



Accessibility Advisory Committee

Minutes

AAC#02-23

Thursday, June 8, 2023, 3:00 p.m.

Council Chambers

225 East Beaver Creek Road

Richmond Hill, Ontario

An Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of the Council of the City of Richmond Hill was held on Thursday, June 8, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. in Council Chambers via videoconference.

Committee Members present in Council Chambers:

Councillor Cilevitz (Chair)
Yuwei Lin
Ted Moritsugu
Barry Munro
Lawrence Raifman
Simon Waldman
Shahla Yaghoubian

Committee Members present via videoconference:

Councillor Davidson
Maxine DiGiovanni
Sherry Caldwell

Regrets:

Lopa Banerjee (Vice-Chair)
Patricia Rybka

Staff Members present in Council Chambers:

M. Kashani, Manager, Design and Construction
B. Inglis, Legislative and Special Projects Advisor
R. Ban, Deputy City Clerk
K. Hurley, Council/Committee Coordinator
C. Connolly, Legislative Assistant

Staff Members present via videoconference:

L. Conde, Manager, Strategy and Government Relations
J. Pullella, Intern

Stacy Hushion and Hannah Tobias-Murray from StrategyCorp, were also in attendance via videoconference.

1. Call to Order

Chair Cilevitz called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Moved by: S. Waldman

That the agenda be adopted as distributed by the Clerk.

Carried Unanimously

3. Disclosures of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest by members of Committee under the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

4.1 Minutes - Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting AAC#01-23 held April 20, 2023

Moved by: L. Raifman

a) That the minutes of Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting AAC#01-23 held April 20, 2023, be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

5. Delegations

There were no delegations.

6. Scheduled Business

6.1 Overview of the Accessibility Advisory Committee's Role and Member Guidelines

- Presentation by Brian Inglis, Legislative and Special Projects Officer

Brian Inglis, Legislative and Special Projects Officer, made a presentation to the Committee to provide an overview of the Accessibility Advisory Committee's (AAC) Role and Member Guidelines for the upcoming term. He reviewed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) highlighting some of its laws and standards, and advised that detailed standards under the AODA were found within the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (IASR). He provided an overview of the duties and expectations of the municipality under the AODA and IASR, as well as the legislated role of the AAC, and explained the Terms of Reference that were in place for the City of Richmond Hill's AAC.

B. Inglis addressed ways in which the Committee could go beyond matters described in the legislation, including things that should be taken into consideration, and explained the process for meetings as well as the process for identifying and bringing forward an item for consideration at a future meeting. He concluded his presentation by providing an overview of the current items that staff were investigating and developing based on the Committee's comments, review of legislation, and best practices.

Inquiries were made regarding the status of the municipality in achieving the standards within the AODA, what the City has done in the last few years to become more accessible in areas such as public washroom facilities and public trails that residents used, and whether that information was available online for residents to see the progress made to date specific to accessibility. Staff confirmed the City was in compliance and on target with the provincial timeline and standards for accessibility matters, and advised that past minutes from AAC meetings and the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan reports were good sources of information on what was being done within the municipality specific to public spaces projects and accessibility. Staff agreed that a presentation could be made at a future meeting to highlight accessibility work that has been completed, and noted that the presentation associated with Item 3.2 on today's agenda would further elaborate on accessibility improvements that have been made to public spaces within the City.

Additional inquiries were made regarding whether specific information about a trail's accessibility was available online for residents to look up, for example if it showed the International Wheelchair Symbol, and whether it was within the scope of the AAC to comment on the accessibility of restaurants and plazas. It was noted that the Richmond Hill Mobility Accessibility Foundation has partnered with a non-profit organization "Access Now" and that they had created a crowd supported app where you can go in and audit trails, restaurants and retail spaces which would be a very useful tool for the public. Clarification was requested regarding what the process was for the City to undertake any improvements to the accessibility of public spaces when feedback has been submitted to shed light on why this type of work took time to complete.

The Deputy City Clerk elaborated on some of the areas that were being explored with staff to bring forward presentations to future meetings of the AAC, and advised members that they were always welcome to contact staff with any accessibility related question or concern they had and wanted addressed. Committee members discussed the challenges faced with ensuring accessibility within private sector spaces, the importance of government support for accessibility related issues in order for improvements to occur, how best to raise awareness regarding accessibility related issues within the community, and what community groups existed to help raise awareness.

Moved by: Councillor Davidson

a) That the presentation by Brian Inglis, Legislative and Special Projects Officer, regarding an Overview of the Accessibility Advisory Committee's Role and Member Guidelines, be received.

Carried Unanimously

At the consent of the Committee, Item 6.3 was brought forward for consideration at this time.

6.3 Richmond Hill 2023-2027 Strategic Plan

- Presentation by Lise Conde, Manager, Strategy and Government Relations, and Stacy Hushion, StrategyCorp

Lise Conde, Manager, Strategy and Government Relations, advised that with the new Term of Council, Richmond Hill was embarking on a new Strategic Plan for 2023 to 2027 to guide the City with its goals and how to

achieve them, and noted that they were currently in the community engagement phase. She explained that they were reaching out to all of Council's Advisory Committees to let them know about the project and to gather members feedback and input to help develop the new Strategic Plan. L. Conde advised that StrategyCorp had been retained to assist with the project, and introduced Stacy Hushion from StrategyCorp who was in attendance to make a presentation to the Committee.

Stacy Hushion, StrategyCorp, made a presentation to the Committee regarding the Richmond Hill 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. She reviewed the meeting objectives and participation principles, introduced the Project Team from StrategyCorp, and provided an overview of the project explaining what a Strategic Plan was and where they were in the planning process. S. Hushion advised that the community could participate through an online survey, community pop-ups, community meetings and focus groups, and highlighted the different stakeholders and community members that the City was engaging with to get their feedback including:

- Members of City Council;
- City staff;
- Committees of Council;
- Richmond Hill community members;
- Members of the local business community;
- Local religious / cultural / advocacy groups and social service providers; and
- Indigenous rights holders and urban Indigenous groups.

S. Hushion concluded the presentation by reviewing the importance of getting involved in the project, and opened up the discussion to members of the Committee to share their thoughts and ideas.

Chair Cilevitz referred members to the three questions listed in the presentation to begin the discussion and noted that Council was very excited about the new Strategic Plan and bringing it forward to the community. No members of the Committee had comments to provide during the meeting so it was suggested by Chair Cilevitz that they review and reflect upon the information shared in the presentation, specifically the three "thought starter" questions, and provide their answers to either herself as the Chair or to the Deputy City Clerk, and to continue to look for

any updates online regarding the engagement events for the new Strategic Plan.

Moved by: B. Munro

a) That the presentation by Lise Conde, Manager, Strategy and Government Relations, and Stacy Hushion, StrategyCorp, regarding the Richmond Hill 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, be received and all comments referred back to staff.

Carried Unanimously

6.2 Annual Infrastructure Delivery Division Update on Active Projects

- Presentation by Mohammad Kashani, Manager, Design and Construction

Mohammad Kashani, Manager, Design and Construction, made a presentation to the Committee regarding the Annual Infrastructure Delivery Division Update on Active Projects. He highlighted the legislative requirement and importance of City staff consulting and engaging with the Accessibility Advisory Committee regarding accessibility considerations in the design of public spaces to ensure accessibility was maximized in all relevant projects, and explained that public spaces included recreation trails, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel and on-street parking. M. Kashani reviewed the relevant legislation and standards that staff worked within, and advised of their compliance with the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) for the public spaces listed above (walkways, trails, playgrounds and on-street parking).

M. Kashani highlighted the construction projects that were completed in 2022, and advised of the construction projects to be completed in 2023 as follows:

- Sidewalks - Annual Program (various locations);
- Pedestrian Crossover (PXO);
- Red Maple Staircase / Ramp;
- Park Structure Repairs;
- RHDDO Park - Assignment 2 - Trails;
- Richmond Green Playground Improvements;
- Bayview Hill Park Phase 1;

- Dove Park;
- Minthorn Park;
- Silver Stream Waterplay; and
- Raccoon Park.

M. Kashani further highlighted the improvements to the Red Maple Road and 16th Avenue staircase/ramp and accessible sidewalk, and advised of the ongoing active design projects that were underway. He concluded his presentation by noting the consultation options available for Accessible Public Space Design in Richmond Hill, and thanked members of the Committee for their involvement and feedback which was crucial in the creation of inclusive public spaces in the municipality.

Members thanked M. Kashani for his detailed presentation which covered many important topics of discussion for the Committee and asked for additional information related to the timing of when the accessible sidewalk would be completed at the intersection of Red Maple Road and 16th Avenue, and what other ideas and plans were being considered in the various parks throughout Richmond Hill for children in a wheelchair with physical disabilities that would allow them to be able to play and have fun. M. Kashani addressed the questions that were raised and provided information related to the lifecycle and condition assessment that was undertaken for retrofitting parks, as well as considerations for new growth parks, and highlighted the framework and mandate within the City's Parks Plan related to accessibility which was recently updated in 2022.

Further information was requested regarding driving and parking in the City, specifically related to metered and pay per use parking for those with an accessible parking permit, as other municipalities have implemented programs whereby those with a permit do not have to pay to park and have designated on-street parking spots, and if this type of program was something that could be explored in Richmond Hill. Chair Cilevitz advised that she would distribute a copy of Municipal Code Chapter 1106 "Parking - Disabled" to Committee members for their information and suggested that either By-law or Transportation staff could attend a future meeting to further discuss this topic.

Additional information was also requested about which trails were part of the ongoing active design projects, specifically if any accessibility improvements were scheduled for the Oak Ridges/Bond Lake Trail. Discussion ensued regarding trails that were not paved, the associated

accessibility challenges, and appropriate informational signage at entrance points. M. Kashani provided information regarding the accessibility of trails, clarifying that some trails fall under the responsibility of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), and addressed different surface options and other considerations for trails including whether they were located within an environmentally sensitive area, and noted that the end goal was to always make trails as accessible as possible for residents of all abilities.

General discussion ensued regarding what the minimum standards were for sidewalks to ensure accessibility for persons using a wheelchair, what could be done about the number of sidewalks and public spaces in the City that were obstructed from bushes or low tree branches, and what the process was for retrofitting public spaces to make them more accessible that included public consultation with persons with disabilities. M. Kashani shared information regarding the standards for sidewalks, advised Committee members that any issues regarding obstructions from bushes or trees could be directed to Access Richmond Hill for follow up with the appropriate staff members, and discussed the process used when retrofitting any public space.

Moved by: T. Moritsugu

a) That the presentation by Mohammad Kashani, Manager, Design and Construction, regarding the Annual Infrastructure Delivery Division Update on Active Projects, be received and all comments be referred back to staff.

Carried Unanimously

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee was scheduled on Thursday, September 28, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.

8. Adjournment

Moved by: S. Waldman

That the meeting be adjourned.

Carried Unanimously

The meeting was adjourned at 5:22 p.m.