



Corporation of the City of  
**NEW WESTMINSTER**

**Access Ability Advisory Committee  
(AAAC)**

**Thursday, June 15, 2017, at 3:00 p.m.  
Council Chamber & Chamber Meeting Room  
City Hall  
MINUTES**

**VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councillor Patrick Johnstone	- Chair
Julia Schoennagel	- Community
Hayley Sinclair	- Community
Colleen Vogler	- Community
Michael Wilson	- Community

**REGRETS:**

Karla Olson	- Community
Leslie Sayer	- Community
Anne Bélanger	- Community
Heather Boersma	- Community
Lisa Leblanc	- Manager, Transportation

**STAFF:**

Jason Haight	- Manager, Business Operations Parks & Recreation
Carilyn Cook	- Committee Secretary, Engineering Services
Joan Burgess	- On behalf of Human Resources
Dave Cole	- Manager, Engineering Operations

**GUESTS:**

Jessica Schneider	- Executive Director, Massey Theatre
Aaron Pietras	- Accessibility Champion, Massey Theatre
Tyler Vittie	- Community Living Society

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 pm.

## **1.0 ADDITIONS TO AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

### **1.1 Additions to and adoption of the Agenda of June 15, 2017**

#### **MOVED and SECONDED**

*THAT the Agenda of the Access Ability Advisory Committee meeting held on June 15, 2017 be received and adopted with the following changes:*

- 1. New Business Item 5.2, Signage – Wayfinding and Street Names, will not be addressed as Karla Olson, Committee member, was unable to attend the meeting. This will be added to the agenda for the next meeting;*
- 2. Addition of New Business Item 5.3, Renovictions – Julia Schoennagel, Committee member.*

**CARRIED.**

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

## **2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

### **2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of April 13, 2017**

#### **MOVED and SECONDED**

*THAT the Minutes of the Access Ability Advisory Committee held on April 13, 2017, be received and adopted.*

**CARRIED.**

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

## **3.0 PRESENTATIONS**

### **3.1 Massey Theatre Accessibility – Jessica Schneider/Aaron Pietras**

Jessica Schneider, Executive Director, Massey Theatre, began their verbal presentation by providing a short introduction of herself and Aaron Pietras, Accessibility Champion, Massey Theatre. It is Aaron's job to greet visitors to the Theatre which he would like to see made accessible to everyone. Aaron, who utilizes a wheelchair, has limited access in the building.

Jessica shared that in 2019, the Massey Theatre will transfer ownership from the School District to the City at which time the City has committed to a 10.7M renewal of the Theatre's exterior and major internal systems. The Massey Theatre Society recognizes the opportunity this renewal presents to transform the Theatre into a fully inclusive and accessible venue providing an even more engaging

relationship with the community. Having Aaron work at the Theatre provides insight as to where accessibility improvements are necessary; for example, backstage, the dressing rooms, the balcony, meeting rooms located on the second floor, etc. Aaron conveyed to members that as an employee he can only work on the ground floor, as a guest, he can only view from the back row and, as a performer, getting on and off the stage is challenging.

The following discussion ensued:

- The addition of gender neutral washrooms needs to be considered;
- Accessible parking must be addressed, including room for those with disabilities to enter and exit vehicles. Temporary disabled parking signs could be an option;
- Another 14 seats will be added to a variety of rows and hearing assistance will be implemented as well;
- Seating consideration needs to be made for those in wheelchairs who require companions or aides for assistance;
- Staff will be working to ensure maintenance of safe access, lighting, etc., during the construction period.

The following recommendation to Council was passed:

#### **MOVED and SECONDED**

*THAT the Access Ability Advisory Committee ask Council that a universal design review and plan be funded as a component of the Massey Theatre renewal project before the building improvements are finalized.*

**CARRIED.**

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

#### **4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

##### **4.1 Update on Accessibility Policy – Joan Burgess**

Joan Burgess, on behalf of the Human Resources Department (HR), provided a brief recap of the City's Accessibility Policy which is currently being recreated by HR. She advised that department directors will create procedures designed to fulfill the tenets of the Policy. Once the Committee endorses the Policy it will go to senior staff and then to Council.

The following discussion ensued:

- Section 3 – Definitions: these read more as goals than definitions and should be titled as such;
- Section 3 – Definitions: Item D should be changed from “i.e.” to “e.g.” so as to not restrict the scope of coverage;
- Section 4 – Civic Building Accessibility: this Policy should include all forms of civic property – currently, it does not. Title should read: Civic Facility Accessibility;
- Throughout the Policy, the word *visitor* should not be capitalized as it infers definition;
- It was noted that employees will be trained at levels coinciding with their role within the City;
- The Policy will be amended according to the suggestions of the Committee.

### **MOVED and SECONDED**

*THAT the Access Ability Advisory Committee endorse the draft Accessibility Policy, as presented on June 15<sup>th</sup>, with the following changes:*

1. *Section 3 – Definitions, the title should be “Goals” instead of “Definitions”;*
2. *Section 3, Item D, should read, “e.g.” and not “i.e.”;*
3. *Section 4 – Civic Building Accessibility: Title should read “Civic Facility Accessibility”;*
4. *Throughout the Policy, the word “visitor” should not be capitalized.*

**CARRIED.**

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

## **5.0 NEW BUSINESS**

### **5.1 Snow and Ice Response (Curb Letdowns/Transit Stops) – Dave Cole (Item 6.1, Report: Snow and Ice Response)**

Dave Cole, Manager, Engineering Operations, stated that the unusual weather this past winter gave the City cause to review the Snow and Ice Plan which was created in 2008 after that year’s large snow event. This season, there were a lot of challenges due to the timing of snowfalls and continuous thawing and refreezing. The City strived to keep main roads clear and were challenged with sidewalk, boardwalk, and bike lane clearing. Members were reminded that commercial tenants are responsible for clearing the sidewalks adjacent to their properties. Currently, the City has a consultant reviewing how other cities manage sidewalk clearing issues; some may clear the sidewalks themselves and then charge the tenant. It is understood that some residents may be out of town during a snowfall and have no one to clear their sidewalks for them.

The following discussion ensued:

- Typically, one path is plowed in either direction of a main street. If two paths are cleared, with one being closer to the curb, this may sometimes result in snow being left in front of a driveway or on the sidewalk;
- Communication needs to take place well before and during snow events and include education of the bylaw, correct removal of snow, etc. In order to reach as many residents as possible, this communication should take place in a variety of ways;
- Laneway clearing should be addressed;
- We need to look at policies that address getting assistance to those that need it during snow events;
- For those in wheelchairs it was sometimes easier to go down the middle of the street than on uncleared sidewalks;
- The City provided a salt and sand mixture to residents. To date, some residents have still not cleaned the sand off of their sidewalks;
- With respect to enforcement, the City takes the approach of education first. The non-compliant resident is informed of the bylaw and then a follow up is conducted 24 hours later. If they have still not complied, a ticket is issued starting at \$50 and incrementally increasing with continued non-compliance;
- Once the consultation of the City's Snow Response Plan is complete, Dave will come back to the Committee with the findings.

## **5.2 Signage – Wayfinding and Street Names – Karla Olson**

This item was postponed to the next meeting.

## **5.3 Renovictions – Julia Schoennagel**

Julia Schoennagel, committee member, advised the group of letter that was recently submitted to CBC News regarding renovictions currently taking place at Westcourt Manor on Seventh Street. She questioned whether there was anything the City could do with respect to the Residential Tenancy Act to stop the growing number of renovictions and demovictions that displace low-income and disabled people.

The following discussion ensued:

- It was noted that in 2016, the City's Planning Department put together a Renovictions Action Plan which informs tenants of their rights and facilitates access to information and resources;
- This issue was taken to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) conference; however, due to time restrictions it was not discussed. It will be brought to the conference again this year;

- Members were encouraged to contact New Westminster NDP MLA Judy Darcy with their concerns regarding renovations and demovictions.

The following recommendation to Council was passed:

**MOVED and SECONDED**

*THAT the Access Ability Advisory Committee would like to ensure that Council, in its continuous efforts to address the ongoing housing affordability demoviction/renoviction crises, is aware that those with disabilities are disproportionately affected as the scarcity in accessible housing is more acute than in other housing forms and those with accessibility barriers have fewer resources to secure adequate, affordable, and pet-friendly housing.*

**CARRIED.**

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

At this point in the meeting, Councillor Johnstone requested location suggestions for a possible summer walkabout. Members agreed that with the large amount of construction coming up in the area, that the Brewery District, Sapperton SkyTrain, and the general area around Royal Columbian Hospital be a good place to review accessibility challenges. Carilyn Cook, Committee Secretary, will get list of possible walkabout dates from Councillor Johnstone and forward them to Committee members.

**6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION**

**6.1 Snow and Ice Response (Curb Letdowns/Transit Stops) (see Item 5.1)**

This was addressed under Item 5.1, Snow and Ice Response (Curb Letdowns/Transit Stops).

**6.2 Action List – Committee**

There were no comments.

**7.0 CORRESPONDENCE**

No items.

**8.0 NEXT MEETING DATE**

**Thursday, October 12, 2017**  
**Thursday, December 14, 2017**

**9.0 ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 4:23 pm.

Certified correct,

Original Signed

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**PATRICK JOHNSTONE**  
**CHAIR**

Original Signed

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**CARILYN COOK**  
**COMMITTEE SECRETARY**