



Minutes

ACCESS ABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

3:00 pm, Thursday, April 9, 2015

Council Chamber

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillor Patrick Johnstone	Chair
Anne Bélanger	Community
Karla Olson	Community
Marion Orser	Community
Michael Wilson	Community
Colleen Vogler	Community
Janet Taylor	Community

NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ron Jones	Special Advisor
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VOTING MEMBER REGRETS:

Glen Henderson	New Westminster School Board
Mary Varga	Community

STAFF:

Carilyn Cook	Engineering Clerk, Engineering Services
Eugene Wat	Manager, Infrastructure Planning, Engineering Services
Jason Haight	Manager, Business Ops, Parks, Culture and Recreation
Joan Burgess	Director, Human Resources (Ms. Burgess left the meeting at 3:19 pm)

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 pm.

1.0 ADDITIONS TO AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

1.1 Adoption of the April 9, 2015 Agenda

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Agenda of the Access Ability Advisory Committee held on April 9, 2015 be received and adopted.

CARRIED

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1 Receipt and Adoption of Minutes of February 12, 2015

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the minutes of the Access Ability Advisory Committee Meeting held on February 12, 2015 be received and adopted.

CARRIED

All members of the Committee present voted in favour of the motion.

3.0 PRESENTATIONS

4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Procedural note: In the interest of time, Item 4.5 was discussed first in this section.

4.1 Policy for Designated Disabled Parking Spaces in Residential Areas – Mr. Eugene Wat

Mr. Wat informed the Committee that this Policy was prepared based on an item originally discussed at the September 11, 2014 meeting at the request of a Sapperton area resident who wished to have a designated disabled parking space in front of their home. It was noted that this is the first request we have received for designated disabled parking in a residential area. As a result, Staff have put together a draft policy that will go to Council for special consideration. This Policy would allow Staff to review individual requests and requests would only be considered in exceptional situations where there are no other options available. If a designated disabled parking space was established in an area, staff would revisit it over time to determine if the space was still required (i.e. has the requestor moved, etc.).

Members discussed:

- The Policy was drafted on the basis that there is a demonstrated need of the requestor; however, the space would not be for one specific person. It could be stipulated that it's a disabled spot for the entire block and be utilized by other people with mobility issues.
- As there is a wide variety of impairments that may necessitate the need for disabled parking, it was suggested that the application form include a space for the nature of impairment rather than a limited checklist.
- With respect to the two hour only parking areas, it was noted that the draft of the new Street and Traffic Bylaw includes the addition of allowing disabled parking in residential permit parking areas for up to two hours without displaying a residential parking permit but while displaying a disability permit. This does not include two hour only parking restrictions in non-residential areas.

4.2 7th Street Parking Meter Placement Update – Mr. Eugene Wat

Mr. Wat advised the Committee that this pay station will be moved to ensure there are no issues with regard to sidewalk accessibility. The Supervisor of Parking Services, who is responsible for the placement of these stations, has said that they will be more cognizant in the future of the placement of the units.

Members discussed:

- The standard width of the sidewalks is approximately 1.5 meters in residential areas and 2 meters in high pedestrian areas.
- With respect to meter placement, measurements are made from the curb inwards in order to leave room for car doors, car mirrors, etc.

4.3 New West Station Renovations (Update Requested)

Councillor Johnstone informed the Committee that as of April 2nd, TransLink was in the process of awarding the construction contract and this was expected to be completed within a few business days. At the moment, they are looking at a 6-8 week window when construction will start. They will be able to provide us with a firm date after the team sits down with the contractor to finalize the work plan and schedule.

4.3 Invitation to TransLink Representative to Attend AAAC Meeting for Q& A Period – Mr. Eugene Wat

Staff will extend a formal invitation to TransLink to attend the next AAAC meeting on Wednesday, June 11th for a general question and answer period. Committee members were encouraged to forward their concerns/questions to Carilyn in advance of the meeting.

4.4 "Can Do" Active Access Policy – Ms. Joan Burgess, Human Resources

After a brief introduction, Ms. Burgess gave an update on the status of the City's "Can Do" Active Access Policy. In 2014, Ms. Burgess, Mr. Wilson (Committee Member) and Mr. Gibson (Director of Parks, Culture & Recreation) met to discuss why the Active Access policy has not been implemented by the City. The Human Resources Department ("HR") is conducting ongoing research that is ongoing to see how other municipalities facilitate access for people with special needs (i.e. pools, etc.) HR is asking pertinent questions, including training and roles staff have with respect to assisting pool and recreational facility usage for special needs persons.

The Committee would like to ensure that any improvement to the Canada Games Pool strongly consider accessibility needs.

Members Discussed:

- Discussions about the Canada Games Pool are very preliminary and will, in the future, include public consultation (with all interested stakeholders).
- Councillor Johnstone suggested that the Committee generate a stakeholder list.
- Mr. Haight suggested that a Recommendation be made to include this Committee in the design process related to accessibility.

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Local Business Participation in Washroom Facility Access in Emergency Situations Program (Directive from Council) – Councillor Johnstone

Councillor Johnstone explained to the Committee that this Directive came out of the New Westminster Dementia-Friendly Community Initiative and could possibly result in participating businesses displaying a visual symbol, possibly a sticker on their window, indicating that they are participating in the program wherein their washroom is available, to the public, for use in the case of an emergency.

Members discussed:

- It was noted that there are not a lot of handicapped bathrooms in the City and even some of the designated stalls aren't user friendly for people in wheelchairs. Sometimes, the dimensions of what is considered wheel-chair accessible, is not user friendly in the real world.

- The visual symbol that is used for this program should also note whether or not the washroom is wheel-chair accessible.

5.2 Request for Eastbound Columbia Street Bus Stop for Route 106 –

Mr. Eugene Wat

Mr. Wat notified the Committee of the Advisory Committee for Transit, Bicycle and Pedestrians' ("ACTBiPed") request for an eastbound Columbia Street bus stop for Route 106, as the current bus stop on Sixth Street, in front of the Police Station, presents accessibility challenges for many transit users. The new stop could be located on Columbia Street between Mckenzie Street and Begbie Street. The current stop, in front of the Police Station, could possibly be moved further up the hill where the grade is a little flatter. The Committee was encouraged to forward their feedback regarding this issue to Mr. Wat.

5.3 Belmont Street & 6th Street Crossing – Mr. Eugene Wat

Mr. Wat explained to the Committee that Staff have been looking at this intersection for years as it is a very popular pedestrian crossing point. At the time of the 2010 intersection study, this location's configuration was deemed acceptable; however, during the interim time, the City has received feedback and requests from both residents and drivers for it to be upgraded. A recent study indicates pedestrian signalization can be provided based on pedestrian and traffic volumes. Internally, Staff have looked more closely at what is happening at this location and site context and determined that a special crosswalk with an overheard flashing light and overhead illumination will be more appropriate. This solution would address the late evening safety of pedestrians. There are operational and possible safety issues associated with coordination with the full pedestrian signal due to proximity with the major crossing at 6th Avenue and 6th Street. Pedestrians may not want to wait for the full cycle and may jaywalk.

Members discussed:

- It was suggested that the 6th Street and 6th Avenue crossing be changed to a "scramble walk" in which all vehicular traffic is stopped and pedestrians may cross the intersection in every direction, including diagonally, at the same time.
- The City is trying to standardize traffic control measures. As the infrastructure allows, we are moving away from the side-mount flashers and using the overhead more as it is very visible and lights up the sidewalk as well. In the future, if need be, the City can use the same hardware to convert the crossing to a full pedestrian crossing light.
- A pedestrian light would create a more orderly movement; however, given that there are no pedestrian accidents at this point, a more graduated approach is warranted. Most accidents at this location were rear enders associated with drivers stopping to let pedestrians cross the street.

- It was determined that this is one of the best crossings in the City and the issue is more the nighttime operation and safety concern than daytime operation and safety.

5.4 Pedestrian Push Button Operations & Signalized Intersections –

Mr. Eugene Wat

Mr. Wat informed the Committee that this issue was brought to Council's attention by the ACTBiPed. Vancouver has a number of efficient intersections that do not require pedestrian-activated push buttons; Staff were tasked to identify locations within the City of New Westminster where push button activation could be eliminated.

It was determined that pedestrian-activation can be eliminated only at intersections with high-balanced pedestrian traffic (for example, 6th Street & 6th Avenue, 6th Avenue & 8th Street). It is not a feasible option where there is a complex movement of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Where pedestrian activation is removed, there would be an automatic green light call at every cycle. However, buttons may still be needed by visually-impaired pedestrians in order to activate audible warnings during evening periods.

Member discussed:

- Removal of push buttons at certain locations would help to alleviate the inconvenience of pedestrians having to wait through light cycles.
- In locations where there is predominant vehicular traffic in one direction, it makes sense to have the walk display for parallel pedestrian movement remain until the signal has to cycle.
- It was requested that the timing of the crossing at 5th Avenue and 6th Street be assessed and that it possibly be upgraded with an audible signal. It's a pedestrian-activated crossing but the timing is the same whether it's car activated or pedestrian activated.

At this point in the meeting, Councillor Johnstone suggested that since the Committee does not meet in the summer, perhaps a meet-up could be arranged to visit particular site(s) of interest to observe first-hand any identified problem(s). He encouraged Members to bring their ideas to the June meeting.

6 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

7 CORRESPONDENCE

8 NEXT MEETING DATES

Thursday, June 11, 2015
Thursday, October 8, 2015

9 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:41 p.m.

Original Signed

Councillor Patrick Johnstone
CHAIR

Original Signed

Carilyn Cook
COMMITTEE SECRETARY