

Accessibility Committee

Monday, Feb. 10th, 2025

Berwick Town Hall Council Chambers

6:00 p.m.

ATTENDING

Councillor Kwakernaak, (Chair)
Elaine Furniss, (Co Chair)
Mayor Trinacty
Councillor Chris Goddard
Crystal McCormack, Citizen Representative
Jordan Hebb, Active Living Coordinator
Taylor Boylan, Communications and Special Projects Coordinator
Recording secretary, Roger Flynn, Office Administrative Coordinator
Kenisha Gordon, Citizen Representative (Virtual)
Katie Verrette, Manager of Community Development (Virtual)
Councillor Serino (Virtual)

ABSENT WITH REGRETS

Reta Shay, Citizen Representative
Michael Harris, Citizen Representative

1. Call to Order

Called to order at 6 pm.

2. Approval of the Agenda

A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda as circulated.

Motion carried

3. Approval of the Minutes

a. Jan. 13th, 2025

A motion was made and seconded to the approval of the minutes as circulated.

Motion carried

4. On-going Business

5. New Business

a. Accessibility Committee Report.

- The **Accessibility Committee Report** covered key topics, including:
- **Understanding History Course:** The Diversity Kings Committee recommended elected officials attend this course (date TBD), which Berwick staff have already completed.
- **Front Desk Renovations:** Members reviewed the design and were encouraged to submit feedback to the CAO within a week.
- **Survey on Accessibility, Inclusion & Diversity:** Launched January 8th, with early results reported. Open until February 1st, it will inform the Accessibility Review and Equity & Anti-Racism Plan.
- **Berwick Community Gardens:** Seeking to enhance accessibility at Train Station Gardens. A proposal, including budget and grant support, is expected.
- **Bus Stop Improvements:** Discussed the need for shelters and better accessibility.
- **Action Items:**
 - Submit feedback on Front Desk renovations.
 - Follow up on the Accessibility Review and its integration with the Equity & Anti-Racism Plan.
 - Await proposal from Berwick Community Gardens.
 - Assess feasibility of improved bus shelters.

b. Report Declaration of Black Heritage Month event.

- The well-attended Black Heritage Month event, themed *Legacy in Action: Celebrating Black Brilliance*, was hosted by the Municipality of the County of Kings in the Council Chambers. It featured participation from the Horton High Afrocentric Cohort, drummers, Girl Guides, and various dignitaries, including Mayor Trinacty and Councillors from Berwick.
- The event replaced the Kings Diversity Committee's regular meeting and highlighted Black student achievements and local Black heritage. Remarks were given by the Deputy Minister of African Affairs, with a recorded address from Minister Twila Rose Grosse.

-
- Prior to the event, Kings Diversity Committee Chair Christina Sappington announced that the Council unanimously approved an *Overcoming History*
 - education session for new councillors, with invitations extended to elected officials from Berwick, Kentville, and Wolfville.
 - **Action Items:**
 - Share a social media post about the event.
 - Follow up on education session invitations and participation.

c. Concern re the loss of seating in the lobby of the KMCC.

- The removal of seating in the Kings Mutual Center (KMCC) lobby was due to concerns about youth gatherings during hockey games. However, this has negatively impacted accessibility and community engagement.
- Key issues include:
- Lack of seating forcing individuals to eat in their cars.
- Difficulties for people with mobility challenges.
- No security presence to manage the space.
- Discussions included potential alternatives like tables, chairs, and benches, as well as adding signage. The accessibility committee may draft a formal letter to the governance committee addressing these concerns and exploring solutions, including security measures that do not compromise accessibility.

d. Accessibility survey results and draft plan.

- The survey had 65 responses; a strong uptake compared to other municipalities.
- **Discrimination:** 47% experienced or witnessed it.
- **Feedback Preference:** 84% prefer online surveys.
- **Revised Plan:** More concise and readable, with positive provincial feedback.
- **Goal Refinement:** Emphasis on clear, measurable targets, strategic goal alignment, and inclusion of budget considerations.
- **Built Environment:** Accessibility considerations should be integrated into all new projects.
- **Roles & Responsibilities:** The municipality owns the plan; the committee advises and celebrates progress.
- **Progress Tracking:** Committee report cards will measure goal implementation.
- **Accessibility Definition:** Should focus on barrier removal rather than ease of use.

- **Site Visit:** Aylesford Lake noted for accessible features like walkways and bathrooms.
- **Inclusive Culture:** Attitudes play a key role in fostering inclusivity.
- Refine goals and action items for clarity and measurability.
- Continue discussions on accessibility definitions.
- Incorporate feedback into the revised plan.
- Ensure accessibility is prioritized in all municipal projects and events.

6. Meeting

March 24th at 6:00 pm

7. Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 pm.

Motion carried

Approved by Committee on Month Day, 2025

As recorded by Roger Flynn, Office Administrative Coordinator