
DEPARTMENT: Executive Operations**TITLE: Accessibility Advisory Committee**Minutes reference date: February 24, 2020

1.0 BACKGROUND

Under the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act (NSAA), the Town of Amherst is required to appoint an Accessibility Advisory Committee to provide input on accessibility matters within the Town of Amherst.

2.0 PURPOSE

The Accessibility Advisory Committee ("Committee") assists Town Council ("Council") in fulfilling its responsibilities relating to identifying, preventing and eliminating barriers to people with disabilities in municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities. The Committee plays a pivotal role in helping the Town of Amherst become a barrier-free community and ensuring obligations under *An Act Respecting Accessibility in Nova Scotia* (2017) are met, and to assist in creating a community of wellbeing.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 The definitions in the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act will supersede any and all definitions in this policy
- 3.2 Barrier means anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of persons with disabilities, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice;
- 3.3 Council means the Town Council for the Town of Amherst;
- 3.4 Disability includes a physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation in society.

4.0 POLICY

4.1 Role

The Accessibility Advisory Committee shall:

- 4.1.1 Advise Council on the preparation, implementation, and effectiveness of its accessibility plan. In accordance with the Accessibility Act, the plan must include:
 - i. a report on measures the municipality has taken and intends to take to identify, remove, and prevent barriers
 - ii. information on procedures the municipality has in place to assess the following for their impact on accessibility for people with disabilities:
 - any proposed policies, programs, practices, and services
 - any proposed enactments or by-laws
 - iii. any other prescribed information

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- 4.1.2 Review and update its accessibility plan at least every three years, in accordance with the Act.
- 4.1.3 Consult with the community on accessibility in the Town of Amherst.
- 4.1.4 Advise Council on the impact of Town of Amherst policies, programs, and services on people with disabilities.
- 4.1.5 Review and monitor existing and proposed Town of Amherst bylaws to promote full participation of people with disabilities, in accordance with the Act.
- 4.1.6 Identify and advise on the accessibility of existing and proposed municipal services and facilities.
- 4.1.7 Advise and make recommendations about strategies designed to achieve the objectives of the Town's accessibility plan.
- 4.1.8 Receive and review information from Council and its committees, and make recommendations, as requested.
- 4.1.9 Monitoring federal and provincial government directives and regulations.

4.2 Membership

- 4.2.1 In accordance with the Act, at least half of the committee membership must be people with disabilities or represent organizations that represent people with disabilities with preference for the former.
- 4.2.2 All members must adhere to and abide by the Code of Ethics Policy, Policy #04000-12.
- 4.2.3 When making appointments to the Committee, Council will give consideration to representation from different sectors of the community.
- 4.2.4 Appointees shall possess knowledge and understanding of accessibility related issues and services currently being provided by the community. Appointments shall be approved by Council annually at their October meeting.
- 4.2.5 The Committee shall have 8 voting membership that includes:
 - a) 2 Town of Amherst Council members
 - b) 6 community members
- 4.2.6 Non-voting members shall include:
 - a) Municipal Accessibility Coordinator – Town of Amherst staff

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4.3 Terms of Appointment

- 4.3.1 The initial appointments will be for one-year terms, as a transitional measure, and subsequent appointments will have three members for a one-year term and four members for a two-year term to ensure knowledge is retained on the Committee.
- 4.3.2 The Town of Amherst Council members shall be appointed annually by Council.
- 4.3.3 The Town of Amherst Accessibility Coordinator, and the Secretary of the Committee shall be employees of the Town of Amherst and appointed by the Chief Administrative Officer.
- 4.3.4 The Chair and Vice Chair shall be elected annually by the Committee, and the Chair shall be a Town of Amherst Council member.

5. OTHER

- 5.1 The Committee shall meet at least quarterly but may meet more frequently, as required
- 5.2 Meetings of the Committee shall be open to the Public, however, they are subject to the provision of Section 22 of the Municipal Government Act with respect to closed meetings
- 5.3 The Committee provides open avenues of communication to stakeholders and Council.
- 5.4 The Committee may establish Working Groups to explore specific issues related to the accessibility plan and/or to other responsibilities. Members of the Working Group may consist of additional members of the community.
- 5.5 Meetings shall convene at 4pm on the day selected, unless otherwise specified.
- 5.6 The Committee and its members shall follow the rule of order, as set in the Proceedings of Council Policy, Policy #10350-24.

6. TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW

- 6.1 The Committee will review its terms of reference annually and make any recommendations to Council, as the Committee deems appropriate.

7. REFERENCES

- 7.1 Bill NO. 59 – Accessibility Act, Chapter 2 of the Act of 2017.