

MINUTES
ACCESSIBILITY AND DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Committee Rm. 2 and via Microsoft Teams
Saanich Municipal Hall, 770 Vernon Avenue
November 8, 2023, at 5:15 p.m.

Present: Councillor Mena Westhaver, Rae Franklin, Donald Kennedy (5:11 p.m.), Swapna Mazumber.

Staff: Sheila Allen, Director, Corporate Services (5:34 p.m.); Rebecca Newlove, Manager of Sustainability; Dale Samsonoff, Manager of People and Programs, Human Resources; Captain Erin Stockhill, Emergency Program Officer; Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk.

Guest: Mais Hajai, Consultant.

Regrets: Maya Bosdet, Stephan Herman, Kam Judge, Laurie-Anne Keith, Rachid Ouache, Reed Poynter.

Due to lack of quorum, no motions were passed.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

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

- Thanks were given to the members and staff that gave time and energy to the committee.
- Members were asked to submit their applications for committee appointment in 2024.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN CONSIDERATION

The Manager of Human Resources gave the following update (report on file), and the following was noted:

- The plan was put together efficiently to meet the Provincial deadline, September 3, 2023.
- The feedback that was received from the public was minimal.
- As the plan is implemented, feedback from community service providers and community members is expected.
- Feedback gathered was passed on to the appropriate areas within Saanich.
- The changes have been grouped by theme:
 - Updated Language
 - Emergency Response
 - Access
 - Bylaws and Guidelines
 - Transportation
 - Built Environment
 - Processes

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

- Genetic conditions could be included in the updated language.
- Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) could be a useful tool.
- Mental health support is not under the jurisdiction of Saanich.
- A decision-making framework for staff and Council could be presented to the committee for consideration in the future.
- People who are facing increased costs due to disabilities can find it challenging to afford the programs offered in Saanich. Funding opportunities could be included in the plan.
- Multiple platforms and opportunities to give feedback is appreciated.
- Reporting will happen annually to the committee and to Council.
- The plan will be updated every 3 years.

ACCESSIBILITY AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANNING

The Emergency Program Officer gave a presentation (PowerPoint on file) and the following was noted:

- Feedback for this plan is appreciated.
- The Accessibility and Emergency Response Plan is one of seven divisions within the Fire Department.
- The emergency program supports municipal efforts to prepare for, respond to and recover from major emergencies.
- The local government does not have the ability to close due to an emergency.
- The emergency program has 3 full time staff members.
- The program is supported by more than 100 volunteers.
- Materials are accessible through online platforms, public engagements, and mail out flyers. This helps to reach people of all ages, accessibility, and ethnicities.
- Grab-and-go bags are part of a Grade 4 initiative in elementary schools. The intention is to reach all households, regardless of mobility or socioeconomic status.
- Results from a survey in 2019 showed that time, cost, space, and complacency are barriers to emergency preparedness.
- The Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Presentations are hosted in person and online for free at Saanich Recreation Centres. Private presentations are available upon request.
- Alert Ready is Canada's emergency alerting system that delivers critical and potentially life-saving alerts to Canadians through television, radio, and compatible wireless devices.
- In 2022, the Province introduced the ability to issue emergency alerts for wildfires, floods, and extreme heat. These are in addition to tsunamis, civil emergencies, and Amber Alerts.
- Emergency Support Services (ESS) is critically important and central to community well-being.
- 24 recommendations were put forward to the Ministry of Emergency and Climate Readiness (EMCR) and were passed. Some of these recommendations are, accessibility and culture safety, strengthening support for community-led ESS, and support for people who are displaced long term. The timeline for the implementation is March 2024.

- Saanich is a leader in adopting modernized emergency support services and delivery.
- The virtual reception centre allows volunteers with all abilities to serve the community.
- ShakeOut and the BC Earthquake alliance are working to make their messaging more accessible and to include awareness of those who may not be able to drop, cover and hold on.
- Partnership and collaboration are essential to the success of this program and to educate the public.

The committee members made the following comments:

- The four main recreation centres are the Reception Centres for information in the event of an emergency. Evacuation routes are not available as each emergency calls for a different course of action.
- Local governments have access to Provincial notifications.
- A registration system for individualized emergency support could be implemented.
- The equipment and training that is provided to emergency responders is accessible and extensive.
- Training exercises in the recreation centres are done twice a year. These exercises provide feedback for accessibility during an emergency.

The Emergency Program Officer exited the meeting at 6:26 p.m.

DPA DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Manager of Sustainability gave a presentation (PowerPoint on file), and the following was noted:

- The *Local Government Act* provides authority to designate Development Permit (DP) Guidelines to establish form and character objectives and to designate areas of land as Development Permit Areas (DPA) for certain purposes. DPAs must specify guidelines for how proposals in that area can address the special conditions or objectives of the DPA.
- DP Guidelines support staff in an efficient review of applications, as well as provide direction and guidance to applicants, review committees (e.g., Advisory Design Panel) and Council to support a common understanding of expectations.
- The guidelines should be educative, descriptive, consistent, and clear on intent.
- The existing Saanich Development Permit Areas (DPA): Justification and Guidelines document is a patchwork of Development Permit Areas (DPAs) and guidelines that have not undergone a comprehensive review since before the Official Community Plan (OCP) was approved in 2008.
- Many policies and plans have been approved by Council including the 2008 OCP and multiple planning documents that contain design guidelines. For example, garden suites have their own.
- The purpose is to develop a simplified, consolidated Guidelines document that is aligned with the OCP and recent policies, plans and bylaws that have been approved by Council. The goal is a harmonized, easy to use document with clear

language, explanatory visual illustrations, and alignment with other goals.

- The guidelines will be updated more frequently as new policies are approved.
- The new simplified and consolidated document will improve efficiency and aid staff in achieving targets as laid out in various plans.
- A descriptive (vs. prescriptive) approach has been taken, with clear statements of design intent including strategies and best practices for implementation.
- More prescriptive guidance such as metrics have been added, for built form, scale, orientation, and relationship to public spaces. A more descriptive and educative approach was taken for character, composition, and site planning.

FINAL REMARKS

The Chair commented and the following was noted:

- Thank you to the staff that worked with tight deadlines to create the Accessibility plan.

The committee members made the following comments:

- Thank you to the Chair and the staff for the time spent on presentations.
- Funding for this plan is hopeful.
- This committee has a lot to offer in the future.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Councillor Westhaver, Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk