



## **PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES**

**February 1, 2018**

A meeting of the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, February 1, 2018, at 5:07 pm, in the Town Hall Meeting Room, Main Floor, Vancouver City Hall.

**PRESENT:** Cathy Browne, Co-Chair  
Jacques Courteau, Co-Chair  
Caitlin Anderson  
Kristina Baerg  
Varun Banthia  
Peter Brown  
Mary-Jo Fetterly  
Laura Mackenrot, Vice-Chair\*  
Leonor Vlug

**ABSENT:** Tasia Alexis (Leave of Absence)  
Paul Gauthier (Leave of Absence)  
Chelsea Hitchen  
Jocelyn Maffin (Leave of Absence)  
Anita Rudolph (Leave of Absence)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor George Affleck, Council Liaison  
Councillor Melissa De Genova, Council Liaison  
Robyn Newton, Social Policy and Projects, Staff Liaison

**CITY CLERK'S OFFICE:** Denise Swanston, Meeting Coordinator

\* Denotes absence for a portion of the meeting.

## **Acknowledgement of Traditional Indigenous Territory**

Cathy Browne, Co-Chair acknowledged that we are on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

## **Leave of Absence Requests**

MOVED by Peter Brown  
SECONDED by Cathy Browne

THAT the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee approve Leaves of Absence for Tasia Alexis, Paul Gauthier, Jocelyn Maffin, and Anita Rudolph for this meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY  
(Laura Mackenrot absent for the vote.)

## **Approval of Minutes**

MOVED by Peter Brown  
SECONDED by Varun Banthia

THAT the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee approve the minutes from the meeting held November 23, 2017, as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY  
(Laura Mackenrot absent for the vote.)

### **1. Welcome to New Member**

The Committee welcomed new member Caitlin Anderson who provided a brief introduction of herself to the group.

### **2. Election of Chair**

Cathy Brown and Jacques Courteau were re-elected as Co-Chairs, and Laura Mackenrot was re-elected as Vice-Chair, all by acclamation.

### **3. Election Update**

Paul Hendren, Elections Office, presented an update on election outreach. Mr. Hendren summarized the Committee's areas of concern from his last visit, and how the Elections Office is working towards addressing those concerns. Mr. Hendren commented that due to time constraints, resources available, and current by-laws, telephone voting will not be in place for the 2018 election, but is on the list for the 2022 election. Mr. Hendren also noted there will be a motion coming forth to Council requesting special voting opportunities be expanded to include additional facility (e.g. Hospitals and Care homes.). Mr. Hendren noted that he will return to the Committee in the spring.

The Committee requested they be consulted prior to printing of election materials, and encouraged the City to consider novel ways of assisting with transportation to and from voting stations for those who require assistance and/or face financial barriers in getting to polling stations (e.g. bus tickets, HandyDART compensation.)

Ms. Browne introduced the motion on elections outreach, noting that although Mr. Hendren indicated the Elections Office addressed a number of items in the motion during his presentation, the Committee felt it was still important to submit the motion in its entirety.

MOVED by Mary-Jo Fetterly  
SECONDED by Laura Mackenrot

#### WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver will be holding its Municipal election on October 20, 2018.
2. Voting is an inherent right and duty of all citizens, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual preference, age or ability, and must therefore be accessible and inclusive to all, including for advance polling.
3. Elections BC is committed to improving accessibility to the electoral process for all eligible voters in B.C.

4. The Vancouver Charter provides for electoral rules to help those who cannot vote; according to section 71 of the Vancouver Charter, City Council can make bylaws to create special voting opportunities for those who would otherwise be unable to vote.
5. Election officials are trained on how to help voters with accessibility challenges, and services are available to help voters with disabilities vote.
6. The City of Vancouver positions itself as one of the most accessible and inclusive cities in Canada.
7. The City of Vancouver has adopted the Accessibility Event Guidelines which apply to the 2018 Municipal Elections.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee recommend that the City of Vancouver Election's Office implement the following measures in preparation for the 2018 municipal election:

1. Outreach
  - a. Provide telephone voting which was successfully trialed by Elections BC in May 2017.
    - i. Telephone voting will increase accessibility for people who are blind/visually impaired, homebound, and people who cannot mark the ballot themselves; and
    - ii. Telephone voting is financially accessible for persons with disabilities who can incur high costs getting to and from voting stations.
  - b. Hire people in marginalized communities, including persons with disabilities; as having diverse staff will increase accessibility and help break down barriers to voting;

- c. Ensure polling stations are available at residential care facilities, rehabilitation centres, hospitals, and shelters;
  - d. Ensure adequate notice is given to deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind residents that accommodations have been included for this election.
    - i. It would also make a big impact if an ASL interpreter, as well as captions, were included in the official announcement (televised or online video.)
  - e. Work with Elections BC to ensure voters are aware of transportation resources on voting days, (e.g. TransLink and Vancouver Taxi Association);
  - f. Use community champions to speak with groups in the DTES about making voting locations safe and approachable spaces;
  - g. Publicize the solemn declaration of identity process to people in marginalized communities – many of whom have disabilities - to clear concerns about ID requirements; as many may not have a fixed address; and
  - h. Recommend that all-candidates meetings be accessible to people with mobility devices, blind and visually impaired people, deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing people, people who have communications disabilities and all service dog users. It is also recommended that the organizers book ASL interpreters for all meetings.
2. Communications
- a. Ensure that the Elections pages on the website are fully accessible to everyone with disabilities. All communications should be in plain language and describe the voting process in easily understood steps. All videos should include interpreters and be captioned for deaf and hard of hearing people;

- b. Involve PDAC, SAC, and other relevant Civic Advisory Committees early on to provide input on communication materials (e.g. posters, voters' guides, etc.) with special consideration given to language, colours and contrast and print size;
  - c. Provide voting and candidate information materials in large print and Braille upon request;
  - d. Provide ASL interpretation at designated polling stations, and ensure that their availability is widely communicated to the deaf and hard of hearing community;
  - e. Clearly communicate the features of the Image Cast Evolution Assistive Device and provide online video demonstrations (including ASL interpretation and captions) of how each accessibility function operates, as well on the election website so people can research how to use them in advance; and
  - f. Emphasize that citizens can still vote even if they have not registered in advance, and offer clear guidelines on what the process is to register at a voting location.
3. Polling Station Staff
- a. Hire persons with disabilities to train election staff on how to use the accessible voting machine and demonstrate how long the process takes; and
  - b. Provide anti-oppression training for election staff, especially for people who will be working in areas with marginalized communities like the DTES.
4. Accessible Polling Stations
- a. Ensure that numerous voting stations are accessible to those with the full range of physical mobility challenges, in and have adequate accessible parking, drop-off areas, and washrooms;

- b. Establish curb-side voting at all polling locations;
- c. Set up a priority-line for persons with disabilities to mitigate long lines being a barrier for people who find it difficult to stand for long periods of time; and
- d. Ensure adequate seating is available so people are not forced to stand while waiting to vote.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

#### **4. Election Website Discussion**

Lori Kittelberg, Digital Services, provided an overview of election goals to reduce barriers. The Committee provided feedback regarding features they would like to see on the City's website:

- Accessibility compliant with accessibility features made clear on homepage and video tutorials
- Easy navigation with uncrowded content (limit menu/banners)
- Clear buttons
- Search feature
- Easy to go back/recover from entry errors
- Clear, concise and plain language with various font options, and ASL captioned interpretation
- Intuitive layout

The Committee would like to be included in the process of updating the digital content. Ms. Kittelberg noted demonstration and the feedback process would begin in March and the site would likely go live in September.

The Committee commented that the City of Vancouver needs to be a role model of accessibility, and any information regarding the election, should be fully accessible to all communities and disabilities.

## **5. Subcommittee Reports**

### **a) Accessible City Subcommittee**

Mary-Jo Fetterly, Chair, Accessible City Subcommittee re-scheduled a Parks meeting relating to accessible outdoor gym equipment; it was noted that this item was initially requested at a meeting in 2008.

Ms. Fetterly has also noted that she has been working with Councillor De Genova on bringing forth a motion regarding the creations of an Accessible City Guidelines document.

Jacques Courteau, Co-Chair, has been attending various meetings related to the installation of an accessible washroom at Charleston Park. Mr. Courteau also noted there has been no further progress regarding the accessible washroom at Jim Deva Plaza.

### **b) Housing Subcommittee**

Kristina Baerg, Housing Subcommittee, indicated that staff from the City as well as from Onni presented at their last subcommittee meeting. Concerns were raised by subcommittee members regarding the small unit sizes, the inability to accommodate power wheelchairs in some units, and the lack of 2 or 3 bedroom units. The subcommittee felt the presenters did not consider accessibility of the grounds (e.g. for visitors with disabilities); furthermore, Onni indicated the access path to the park would include an “aggressive” slope; if included, the slope would render the park itself inaccessible. There was also concern surrounding the therapeutic pool, which has not been included in architectural plans presented as of yet. Ms. Baerg noted there will be a follow-up meeting in February; Paul Gauthier, Chair, Housing Subcommittee will circulate information.

### **c) Social Inclusion Subcommittee**

None.



**d) Transportation Subcommittee**

Laura Mackenrot, Chair, Transportation Subcommittee noted there are plans to have TransLink bring one of their new double decker buses to the Committee's next working session – to be confirmed closer to the date.

Ms. Mackenrot and Varun Banthia attended an information sessions on the Mobility Pricing Strategy. Information about Mobility Pricing can be found here: <https://www.itstimemv.ca/>

**6. New Business**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

MOVED by Caitlin Anderson  
SECONDED by Kristina Baerg

THAT this meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**Next Meeting:**

DATE: Thursday, April 5, 2018  
TIME: 5:00 pm  
PLACE: Committee Room 1  
Third Floor, Vancouver City Hall

The Committee adjourned at 7:03 pm.

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