

Northumberland Accessibility Advisory Committee

Minutes

January 18, 2024

555 Courthouse Road, Cobourg

By Zoom video conference – 1:00pm – 2:30pm

Members present:

Christine Bayer, Hope Bergeron, Jason Ducharme, Selena Forsyth, Stephanie Ash (until 2pm), Bobby-Jo Preston (Chair), John Logel (County Councillor), Andrea Nicholson (staff liaison)

Regrets: Bob Robertson

Quorum was confirmed and the meeting called to order at 1:09pm.

1. **Approval of meeting notes from November 9, 2023**

Moved by Selena, seconded by Christine that the NAAC minutes from the November 9, 2023 meeting be approved. **Carried.**

2. **Action items and follow-up from November 9, 2023**

none

3. **New Business**

i **2023 Accessibility compliance Report (Andrea)**

Andrea reported that the County has submitted a 2023 Compliance Report to the Ministry Seniors and Accessibility, reporting compliance in all areas, including Section 14 of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation for accessible websites and web content. Compliance Reports must be submitted every 2 years, with the next one due in 2025.

ii **Multi Year Accessibility Plan Q4 update (Andrea)**

Andrea reported on the progress of the 2023 Accessibility Goals for Q3 (July - Sept 2023). See attached.

iii **Annual Status Report draft (Andrea)**

Andrea presented a draft report to the Corporate Support Standing Committee that will serve as the Annual Status update to the 2022-2025 Multi-year Accessibility Plan. Committee members provided feedback.

Andrea reported that a few more achievements will be added related to projects completed by the Facilities team.

Moved by Selena, seconded by Jason, that the Committee endorse the Annual Status Update Report, with the added achievements and recommend that Council accept and approve the 2022 Accessibility Annual Status Update. **Carried.**

iv Accessibility Coordinator update (Andrea)

Andrea reported on the following:

November 30, 2023 Site Plan Review for Emergency Exit project – Andrea prepared a written copy of the committee's feedback on the site plans, send to Bobby-Jo for final review then sent to Facilities.

Canadian Survey on Disability 2022 – The survey results were released in December 2022. Mental Health-related, pain-related and seeing disabilities had the highest increases. The committee recommends recruiting a representative for the mental health related disability community during the next committee recruitment period.

National Access Ability Week May 26 - June 1,2024 – The Committee would like to give Helping Hands Awards to County staff who champion accessibility in 2024. Nomination will be accepted for a 3-week period in February. The NAAC will review nominations at the March meeting. Andrea reported having a brief discussion with Communications about possible awareness activity themes.

Action item1: Andrea will prepare Helping Hands Award nomination forms and distribute to County staff.

v Selection of Committee Chair and Vice Chair for 2024

Andrea facilitated a conversation to help the committee discuss the selection of the positions.

Action Item 2: Committee members will consider the NAAC Chair and Vice Chair roles and self-nominate if interested and nominate other members by February 1 be sending Andrea an email or phone message.

4. Adjournment

The meeting was terminated at 2:37pm

Next Meeting: February 15, 2024 at 1:00pm (Zoom)

Northumberland County Multi-Year Accessibility Plan: 2023 Accessibility Goals – Q4 update

Acronyms

AC	Accessibility Coordinator
COMM	Communications
CSS-HS	Community and Social Services – Housing
HR	Human Resources
IT	Information Technology
MYAP	Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
NAAC	Northumberland Accessibility Advisory Committee
NH	Natural Heritage
PW-F	Public Works Facilities
PW-MCP	Public Works Major Capital Projects
PW-E	Public Works Engineering

See 2023 Accessibility Goals starting on page 2

2023 Accessibility Goals – Q4 update

General

Action item	Type: MYAP, Dept	Responsibility	Time frame for completion	Action plan or Status	Comments
Conduct an annual review of the Multi Year Accessibility Plan, and update the Plan as required	MYAP	HR (AC)	Q4	Complete	Q4- Plan reviewed and updated after 2023 Q4 review of goals.

Customer Service

Action item	Type: MYAP, Dept	Responsibility	Time frame for completion	Action plan or Status	Comments
Continue to receive and respond to accessibility feedback and address identified barriers in a timely manner	MYAP	HR (AC), all departments	ongoing	ongoing	Q1 – no feedback forms received in Q1 Q2 – positive feedback from a mother who reported on a waste driver’s interactions with her child who has a disability
Explore and provide training on communicating using plain language	MYAP	HR (AC)	Q3 – expected completion Q4	complete	Extended from 2022 to 2023 – started research in 2022 Q3 – 3 plain language workshops are planned (Oct/Nov) and 50-60 staff will be trained Q4 – 3 workshops, 52 staff trained

2023 Accessibility Goals – Q4 update

Action item	Type: MYAP, Dept	Responsibility	Time frame for completion	Action plan or Status	Comments
Explore new technologies that support internal and external customer service	MYAP, ongoing	HR (AC)	ongoing	ongoing	Q1- exploring the possibility of additional assistive listening technologies for Reception and CSS lower desks Q2 – 2 additional assistive listening devices with hearing loops were added to the second wicket at each of the Main reception desk and Community and Social Services desk Q3 – captioning for Council meeting video recordings is being tested
Train employees in customer service facing roles to identify accessibility feedback (not always defined as such) and the procedure to address	MYAP, ongoing	HR (AC)	ongoing	ongoing	

2023 Accessibility Goals – Q4 update

Information and Communications

Action item	Type: MYAP, Dept	Responsibility	Time frame for completion	Action plan or Status	Comments
Develop branding guidelines that improve accessibility, including standardized accessible font sizes and style for emails, business cards, presentations	MYAP	COMM, HR (AC)	Q2 2023 – expected completion Q4	Partly complete in 2022 and 2023 – extend to 2024	Extended from 2022 to 2023 Q3 – expected to be completed by the end of year Q4 – competing demands in Communications
Develop and facilitate Accessible Presentations training	MYAP	HR (AC)	Q2 2023 expected completion Q4	In progress – extend to 2024	(Moved from 2022 to 2023) Dependent on completion of guidelines above Q3 – development in progress Q4 – put on hold to develop additional training on document remediation

2023 Accessibility Goals – Q4 update

Employment

Action item	Type: MYAP, Dept	Responsibility	Time frame for completion	Action plan or Status	Comments
Review HR policies and practices to ensure applicants and employees with disabilities receive the supports they need	MYAP	HR and all departments	Q4	Complete	<p>Q3 – HR 4.1.4 Accommodating Disabilities policy was updated</p> <p>Q4 – Reviewed the process for letting applicants selected for an interview know that accommodations during the interview are available upon request. Reviewed letters of offer to ensure an accommodation statement is included. Posted annual memo regarding Individual Workplace Emergency Plans</p>

Design of Public Spaces / Built Environment

Action item	Type: MYAP, Dept	Responsibility	Time frame for completion	Action plan or Status	Comments
Improve accessibility of trail signage within Northumberland County Forest	MYAP	Natural Heritage	Q2	Partial completion – extend to 2024	Q4 – Reviewed and provided accessibility input on signs for new universal trail.
Ensure that all new and redeveloped public spaces owned and/or operated by the County meet or exceed the requirements of DOPS.	MYAP, ongoing	PW-F, PW-MCP. PW-E	Ongoing	Ongoing	Q4 – NAAC reviewed plans for emergency exits project at 555 Courthouse

Additional Initiatives

Action item	Type: MYAP, Dept	Responsibility	Time frame for completion	Action plan or Status	Comments
Conduct research (census, Canadian Health Survey) to better understand the types of disabilities and the number of people with different types of disabilities within the County	MYAP	HR (AC)	Q4	Partial completion – extend to 2024	Q4 - gathered stats on Canadian Survey on Disability released in December 2023 (not specific to County)

2023 Accessibility Goals – Q4 update

Other

Action item	Type: MYAP, Dept	Responsibility	Time frame for completion	Action plan or Status	Comments
Work with community housing providers to support accessible housing improvements	MYAP	CSS-HS PW-F	Ongoing	ongoing	
Proclaim week of May 28 – June 3 as National AccessAbility Week and promote accessibility through events to be determined.	MYAP, ongoing	HR (AC)	Q2 annually	complete	
Select County staff members to be awarded 2023 Helping Hands certificate (NAAC to select)	MYAP, ongoing	HR (AC)	Q2 annually	complete	
Proclaim December 3 as International Day of Persons with Disability and promote accessibility based on UN Theme for 2023	MYAP, ongoing	HR (AC)	Q4 annually	complete	Q3 – proclamation request was sent to through the council meeting portal for approval in November Q4 – Proclamation made at November Council Meeting
Conduct spot checks/audits for AODA compliance	MYAP, ongoing	HR (AC)	Ongoing	ongoing	Q1 – checked the functioning of the 7 assistive listening devices at the customer service desks at 555

2023 Accessibility Goals – Q4 update

Action item	Type: MYAP, Dept	Responsibility	Time frame for completion	Action plan or Status	Comments
					Courthouse and the POA offices Q4 – monthly audit was introduced to monitor select webpages and documents

Other (unplanned)

(Note any new projects/activities not listed above)

Q1 - Added information to the accessibility webpage on how to access local services and support via 211 (by phone or website)

Q2 – Installed 2 additional assistive listening devices with hearing loops at 555 Courthouse Road at:

- the lowered counter at main Reception and
- the lowered counter at Community and Social Services customer service desk

Q4 –

- Conducted Web Content Accessibility Working Group focus groups to identify pain points in the remediation process and improve the accessibility and efficiency of our procedures.
- Developed a web content auditing plan to review remediating documents and images and ensure that best practices are implemented across all the County’s web platforms.
- Organized accessible documents training for member municipalities for January 2024 delivery.