



## **Special Session**

### **Joint Meeting of the Local Accessibility Advisory Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, March 11, 2021  
3:00 PM**

### **Online Attendance Only**

#### **1.0 Call to Order**

Christine Easterbrook, Chair of the Essex County AAC and Peter Best, Co-Chair of the City of Windsor AAC Co-Chaired the meeting. Ms. Easterbrook called the meeting to order at 3:00PM.

#### **2.0 Recording of Attendance**

Chair Easterbrook called on one municipality at a time, and members present provided their names and roles with the AAC.

#### **AAC Members Present:**

Bill Whittal, AAC Co-Chair, Town of Amherstburg  
Shirley Curson-Prue, AAC Chair, Town of Amherstburg  
Lisa Wallace, AAC Vice Chair, Town of Essex  
Larry Patterson, AAC Chair, Town of Kingsville  
Tracey Bailey, AAC Vice Chair, Municipality of Lakeshore  
Sue Desjarlais, AAC Chair, Town of LaSalle  
Rob Bahry, AAC Vice Chair, Municipality of Leamington  
Karen Jones, AAC Chair, Municipality of Leamington  
Ronald Matysek, AAC Chair, Town of Tecumseh  
Kristy Franklin, AAC Alternate Member, City of Windsor  
Peter Best, AAC Co-Chair, City of Windsor  
Sally Bennett Olczak, AAC Co-Chair, City of Windsor  
Christine Easterbrook, AAC Chair, County of Essex  
Gord Queen, AAC Vice Chair, County of Essex

#### **Municipal Staff Present:**

Kevin Fox, Policy and Committee Coordinator, Town of Amherstburg  
Shelley Brown, Deputy Clerk, Town of Essex  
Roberta Baines, Deputy Clerk, Town of Kingsville  
Linda Jean, Deputy Clerk, Town of Lasalle  
Angela Toole, AAC Coordinator/Licensing Assistant, Municipality of  
Leamington  
Jennifer Alexander, Deputy Clerk, Town of Tecumseh  
Laura Moy, Director, Corporate Services/Clerk, Town of Tecumseh  
Gayle Jones, Diversity and Accessibility Officer, City of Windsor  
Katherine Hebert, Deputy Clerk, County of Essex  
Cathy Paduch, GIS Technician, County of Essex  
Crystal Sylvestre, Administrative Assistant, Council and Community  
Services, County of Essex  
Danielle Dunlop, Communications Coordinator, County of Essex

### **3.0 Welcome Greetings**

Gord Queen, Deputy Mayor of the Town of Kingsville and Vice Chair of the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee welcomed the group and offered the following greeting:

Special Times require a Special Welcome. Today as a member of County Council, it is my pleasure to welcome you all to this Meeting of Accessibility Committee Chairs, Vice Chairs and Administrative Support staff from the City of Windsor, The County of Essex and all our local Municipalities. Years ago, the City and County held an annual meeting to share common interests in support of Accessibility issues. May the meeting today achieve similar goals. May we remember the words of Helen Keller, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."

### **4.0 Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest**

There were no conflicts of pecuniary interest declared.

### **5.0 Delegations and Presentations**

The time limit for each delegation is fifteen minutes.

#### **5.1 Compliance with WCAG 2.0 Information and Communication Standards**

Kevin Fox, Policy and Committee Coordinator, Town of Amherstburg provided a presentation on Accessibility Compliance Matters pertaining to Municipal websites, and WCAG 2.0 Information and Communication Standards.

Mr. Fox discussed website accessibility changes effective Jan 1, 2021. This legislation is applicable to website content posted after Jan 1, 2021. Content must be compliant to WCAG 2.0 Level AA with some exceptions. He outlined four parameters for web accessibility as follows:

- perceivable
- operable
- understandable
- robust

Criteria for success under each parameter were discussed. Slides of the presentation will be circulated with the minutes of the meeting.

## **6.0 Communications**

Christine Easterbrook reviewed the communications items. She further made note of a book called Building Better Bathrooms by Julie Sawchuk, a member of the Accessibility Advisory Committee for Huron County. The book is now for sale. A link will be provided on the County's Facebook page. [www.buildingbetterbathrooms.ca](http://www.buildingbetterbathrooms.ca)

**Moved By** Ronald Matysek

**Seconded By** Tracey Bailey

That items listed under Communications numbered 6.1 through 6.4 be received as information.

**Carried**

### **6.1 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)**

February 17, 2021 - [AMO Policy Update – Access of Persons with Disabilities to Sports/Recreational Facilities during COVID-19 and Greenbelt Consultation](#)

### **6.2 Windsor-Essex Regional Community Safety and Well-being Plan**

The City of Windsor and County of Essex, in partnership with leaders from across multiple sectors, are launching a community survey and holding virtual public Zoom meetings in February and March 2021 for the development of a regional community safety and well-being plan.

Community safety and well-being plans recognize that today's social issues are complex and must involve collaborative

responses; all community members, levels of government and sectors have a role to play. These plans also work to build on existing community strengths and focus on proactive and preventative ways of dealing with identified risks.

### **6.3 Mandates of Accessibility Advisory Committees in Ontario**

Review of the legislated requirements of AACs In Ontario Municipalities. Discussion on possibility of training for members of local AACs.

How to serve on a municipal AAC: This Online Guide from the province is meant to help members of municipal AACs carry out their responsibilities, engage with their municipal government and work well as a team.

### **6.4 COVID-19 Protocols Locally and Advocacy from AODA Alliance**

Windsor Essex County Health Unit - [COVID-19 Vaccine Roll Out Protocols](#)

[Vaccine Registration Portal](#)

[AODA Alliance Advocacy Communication](#)

## **7.0 New Business**

In the interest of time, please be mindful that each matter of New Business has been allotted an approximate time for discussion of ten to fifteen minutes.

### **7.1 Trails Accessibility Assessment Project (TAAP)**

Presentation of the scope of the Trails Accessibility Assessment Project and demonstration of the [Data Collection Tools](#) developed for the project. Cathy Paduch, GIS Technologist - County of Essex, will provide a demonstration of the data collection tool.

Christine Easterbrook provided a summary of the project, explaining that the intention is to review all trails in Essex County. The ECAAC vision is to walk all trails starting this spring and to provide feedback on trail conditions related to

accessibility. Some features that will be considered include grade changes, ground cover, material of trail, width and length of trails, access and availability to bathroom facilities etc.. The data collected will be made available to trail authorities so that they may address the issues outlined by those completing the work. Phase 1 of the TAAP project will be the Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA) trails. ECAAC will be preparing communications on this project in the near future and is seeking volunteers to help with this process.

Cathy Paduch, GIS Technologist for the County of Essex has developed a tool for the data collection.

Ms. Paduch provided a demonstration of the system and the features it provides, including uploading of pictures. She has been working with an interactive system that allows people to report access issues to ERCA when encountered on their trail system from any mobile device.

Ms. Easterbrook noted that support for this project would be welcomed and appreciated.

**Moved By** Sue Desjarlais

**Seconded By** Ronald Matysek

That information regarding the Trails Accessibility Assessment Project be circulated to local municipalities.

**Carried**

## **7.2 Communication and Collaboration**

Discussion regarding the sharing of information between municipal AACs and their members and potential for opportunities for collaboration.

Peter Best requests a forum be held with this group two to three times per year. The intention of the meetings is to share best practices and ideas to move together towards the final goal. Request was made to meet again in the fall to discuss projects that are being worked on and what has been completed.

Group decided to discuss this suggestion with their committees. If this is a desired arrangement at the local

AACs, then Committee Coordinators can contact Gayle Jones to facilitate scheduling the next meeting this fall. A contact list of local AAC Coordinators will be circulated with the minutes.

### **7.3 Municipal Parks and Recreation**

Discussion regarding the involvement of AACs in making recommendations for municipal park equipment/trails/parking/facilities.

Gord Queen reminds the committee members, that when working with municipal parks and recreation departments, to ensure accessible fixtures and that accessible access and egress have been considered.

It was noted that availability of Public Private Partnership initiatives have allowed access to funding opportunities for some municipalities to bring projects to fruition.

### **7.4 Accessible Public Transportation**

Discussion regarding the resources that exist in each individual municipality as well as resources that are available for transportation throughout the region.

Peter Best provided some insights regarding the challenges encountered in accessible transportation in the City of Windsor. Continued communication with service providers will be key in progressing towards effective solutions.

Gayle Jones, Diversity and Accessibility Officer, City of Windsor provided some background on the City of Windsor's pilot project of the NaviLens. NaviLens is a very powerful QR code to assist people who are low vision or blind by directing them to the desired location. The pilot project is planned for the City of Windsor Transit system and could be expanded to other applications including trail markings. This system is supported by iPhone and Android and appears to be a low maintenance, cost effective system.

### **7.5 Accessibility Standards Documents**

Discussion regarding the prevalence of municipalities that have Accessibility Standards Documents such as the one from [City of Windsor](#).

Lisa Wallace requested to know if locals are using guidance documents, such as the one attached from the City of Windsor, that can be provided to businesses looking to increase or amend their accessibility.

Those present expressed support for the concept of a regional guidance document and discussion took place with regard to consulting back with their local AACs on this issue. It was noted that any documents would have to be reviewed by building officials to ensure the document meets building standards.

## **7.6 Education Piece - Leader/Guide Dogs**

Opportunity for an educational webinar RE Leader/Guide Dogs. Is there any interest in bringing in some shared training?

Sue Desjarlais updated the group regarding the cost of training leader/guide dogs and the regulations surrounding this service animal.

Lions Club works with leader dog groups in the United States, Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) and at a school in Oakville. The Lions Club could arrange for a presentation to this group.

Discussion took place with regard to potential for bringing in a speaker on the subject to provide more information.

## **7.7 Reduce - Reuse - Recycle**

Discussion regarding options for reusing, repurposing and recycling medical equipment.

[Canadian Red Cross Program](#)

Article - [Rolling Without Limits, What to do With Old Wheelchairs and Medical Equipment](#)

Ron Matysek offered information regarding local programs available to accept used equipment for repurposing.

## **8.0 Roundtable Discussion**

### **8.1 Local AAC Activities and Scope**

Peter Best requests the group offer their top three activities/priorities to allow for information sharing towards common goals.

City of Windsor: Peter Best relays the top three interests are accessible transportation, recreation including Leisure Buddy and Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS). Subcommittees have been formed to focus on these issues.

Town of Essex: Lisa Wallace expressed intentions to research training opportunities for administration. The departments present back to the committee on their efforts in the area of accessibility. Funding opportunities are constantly being reviewed. Four-year work plan has been developed and group is working through objectives now. Also investigating a free app called AccessNow which uses crowdsourcing to pin-point the accessibility status of locations on an interactive map. You can search for specific places or browse to see what is nearby with the accessibility features you need. If info isn't already on the map, you can add it yourself and contribute to the worldwide community.

Town of Tecumseh: Ron Matysek provided information regarding the initiatives for their group is to raise awareness about the Committee, increase collaboration with other town committees such as the Seniors Committee to create a stronger voice and presence.

Discussion took place with regard to various projects within the local municipalities and how these items are funded.

## **9.0 Next Meeting Date**

It was proposed that the Local AAC Chair and Vice Chairs meet again in the Fall of 2021 and that this be discussed at the local AAC level for consideration.

## **10.0 Adjournment**



**Moved By** Gord Queen

**Seconded By** Larry Patterson

That the March 11, 2021 Joint Meeting of the Local AAC Chair and Vice Chairs be adjourned at 5:07 PM.

**Carried**