

MINUTES
ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, JULY 15, 2021
1:00 P.M., ONLINE MEETING (ZOOM)

PRESENT: Kelly Elliott, Chair/Council Representative
Tom Heeman, Council Representative
Michelle Coghlin, Community Representative
Jesse Farquharson, Community Representative
Christopher Morello, Community Representative
Rick Nolan, Community Representative
Patricia Rivers, Community Representative
Steve MacDonald, Director of Community Services & Facilities/Staff Representative
Sara Henshaw, Deputy Clerk/Staff Resource/Recording Secretary

ABSENT: Katy D'Angelo, Community Representative

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:12 p.m.

1. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

No pecuniary interests were disclosed at this time.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Kelly Elliott was appointed as Chair of this committee at the Council meeting held on March 8, 2021, as per Resolution No. 71-2021.

(A) **Nominations for Vice-Chair position.** The Chair called for nominations for the Vice-Chair position of the Accessibility and Inclusivity Advisory Committee (AIAC) and the following person was nominated: Jesse Farquharson.

Moved by: R. Nolan
Seconded by: M. Coghlin
(Resolution # AIAC-1-2021)

THAT the nominations be closed and that Jesse Farquharson be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Accessibility and Inclusivity Advisory Committee. Carried.

3. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

None.

4. PRESENTATIONS/DELEGATIONS

None.

5. REPORTS OF STAFF

(A) **Accessible Playground Update (per S. MacDonald)**

The Director of Community Services & Facilities gave a verbal update regarding the Proposal for Thames Centre Inclusive Park, as per Report No. CS-010-21 that went to Council on May 10, 2021.

The Director of Community Services & Facilities advised the following:

- This proposal was an information package containing letters of support for an inclusive park in Thames Centre
- Council passed a resolution to support the consideration of an inclusive park as a part of the 2022 municipal budget
- Municipal budget meetings are held in December of each year. At this time, information and expenses for this project will be presented to Council. Council will then decide whether or not include it in the 2022 budget
- Desired elements and particulars of the playground will need to be determined, in order to present approximate pricing to Council in December
- Once budget is finalized, all particulars of project can then be finalized – specific features, exact location, etc.
- “Dorchester Dream Park” has created a Facebook page for this project, and also held an online information session for the community in June
- Areas that will need work – fundraising, applying for grants and business donations, location and design concepts

There was discussion on the following:

- If a subcommittee is formed for the proposed inclusive park – Thames Centre staff can provide support. This project can come through the AIAC and formal recommendations can be made to Council
- A member of the AIAC chairs the subcommittee, but remaining subcommittee members do not need to also be a member of the Accessibility Committee
- Chair of the subcommittee would regularly attend AIAC meetings, in order to provide verbal updates
- AIAC has potential for a lot of different subcommittees
- The municipality is currently meeting accessibility standards for playgrounds, but how can they be exceeded? If a model is created, it will pave the way for other activities

The Director of Community Services & Facilities advised that if Council does not approve the proposed inclusive park as part of the 2022 budget, then the project will be considered with the next update of the Community Services Master Plan, when all playgrounds within the municipality are reviewed.

Moved by: T. Heeman

Seconded by: P. Rivers

(Resolution # AIAC-2-2021)

THAT the Accessibility and Inclusivity Advisory Committee form the Accessible Playground Pilot Project (APPP) Subcommittee and support member T. Heeman to head the subcommittee and be authorized to create supporting documents and recruit community members. Carried.

6. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

(A) **Creating an Inclusive Community (per K. Elliott)**

Chair Elliott suggested that given recent national and local tragedies, a conversation be started about how to create an inclusive community, where everyone feels welcome and safe.

There was discussion on the following:

- How can we have Indigenous, Muslim and other communities feel welcome in Thames Centre?
- Thames Centre amended its “Flying of Flags” policy to be able to lower its flags at half-mast upon a local, national, or international tragedy which affects or impacts the community
- Recent local planning application received hateful and racist comments
- Hatred comes from fear and being misinformed
- Subtly integrating diversity and inclusion in municipal special events, such as Canada Day, annual fairs, Bridgefest, etc.
 - This would be a chance to learn different cultures, what they believe, what they eat, etc.
 - Canada Day – welcoming approach with Indigenous partners, exploring what it means to be Canadian, maybe establishing an Indigenous garden
 - People love food – offer different cultured foods at events, this can easily be done using food trucks
- Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion has great resources
- International Woman’s Day, Black History Month – examples of current celebrations on the calendar that go unnoticed – how can we celebrate these events?

- Potential funding or grants could be available for these types of initiatives and projects
- If an emerging issue arises, members of the Accessibility committee are able to request that the Chair call a special meeting, outside of regular meeting schedule
- How can the Accessibility Committee provide leadership?
- Establishing a subcommittee to promote mobility and walkability around the municipality
 - Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA) established a committee for gender diversity and inclusivity – there was discussion on racism and classism built into our communities based on transportation
 - Municipal committees should think of their work in relation to the municipality and working with the expertise of municipal staff
 - OGRA provides resources and leadership to the Public Works department
 - New subdivisions – are they interlinked? Do they further instill car dependency?
 - Municipal staff has qualified opinions on these subjects – based on each subcommittee's purpose, it should work with applicable Director and department

7. CORRESPONDENCE

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

9. NEW BUSINESS

10. SCHEDULING OF MEETINGS

There was discussion on the following:

- Future meeting dates
- Meetings to be held through Zoom until future notice
- It could be possible to meet in person, with Zoom option still available (also known as a hybrid meeting)

Moved by: T. Heeman

Seconded by: R. Nolan

(Resolution # AIAC-3-2021)

Accessibility and Inclusivity Advisory Committee

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THAT the following dates be planned for the Accessibility and Inclusivity Advisory Committee to meet through Zoom in 2021:

Thursday, September 23, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

Thursday, November 18, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

Noting that such dates and times may be subject to change. Carried.

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, it was:

Moved by: R. Nolan

Seconded by: C. Morello

(Resolution # AIAC-4-2021)

THAT the meeting adjourn at 2:16 p.m. Carried.