

**MUNICIPAL ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 06-2007
MINUTES**

**Friday, September 14, 2007 at 9:30 a.m.
Portsmouth Olympic Harbour, Press Room**

PRESENT

Ms Mary-Margaret Dauphinee, Acting Chair
Mrs. Lorraine Farrar
Ms Eleanor Hands
Mr. Albert Mezzetta (arrived at 10:00 a.m.)
Mr. Glenn Outhwaite
Mr. Floyd Patterson

ABSENT/REGRETS

Councillor Foster (with regret)
Mr. Mike Murphy (with regret)
Ms. Kim Watson (with regret)

OTHERS PRESENT

Mr. John Osborne, Council on Aging
Ms Beth Robinson, Council on Aging
Mr. Damon Wells, Director, Public Works

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Mrs. S. Rideout, Committee Clerk

THIS IS NOT A VERBATIM REPORT

MEETING TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m. and introduced the members of the Committee

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Glenn Outhwaite
Seconded by Lorraine Farrar

THAT the agenda be amended to add working group reports as an item of business and, as amended be approved.

CARRIED

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Moved by Lorraine Farrar
Seconded by Eleanor Hands

THAT the Minutes of Meeting No. 05-2007 held Friday, July 13, 2007 be confirmed.

CARRIED

DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There was none.

DELEGATION / PRESENTATIONS / BRIEFINGS

Ms Beth Robinson and Mr. John Osborne, representatives from the Council on Aging whose offices are located at 230 Brock Street were present. Ms Robinson provided some background with respect to that organization explaining that there is ongoing research in a continuing effort to provide services to seniors and to educate the community respecting elders. Ms Robinson spoke of elder abuse and identified the more common forms as noted below:

Physical abuse may include force feeding, slapping and pushing;

Emotional abuse would include discouraging and degrading comments and put downs;

Financial abuse occurs when people are unable to pay their bills. The service sector may take advantage by offering less service or overcharging.

Ms Robinson discussed the topic of respite care noting that even though caregivers begin by being full of energy they gradually become exhausted as a consequence of being on duty for 24/7. She advised the Council on Aging has taken on a new project to encourage that one apartment in seniors' buildings be staffed by trained individuals who will be available to provide one good meal daily and to be used as a social centre. She said that senior centers such as St. Mary's of the Lake and various nursing homes are unable to provide 24 hour respite service.

Ms Robinson advised that the Council on Aging has taken on the project of assisting Kingston General Hospital to establish alternative care arrangements for seniors who have been admitted for treatment but when stabilized had no where else to go and thus cannot be discharged. Hotels are being considered to serve that purpose but funding would be required.

Mr. Osborne asked that seniors be included as a group having disabilities. He said that a lot of seniors' issues evolve into the same issues as for the disabled. More and more seniors are having problems with incomes with their major income being Old Age Security and CPP. As a result, many seniors are becoming poor, isolated and lonely. He suggested that input from seniors be solicited by this Committee. Members of the committee suggested that elders apply for membership to this Committee to be a voice for their group.

The Chair introduced Damon Wells, Director, Public Works who will discuss sidewalks and snow removal between accessible bus stops.

Mr. Wells stated he would like to review the City's winter control plan and what has been done in the last few years. A copy of City of Kingston Winter Control Plan 2002 – 2003 for Roadways & Sidewalks was distributed. Mr. Wells noted that the current operations do not specifically follow this plan and said it was on his list of goals to have the Plan updated prior to the fall.

[A copy of the Winter Control Plan is attached]

Mr. Wells explained there was initially some confusion respecting the winter control activities of pre-amalgamation municipalities. An effort was made to separate major roads such as Bath, Princess, Division and others from bus routes and then again from residential areas. As far as roads and streets were concerned, consideration was given to those areas where traffic and speeds are the highest. In recent winters the roads were mostly in hand but the pressure for increased service for sidewalks began.

He explained that an updated Plan would separate the standards for levels of service for snow and ice control across the City for various classes and priorities of roadways and sidewalks and would form part of an operational manual.

He pointed out that staff work 2 shifts year round and in the winter, staff is supplied in-house with overtime being voluntary. There is staff assigned to weekend work who work on 12 hour shifts. It takes from 1 hour to 1 ½ hours to get mobilize staff and they are working towards more of a full 24/7 coverage. If there are a lot of events in the summer, there is a bigger demand on us for various reasons. Our Commissioner has directed us to address those demands and to assist with those demands and activities in order to make the City more vibrant. The major issues of money and resources being staffing and equipment remain.

Mr. Wells said that services are laid out in terms of their level and would provide estimated times for completion. If those standards are adhered to there will be some amount of liability protection from claims in courts, however, there are no stated for sidewalks because standards are provided by the Ministry which does not deal with sidewalks. Even though the City has an obligation for liability on sidewalks there is nothing to provide any protection whether the standards are met or not. If there is a set of standards and the City can indicate those standards have been met, there would be some liability protection in the absence of Provincial standards.

There has been an attempt to add walkways to sidewalks in terms of service but they do not receive the same attention as sidewalks. As operators finish their street routes they finish their shift on sidewalks and Mr. Wells recognized it should be happening at the same time as streets are cleared. He said there are 10 to 11 sidewalk plows available for the work. Concentration is given to where pedestrian traffic is heaviest particularly around the Queen's area and the downtown and two accessible bus routes are recognized as a priority. He advised that zones will be

assigned to sidewalk plowing and that resources will be split with some being sent to Kingston West.

Mr. Wells advised that snow removal usually happens at night and is an expensive operation limited to the downtown area and the old part of the City where the streets are very narrow. The budget for snow removal is usually more than \$500,000 a season from December 1st to March 31st with a lot of pressure in the downtown to have no snow banks at all. It is anticipated there will be even more pressure around the Kingston Regional Sports Centre for snow removal. Staff will be made available to deal with any storm and the expectation is that this area will be maintained as best as possible when there is an event and treated like any other downtown street when there is no event.

Queen's University, who do a lot of sidewalks themselves, has asked the City to focus on pedestrian areas. Mr. Wells advised that the City has tried to use liquids which is essentially salt in a brine solution on the streets before the event actually arrives which does not prevent snow on the sidewalk but acts to prevent bonding and thus permit a better job of removal. This solution will be applied to bridges and overpasses as well.

Mr. Wells concluded by pointing out that the problem is staff, equipment and money. Additional staff has been brought on and a new schedule plotted. The equipment fleet for roads and sidewalks is under review to have the right equipment for the job. The Works Division will be asking for more money during budget deliberations but he pointed out the City has requested staff to find saving in the amount of \$2,000,000 in their budget.

The Chair invited questions and comments from members of the Committee.

Mr. Patterson said that while he has great sympathy for the difficulties being faced, people in wheelchairs and walkers face large piles of snow and he asked if there was some control where the snow is piled up. Mr. Wells advised the by-law prohibits placing snow in such a way as to impede traffic. They have started to purchase straight blades that can be angled on street corners to assist with accessibility.

Ms Farrar asked if there is any solution for the large pools of melting water on street corners. Mr. Wells explained that was as a result of snow freezing in the catch basins or a blockage in the storm sewers. Utilities and Engineering have been approached to deal with some of the blocked sewers. Cars parked at night on downtown streets are a problem and they have been working with by-law enforcement to have cars towed in the face of much public disapproval.

Mr. Outhwaite noted that it is critical that sidewalks and parking lots be cleared around the new Kingston Regional Sports Centre.

Mrs. Hands said it was critical that the two accessible bus routes get the sidewalks plowed to enable people to get to the bus stops.

The Chair requested that Mr. Wells provide changes to the Winter Plan to Mr. Barry Kaplan, Facilitator so that he can update the Committee and thanked him for his presentation.

It was reported that there was a very productive meeting held with Chairs of the Working Groups and a decision has been made to continue work on a regular basis with reports being made to the Committee for discussion and approval.

BUSINESS

(a) Resignations of Louise Bark, Joe Downey and Tim Eichholz

Moved by Mike Murphy
Seconded by Glenn Outhwaite

That the resignations of Louise Bark, Joe Downey and Tim Eichholz be received with thanks for their service to the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee.

CARRIED

Working Group Reports

Physical Accessibility and site Plan Review Working Group

Mr. Outhwaite reported for the Physical Accessibility and Site Plan Review Working Group noting that their mandate is to look at barriers to accessibility. He stated that some time has been spent working with staff from different departments within the City in order to reach some compromise respecting the committee's suggestions in an effort to be open and flexible. He advised that the working group does review site plans although they generally only see a very small portion of them. He explained that the plans are usually reviewed by Mr. Kaplan who would subsequently pass along those plans that were felt to require additional involvement and follow up by the group.

Mr. Outhwaite commented that there has been some consideration given to inter-committee communication. There has been some discussion around various projects that fall under communications and some comments have been passed along to that group for consideration. He felt the collaborative approach is working very well.

Mr. Murphy advised that the Independent Living Centre, where he is employed, has promoted an access guide which will be on line. They are currently putting together the training manual for a workshop and he suggested there would be an opportunity to compare information as he felt there were parallels between the Centre and this working group. He advised the information will likely be posted to the web around October 1st and volunteered to provide the link.

Mr. Patterson observed the approach of this committee has been one of friendly persuasion and expressed interest in the discussion of crowded store aisles as being a barrier to all people but particularly to persons with wheelchairs and walkers.

Public Transportation and Pedestrian Issues Working Group

Mrs. Hands explained that this working group looks after any transportation and pedestrian issues. She briefly reviewed various items that have been accomplished and those that are still ongoing. She explained the transit travel training held August 14, 2007 at Portsmouth Avenue, Community Living and the Seniors Centre was well attended and went well. Requests have been received to hold these training sessions at other locations and there will be some consultation with Kingston Transit.

She disclosed that their next project is the provision of accessible taxis by the end of 2008. She advised that Kingston Access Bus is working with the group on this project, however a lot of research involving the taxi companies and the ODSP report remains outstanding.

Ms Dauphinee stated she has recently returned from Fredericton, New Brunswick where there has been a privately-owned accessible taxi for some time. She said taxi owners have stated that if they could just break even they would be prepared to work with us.

Mr. Outhwaite requested that the provision of accessible vans be considered as well.

Communications Working Group

Mr. Murphy provided a verbal report for the Communications Working Group which looks at information and technical issues, education, awareness and communications issues. He said the Group felt there was a need to prioritize and although there are a few things they wanted to undertake but at the present time did not have sufficient resources.

He said they are currently working on the installation of TTY in various City departments along with pocket talkers for use in municipal facilities. TTY has been installed and there a process for training has been established. Pocket talkers have been available for a little while. A strategy is being discussed to make staff aware they are available for use.

Mr. Murphy stated the Communications Groups has been promoting a "Did you Know" fact sheet that outlines the steps made by the City. The focus of their last meeting was around communications of the City and they have been asked to provide corporate strategies for accessibility.

A request has been made to the City to adopt the "Clearing Our Path" strategy for CNIB users and to increasing the fonts for hard copy documents. In considering accessibility it has been determined that more effort is required to examine things like preferred language, a customer service standard and those regulations including the possible impact to good customer service policies.

The Chair noted that the Ontarians with Disabilities Act is working on standards for all people in the municipalities.

CORRESPONDENCE

Noted as received.

OTHER BUSINESS

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee is scheduled for Friday, December 14th at Rideaucrest Home at 9:30 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Eleanor Hands
Seconded by Lorraine Farrar

THAT we so adjourn at 11:35 a.m.

CARRIED