

**MINUTES**  
**ACCESSIBILITY, DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
Via Microsoft Teams  
**October 4, 2023, at 5:02 p.m.**

Present: Councillor Mena Westhaver, Stephan Herman, Laurie-Anne Keith (5:06 p.m.), Donald Kennedy, and Reed Poynter.

Staff: Paul de Greef, Parks Planning and Development Manager; Ryan Hix, Project Delivery Manager; Dale Samsonoff, People and Programs Manager; Becky Goodall, Park Planner Designer; Allison Newcomb, HR Associate Advisor; Tara Da Silva, Senior Committee Clerk.

Regrets: Maya Bosdet, Rae Franklin, Kam Judge, Shapna Mazumber, Rachid Ouache

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Due to lack of quorum, no motions were passed.

### **CHAIR'S REMARKS**

The Chair welcomed the committee members, and the following was noted:

- The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) meeting was exciting and informative.
- The Walk-and-Roll Accessibility Tour report will be emailed to the committee members.
- Ensuring Safety, Accessibility and Independence in Active Travel Schemes for Blind and Visually Impaired Bus Passengers event was enlightening and well attended.
- Applications for the Appointment to Advisory Committees, Foundations and Boards will be accepted until November 10, 2023.
- The Committee Recognition Event is on October 19, 2023, and all members are encouraged to attend.

### **ACCESSIBILITY PLANS FOR THE MUNICIPAL HALL**

The Project Delivery Manager gave the following presentation (PowerPoint on file), and the following was noted:

- In 1965, the Saanich Municipal Hall opened. In 2004, it was designated as a heritage building. The building codes have vastly changed since 1965 and applications for upgrades can be challenging.
- The building has three stories and one elevator.
- More workplace toilets and bathrooms are required.
- The wheelchair accessible bathroom is located on the first floor and will be upgraded in November 2023.
- The number of staff in the hall has increased and office space is limited.
- There are new security requirements for the hall which will secure staff-only areas.

- The two committee rooms on the main floor will have push-to-open activation switches installed.
- The Human Resources Department, Communications Department and staff lunchroom will be accessible to staff only.
- The public area on the second and third floor will have new public counters and security doors. Push-to-open activation switches are a future opportunity.
- A low accessible counter will allow room for a wheelchair.
- The reception area desk will be lowered for accessibility in the future.
- Hearing loops are a possible solution for the acrylic barrier shields.
- Single toilet washrooms are now multigender.
- The second and third floor washrooms are available to the public.
- Exterior signage has been updated to the active wheelchair symbol.
- 13 facilities in Saanich are under assessment for an upgrade.
- The draft estimate cost to update the municipal hall is \$2,000,000.
- Aisle widths are narrower due to the increase of work stations and this will be addressed.

The committee made the following comments, and the following was noted:

- Accessibility for staff may decrease due to the security upgrades.
- Funding could be considered by Council.
- The architect's report will not be made public. A summary could be available.
- The operators of each building provided excellent feedback.
- Customer feedback about the accessibility upgrades was encouraging.
- Plexiglass is difficult for the site loss community and more drilled holes could help.

The Chair made the following comments, and the following was noted:

- The draft report estimate cost includes all 13 locations and is for the highest standard. There are improvements that can be done for a lower cost. Prioritizing projects with a phased approach will be important.
- The staff lunchroom is accessible from the outside. The size of the wheelchair will determine the accessibility.

\*\*\*The Project Delivery Manager exited the meeting at 5:40 p.m.\*\*\*

## **PEOPLE, PETS, AND PARKS – PLANNING AND DESIGN**

The Park Plan Designer gave the following presentation (PowerPoint on file), and the following was noted:

- Accessibility guidelines and strategies are used within parks.
- Universal design and signage that is easy to read is a general rule.
- 8 accessible washrooms have been upgraded.
- Useable and accessible trail systems have been enhanced on Mt. Tolmie.
- Playgrounds are replaced and repaired regularly. Equipment is constantly upgraded.
- Wood chips qualify as an accessible surface material.

- Playground equipment have transfer stations for physical or visually handicapped children.
- The beach mat at Gyro Park is the only one in Saanich. It is challenging to keep clear from debris but is well used.
- The benches at Lambrick Park are designed to be accessible. The tables have extended ends and concrete pads for wheelchairs.
- The *Enabling Accessibility Fund* has provided some funding for various projects in Saanich's parks.
- Topography is a challenge in many of the parks.
- The leash optional parks have wider trails and grades that will allow for all users.
- Enclosed leash optional areas could be developed with wider gates to enter, material to accommodate walking aids and wheelchairs, seating, and clear signage.
- The People, Pets, Parks strategy is not a design concept. The considerations are part of the design process. Saanich is currently in the strategy stage.
- PKOLS parking lot is having several upgrades done to the walkways and curb letdowns.
- A future presentation to the committee about Park design is welcome.
- Information gathered from the *Pop-up Dog Parks pilot project* has offered insight for future facilities and the amenities they could provide. The learning outcomes included the durability of the fencing and the maintenance requirements for the turf. This program was in place for 5 months. A phased approach is expected and new locations could be explored.

\*\*\*The Parks Planning and Development Manager and the Parks Plan Designer exited the meeting at 6:12 p.m.\*\*\*

## **ACCESSIBILITY ENGAGEMENT SESSION UPDATES**

The Manager of People and Programs gave an overview of the report (on file), and the following was noted:

- On August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023, the draft plan was released. Feedback is being gathered from the community through focus groups and email correspondence.
- The consulting engagement is complete.
- The engagement results and the final plan will be presented at the November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to the committee.
- The hope is that the committee will move to endorse the final plan which will then be brought to Council for adoption.

The committee made the following comments, and the following was noted:

- A description of the pictures on the website would be helpful to the sight loss community.
- The organizations that have provided feedback have been sent a copy of the draft.
- The volume of community feedback has been low. This could indicate that the public is pleased and accepting of the draft.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 8, 2023.

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Councillor Westhaver, Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

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Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk

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