



PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

March 10, 2022

A meeting of the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, March 10, 2022, at 5:34 pm by electronic means.

PRESENT:

Peter Brown (Co-Chair)
Laura Mackenrot (Co-Chair)
Caitlin Anderson
Alfiya Battalova
Michelle Chakraborti
Amelia Cooper
Salina Dewar*
Michael Frazer
Paul Gauthier
Yat Li
Chris Morrissey

ABSENT:

Tasia Alexis (Leave of Absence)
Denny Bilac
Nathan Bragg (Leave of Absence)
Jacques Courteau (Medical Leave)

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor Michael Wiebe, Council Liaison
Trustee Janet Fraser, School Board Liaison
Karen Liebel, Vancouver Public Library
Paul Storer, Director, Transportation (Staff Liaison)

**CITY CLERK'S
OFFICE:**

Ana Denissenko, Committee Clerk

*Denotes absence from a portion of the meeting.

WELCOME

Co-Chair Mackenrot acknowledged we are on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

Approval of the Agenda

MOVED by Michael Frazer
SECONDED by Alfiya Battalova

THAT the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee approve the agenda for the March 10, 2022 regular meeting, as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
(Salina Dewar absent for the vote)

Leave of Absence Requests

MOVED by Paul Gauthier
SECONDED by Caitlin Anderson

THAT the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee approve a leave of absence for Tasia Alexis.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
(Salina Dewar absent for the vote)

MOVED by Caitlin Anderson
SECONDED by Yat Li

THAT the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee approve a leave of absence for Nathan Bragg.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
(Salina Dewar absent for the vote)

Approval of Minutes – September 9, 2021 and January 20, 2022.

Co-Chair Mackenrot introduced the following amendments to the September 9, 2021, minutes: changing “engaged in discussions” to “expressed concerns” under Climate Emergency Parking Program Presentation, and changing Caitlin Anderson’s name to Alfiya Battalova under the Subcommittee Updates.

MOVED by Peter Brown
SECONDED by Chris Morrisey

THAT the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting on September 9, 2021, as amended.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOVED by Chris Morrisey
SECONDED by Alfiya Battalova

THAT the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting on January 20, 2022, as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

1. Motions for approval

a) Recommendation for the City of Vancouver Municipal Election – 2022

MOVED by Salina Dewar

SECONDED by Amelia Cooper

WHEREAS:

1. The City of Vancouver will be holding its Municipal election on October 15, 2022;
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. 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;
4. Election officials are trained on how to help voters with accessibility challenges, and services are available to help voters with disabilities vote;
5. The City of Vancouver positions itself as one of the most accessible and inclusive cities in Canada and is developing an Accessibility Strategy with a commitment to support the full participation of persons with disabilities by removing barriers and maintaining inclusive services and programs; and
6. The City of Vancouver has adopted the Accessibility Event Guidelines which apply to the 2022 Municipal Elections;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee recommend that the City of Vancouver Elections Office implement the following measures in preparation for the 2022 municipal election:

1. Outreach
 - a. Hire people in marginalized communities, including persons with disabilities; as having diverse staff will increase accessibility and help break down barriers to voting;
 - b. Ensure polling stations are available at residential care facilities, rehabilitation centres, hospitals, and shelters;
 - c. Ensure adequate notice is given to deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind residents that accommodations have been included for this election;

- d. People who are deaf, deafblind or sight impaired must have barrier-free access to full and equal participation. ASL interpreters and captioning at all official announcements will increase accessibility for the citizens requiring this service (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 Downtown eastside (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 reduce 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. Homebound-voting
- a. Implement systems to allow people with severe disabilities who cannot complete the mail-in ballot independently to vote from home.
3. 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 accessibility of the electoral process and 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 d/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.

4. Polling Station Staff

- a. Hire persons with disabilities to support the election process, including training 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.

5. Accessible Polling Stations

- a. Ensure that numerous voting stations are accessible to those with the full range of physical mobility challenges, and have adequate accessible parking, drop-off areas, and accessible washrooms;
- b. Establish curb-side voting at all polling locations;
- c. Set up a priority-line for persons with disabilities to mitigate long lines that create a barrier for people who find it difficult to stand for long periods of time;
- d. Ensure adequate seating is available so people are not forced to stand while waiting to vote; and
- e. Create drive-through polling stations for disabled people who are immunocompromised, and seniors who may not want to be in an enclosed polling station. Drive through voting stations would help to ensure that they can cast their vote.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

b) Request for homebound voting for the City of Vancouver Municipal Election – 2022

MOVED by Paul Gauthier

SECONDED by Laura Mackenrot

WHEREAS:

1. It is a fundamental principle of democracy that all citizens of legal age are given the right to vote, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual preference, age or ability, and must therefore be accessible and inclusive to all;
2. Currently there are citizens with severe disabilities, which renders them homebound and prohibits them from completing a mail in ballot independently;
3. The BC Human Rights code is applicable to the City of Vancouver civic elections as per section 3(a) (political rights) and section 8 (denial of service re disability). The denial of this political right by not making the exercise of the vote accessible would be prohibited by section 8 of the Code. Accommodation for homebound people voting is necessary to offset the denial of service, and would not cause undue hardship to the City;

4. Prior to the Vancouver 2018 municipal election, telephone voting was requested by the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) in order to be able to serve this population;
5. In 2018 municipal elections, telephone voting was unable to be put in place. Staff have currently advised PDAC that telephone voting will not be in place for the 2022 municipal elections and will need the Province to change the Vancouver Charter in order to allow it for 2026 municipal elections;
6. In 2018, the City of Toronto piloted a special voting program to allow homebound voters with severe disabilities to be able to vote in their municipal election at home; and
7. The City of Vancouver does not require any special permissions from the Provincial Government in order to enact this special program to allow voters with severe disabilities who are homebound to vote from home;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee strongly recommends that Council direct elections staff to implement a system whereby people with severe disabilities who are homebound and without the ability to complete a mail-in ballot independently may vote at home; and
2. The Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee requests that Elections staff consult with the Committee on the specifications and delivery of this special voting program.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. Liaison Updates

Councillor Wiebe provided updates on the following and responded to questions and comments:

- A motion passed by the Vancouver Food Policy Council on supporting participation in Advisory Committees was referred to the Nomination Subcommittee for consideration;
- Broadway Plan and Vancouver Plan are in final stages, and any final feedback from the Advisory Committees is welcome;
- Next meetings of the Council are not until the end of the month due to Spring Break.

Committee members discussed concerns regarding the Broadway Plan and Vancouver Plan, including:

- Parking placard requirement and accessibility;
- Lack of parking for people with disabilities and for older adults needing to park;

- Ventilation systems in the buildings;
- Elevator quantity and accessibility;
- Access to food;
- Incorporation of bathrooms.

Trustee Fraser provided updates on the following:

- Education Plan was circulated, and will now need to accommodate the recent changes to the Provincial Health Order;
- VSB is ensuring that staff and student responses to the updated mask requirements are respected;
- Graduation requirements now require four credits on Indigenous Perspectives, Culture, and History.

Karen Liebel circulated VPL updates (appended) in written form prior to the meeting.

3. VFRS Emergency Response Presentation

Staff:

David Boone, Chief of Operations, Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services

Co-Chair Mackenrot introduced the speaker and outlined several questions and concerns, including:

- Lack of clear procedure around emergency response;
- Assistance for older adults and persons with disabilities during emergencies;
- Are there building-specific lists of persons who require assistance during emergencies?

Staff provided a presentation on VFRS strategies for emergency response (including the Vancouver Fire Safety Plan), outlined VFRS tactics and points of action, and responded to questions and comments.

Committee members voiced the following concerns and recommendations:

- Specialized devices are unaffordable for many persons with disabilities;
- People may not be able to afford to buy their own specialized device for others to help them lift them down the stairs during an emergency.
- Pre-planning and relying on other people's help during an emergency is not an optimal solution, and does not guarantee safety;
- Lack of public outreach and communication for persons with disabilities and older adults on fire safety information;
- Conflicting information in fire safety plans, some of which encourage sheltering in place, while others encourage evacuation;
- Special assistance for persons with mobility issues in emergency situations might be needed;
- Building fire safety plans in buildings should kept up to date;

- Fire safety plan should require that building manager/landlord asks about the needs of occupants with disabilities;
- VFRS should ensure that the practice of inquiring about disability and special assistance remains if building manager/landlord changes;
- Systemic solutions are needed as barriers for persons with disabilities in emergency situations are systemic;
- Need to ensure that d/Deaf persons are aware of an emergency in absence of visual alarms and expensive assisting technology;
- Need for public education around assistance for persons with disabilities and older adults in emergency situations; and
- Need for Firefighter training on communicating and interacting with persons with different types of disabilities.

The Committee expressed interest in assisting in developing clear communications around fire safety for persons with disabilities.

4. Accessibility Committee Provincial Discussion

Postponed to the next meeting.

5. Subcommittee Reports

Postponed to the next meeting.

6. New Business

None.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Peter Brown
SECONDED by Caitlin Anderson

THAT this meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Next Meeting:

DATE: Thursday, May 5, 2022
TIME: 5:30 pm
PLACE: TBA

The Committee adjourned at 7:55 pm.

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Vancouver Public Library Update

March 10, 2022 Meeting

Thank you for the opportunity to share information about what's happening at Vancouver Public Library this month.

With the ongoing updating of health orders, VPL will gradually reintroduce in-person programming where it makes sense to with expanded attendance. Currently in-person children's programs are starting to rollout, with StoryTimes and other family programs. Check the Events listings or contact the information line (604-331-3603) for in-person programs in the coming months.

Public meeting rooms are available for use for free in the Central branch. The rooms on Levels 4, 5 and 6 are bookable on the day of use; first come, first served.

<https://www.vpl.ca/location/central-library>

There will also be an expansion of room rentals over the coming months in Central and branch locations, with a focus on private meetings to start. The restart plan agreed to by the VPL Board in February 2021 was delayed due to the changing health orders, and can now begin in 2022. Please read through the restart Phases and adjust 2021 and 2022 to 2022 and 2023:

<https://www.vpl.ca/sites/vpl/public/COVIDRecoveryProgramRentalPhasingReport.pdf>

A fun program we've been running quietly since 2021 is Caring Cards, which allows the general public to bring in or create an anonymous, glitter-free card to be included in deliveries to our Accessible Services patrons, who may be isolated. Branch locations have additional information. The feedback from recipients has been heartwarming and impactful thus far.

Upcoming [programs](#) may be of interest:

The listings will indicate if the event is online or in-person (please note: all adult programs are currently online only; a limited number of children's programs are in-person).

- [Introducing Eden Fine Day: 2022 Indigenous Storyteller in Residence](#) – Tuesday, March 15: 6:00-7:00pm – Join an evening of storytelling and song as Eden Fine Day shares her short story *Up North* about a pivotal year in her childhood living in Fort St. James. Online by Zoom.
- [The Future of Democracy in an Era of Social Fragmentation – Tuesday, March 15: 1:00-2:00pm – Toronto journalist Tara Henley will be in conversation with Samir Gandesha, Director of the Institute for the Humanities at SFU, to talk about the worsening inequality in our society, putting democracy in peril. Online by Zoom.](#)
- [Being Prepared: How to Navigate Local Legal Resources](#) – Tuesday, March 15: 5:00-6:00pm – Learn essential legal resources that you can access for free to educate yourself on legal matters. Online by Zoom.
- [Writing the City: Crafting Poems about Place](#) – Saturday, March 19: 2:00-3:30pm – This online workshop led by Vancouver's Poet Laureate, Fiona Tinwei Lam, will discuss poetic tools to help participants write poems about significant places in their lives. Online by Zoom.
- [Library Champions Information Session](#) – Tuesday, March 22: 6:30-7:30pm – Are you a Permanent Resident who loves libraries? Consider becoming a Library Champion volunteer, to connect with other immigrants and share what you know about what their local library offers. Online by Zoom.
- [Let's Get Thready: Hand Embroidery Basics](#) – Thursday, March 25: 6:00-7:00pm – This introductory class will help first-timers learn the basics of hand embroidery. Online by Zoom.
- [Does Cabinet Secrecy Unduly Undermine Open Government & the Public's Right to Know?](#) – Wednesday, March 30: 1:00-2:00pm – Join Associate Professor in Law, Yan Campagnolo, and

Appendix A – VPL and VSB Liaison Updates

former Clerk of the Privy Council, Mel Cappe, as they discuss Cabinet secrecy in an era of the push for government transparency. Online by Zoom.

- [Plant-Forward Cooking](#) – Tuesday, April 5: 11:00am-12:00pm – Learn about plant-forward cooking strategies to create satisfying and healthy plant-centred dishes. Online by Zoom.
- [Celebrate the Cherry Blossom Festival with Your Own Haiku - 櫻花時節吟俳句](#) – Thursday, April 7: 5:30-7:00pm – Celebrate the Cherry Blossom Festival with a fun and interactive poetry appreciation event hosted by poet Anna Yin. Conducted in English and Mandarin. Online by Zoom.

Ongoing Series

- [ESL Conversation Practice Online for Vietnamese Speakers – Tuesday, March 22: 10:30-11:30am – Make new friends and practice your English conversation skills with other English language learners. This is a supportive and casual meet-up using Zoom. Online by Zoom.](#)
Additional dates:
 - [April 5](#)
 - [April 19](#)
 - [May 3](#)
 - [May 17](#)
- [ESL Conversation Practice](#) – Wednesdays 11:00am-12:00pm – This weekly online conversation allows participants to practice their language skills in a supportive and casual way. Online by Zoom.
- [Library Stitch-Up](#) – Tuesday, March 15: 6:30-7:30pm – Connect monthly to other fibre craft enthusiasts and talk about what you're working on! There will also be a discussion about VPL's craft resources. Online by Zoom.
- Cook and Tell series – A monthly online Zoom discussion with other food lovers. There is an upcoming session:
 - [Marvelous Muffins](#) – Wednesday, March 23: 11:00am-12:00pm – Share your favourite recipes and learn about baking resources at VPL. Online by Zoom.
- [Story Stream: Storytime for Adults](#) – Tune in to hear live storytelling, every second week on Fridays from 10:00-11:00am. Online by Zoom. Upcoming sessions:
 - March 18
- Many past programs are also available on the VPL YouTube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/vancouverlibrary/videos>

Thank you,
Karen Liebel
Coordinator, Accessible Services, Vancouver Public Library

Vancouver School Board Update

March 10, 2022 Meeting

Education Plan

In January the VSB board of trustees approved a new Education Plan that had been incorporated into [Policy 1 – Foundational Statements \[vsb.bc.ca\]](#).

The Education Plan is a roadmap for staff to set the direction of the District for the next five years. The focus of the Education Plan is to improve outcomes for students.

Values Statement

The Vancouver School Board believes an effective public education system will prepare students to be active, productive, and socially responsible citizens.

Students who complete their education with the Vancouver School Board should possess a strong educational foundation; be disposed to treat others with respect and work cooperatively with them; act upon the values and principles that make us human; care for themselves, for others, and for the planet; and exercise a critical intelligence adaptable to new situations.

The VSB will foster school communities where students can learn, see themselves, feel supported and connected so that they develop a love of learning and become lifelong learners.

Goals

The Vancouver School Board will improve student achievement, physical and mental well-being, and belonging.

The Vancouver School Board will increase equity.

The Vancouver School Board will continue its Reconciliation journey with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

Janet Fraser (she/her)

Chair, Vancouver School Board