff Present:

Murray Boyce, Seniors Project Coordinator
Warren Rupnarain, Accessibility Coordinator
Don Taylor, Manager, Executive Operations
Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator

Regrets:

None

The Advisory Committee on Accessibility convened at 3:32 p.m. with Sidney Polak presiding as Chair.

1. ACCESSIBLE HOUSING STRATEGY

Mr. Murray Boyce, Seniors Project Coordinator of Policy and Special Projects, provided a presentation on the Draft Affordable and Special Needs Housing Strategy.

Discussion

There was an inquiry regarding the demand for affordable housing in Markham. Staff advised that the demand far exceeds the supply for affordable housing in Markham. Currently, there are only 6,000 affordable housing units in York Region and there is a waitlist of approximately 5,000 households. It was suggested that Members read the Affordable and Special Needs Housing Strategy on the website to better understand the affordable housing needs in Markham.

There was a question with respect to where the Town plans to build affordable housing. Staff advised that the new Official Plan will allow affordable housing in various locations and building types throughout Markham. It was explained that the Plan can only dictate the land use not the tenant type. The goal is to have affordable housing throughout the Town, noting that more affordable housing will be permitted in areas close to transit.

There was an inquiry regarding how Markham integrates affordable housing into neighbourhoods, as the Committee was concerned with placing seniors and persons with a disability into low income areas. It was explained that Markham integrates affordable housing units with market value units. This strategy is believed to better integrate affordable housing into existing neighbourhoods without creating pockets of low income housing. In support of this

theory, Council is considering purchasing units in condominiums to further integrate affordable housing into existing neighbourhoods. The Committee believed there was a strong need to improve public perception of affordable housing by educating the public on affordable housing strategies. The Tony Wong project is a success affordable housing project that can be shared with the public.

A Member questioned if the Community Care Access Centre in York Region is consulted on matters pertaining to affordable housing. Staff advised that both the Province and York Region would work with the Community Care Access Centre in York Region and other similar types of agencies on resolving matters pertaining to affordable housing.

A Member inquired how a family could obtain affordable housing in Markham. Staff advised that they should contact the Region to obtain more information on affordable housing. It was noted that in Markham basement apartments are prohibited, excluding basement apartments that existed prior to the legislation.

It was questioned if the aging demographic has been factored into both the future demand for affordable housing and the type of structures being built. Staff confirmed that demographics are being considered as part of Markham's affordable housing strategy. Staff thought more apartments and townhouses will be built going forward.

There was a discussion on the Accessibility Design Guidelines. It was noted that the Accessibility Design Guidelines are to encourage developers to build more accessible structures. A member suggested that these guidelines should be followed when the Town is reviewing affordable housing plans. Staff advised that Council can consider these guidelines in its approval process, but that the Town can not dictate the type of structures that are built.

It was questioned if the Town could negotiate the number of accessible units included in an affordable housing project and if there are targets pertaining to the number of accessible units. Staff advised that the accessibility requirements are considered when developing affordable housing projects, but information pertaining to the target number of units was unknown. It was thought that the Town must first better understand how it could measure the number of accessible units before establishing targets, noting that targets cannot be included in the Official Plan.

2. Approval of Minutes – October 19, 2011 – All Committee Members

A minor correction was made to the minutes.

Moved by Robert Hunn

Seconded by Bryan Lynch

That the Minutes of the October 19, 2011 Advisory Committee on Accessibility be approved as amended.

CARRIED.

3. **FOCUS 2012 – Sidney Polak**

The Chair advised that the Committee has two sub-committees: the Barriers Sub-Committee; and the Promotion Sub-Committee. These sub-committees will assist the Committee in fulfilling its roles and responsibilities. Ms. Joan Jenkyn requested the contact information for the persons on the Promotion Sub-Committee.

The Committee reviewed the Terms of Reference:

1. *a-e. Identify remove and prevent barriers: removal of barriers for Markham Accessibility Plan*

The Chair advised that the Accessibility Plan will only be updated every five years. Therefore, the Advisory Committee on Accessibility will not be reviewing the Plan in 2012.

2. *Review site plans and drawings*
&
4. *Review proposals and plans for new and major renovation projects*

Note: Clause 3. of the Terms of Reference no longer applies.

The Accessibility Coordinator advised that the Committee will only review major site plans due to time limitations. In addition, an accessibility checklist was developed by the Committee for staff to use when reviewing site plans and the Committee's Councillor Liaisons bring accessibility concerns regarding a site plan to Council's attention. A Member requested that the accessibility checklist be provided to the Committee.

It was recommended that a sub-committee be appointed to review major site plans/ major renovation plans. The Chair clarified that plans would be reviewed outside of regularly scheduled meetings. It was suggested that the sub-committee meetings be open to the entire Committee. The Accessibility Coordinator was requested to get more information on the time requirements for reviewing site plans/major renovation plans and report back at the next meeting. The appointments to the sub-committee can be made at this time.

5. *To conduct periodic audits of public facilities and recommend accessibility retrofits*

The Chair advised that the Committee has not been exercising this role and responsibility, with the exception to auditing building where an accessibility concern was brought to the Committee's attention. A Member questioned how the Committee would decide what public facility should be audited. Staff suggested that the Committee audit facilities that are scheduled by Asset Management for accessibility retrofit. Don Taylor, Manager of Executive Operations, advised he would discuss this possibility with the Director of Asset Management.

Business and Community Outreach

6. *To conduct periodic audits on business establishments as agreed upon.*

The Committee agreed to conduct periodic audits on businesses as a situation arises (e.g. Le-Parc). It was suggested that the Committee's Terms of Reference be updated to say periodic audits as a situation arises.

Discussion on Periodic Audit of the Hilton Hotel

It was noted that the automatic door openers were not functioning at the Hilton hotel located at the corner of Warden Avenue and Highway 7. Additionally, the door was very narrow, which made it difficult for a wheelchair or scooter to enter the building. The Accessibility Coordinator has brought this issue to the attention of the General Manager at the Hilton. An update will be provided at an upcoming meeting.

7. *Encourage the adopting of innovative principles that allow for full access*

It was noted that Developers are encouraged to use the Accessibility Design Guidelines on an ongoing basis. Staff advised that the document will evolve overtime with changes to legislation and standards.

The Chair noted that business initiatives will fall under the roles and responsibilities of the Promotion Sub-Committee. Its projects will include: the Markham Board of Trade Award; working with the Business Improvement Areas (BIA's) to educate them on the economic benefits of having an accessible business; reviewing heritage restrictions to accessibility retrofitting of heritage properties; promoting the concept of universal design; conducting an accommodation audit for Markham hotels and motels listed in Access Guide Canada; and promoting accessible gas stations.

Discussion on Board of Trade Award

There was a discussion on the Accessibility Markham Board of Trade Award. It was noted that the Participation House was the 2011 winner of the award. However, both Second Cup and Milestones will receive coverage from the Province for being very accommodating to persons with accessibility challenges. Going forward, nomination forms should clearly state why a business is being nominated for the award. It was reported that both Second Cup and Milestones can be nominated again for the award in 2012.

Staff advised that there are not too many accessibility awards currently being provided and that other municipalities have demonstrated an interest in establishing a similar award to the Markham Board of Trade Award (e.g. Town of Whitby may be establishing an accessibility award). Members were advised that the nomination form will be available on the Markham Board of Trade website. Members may advise Warren of any businesses they would like to nominate until the form is available online. It was noted that the Committee would like to focus on nominating private businesses in 2012.

Discussion on Heritage Restrictions

The Committee Clerk was requested to see when the Manager of Heritage Planning presented to the Committee on accessibility retrofitting of heritage properties.

8. Advocate, promote and support programs and initiatives for persons with disabilities

The Committee will focus on promoting and supporting the following: National Access Awareness Week; working to make outdoor events more accessible for persons with special needs; provide more accessible washrooms, parking spots and drop off a pick up areas for Para Transit vehicles; and accessible trail systems.

The Committee will continue to use promotional materials to promote the Committee and to create awareness of matters pertaining to accessibility. This will include the distribution of brochures at events.

Liaison with Key Stakeholders.

Cindy Jones Shrek and Warren Rupnarain agreed to liaison with key stakeholders (e.g. other Advisory Committees on Accessibility and community organizations).

Seniors Advisory Committee

It was recommended that the Seniors Advisory Committee be consulted on matters that would also affect seniors. Staff suggested that the Chair of the Seniors Advisory Committee be invited to meetings where there are items on the agenda of joint interest.

Action Items

The Committee reviewed and updated the list of action items.

4. Other Business

a. Parking Reserve

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

b. Appointment Cycling & Pedestrian Advisory Committee Representative

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

5. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility will be held on Wednesday, January 14, 2011 at 3:30 p.m. in the Canada Room.

6. Adjournment

The Advisory Committee on Accessibility adjourned at 5: 46 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 – January 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. Toronto Parking Regulations

Disabled parking is permitted in any “no parking” areas in Toronto. Gord Landon offered to bring this matter forward at the next Parking Advisory Committee meeting. An email will be sent to the Committee.

7. Heritage/Accessibility

- Staff to provide info on coordination of accessibility (Warren) - ongoing
- Update on the BIA mandate to be provided following Council/BIA workshop
- Laura Gold to see when the Manager of Heritage Planning last came to an Advisory Committee on Accessibility meeting – January 2012

8. 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.

9. Cycling & Pedestrian Committee

Appoint a new Advisory Committee on Accessibility Representative to Cycling and Pedestrian Committee – January 2012 agenda item

10. Provide Joan Jenkyn with the contact information for the Promotions Sub-Committee – Laura Gold, complete by January 2012
11. Provide Accessibility Checklist to Committee – Warren Rupnarain, complete by January 2012
12. Discuss with the Director of Asset Management the possibility of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility auditing public facilities scheduled for accessibility retrofit – Don Taylor
13. Consider changing the Terms of Reference to say periodic audits as situation arises – Warren Rupnarain

14. Provide update on accessibility concerns at the Hilton Hotel – Warren Rupnarain