

MINUTES

Date: Thursday January 25, 2024

Location: Committee Room #304 & Microsoft Teams

Time: 9:00 a.m.

9:05 a.m. The meeting convened with M. Sylvester, Chair presiding.

Attendance:

Members

Michelle Sylvester, Chair

Catherine Topping, Vice Chair

Councillor Rose Gibson

John Allen (Departed 10:19 a.m.)

Sheila Rodaway

Sarah Savoie

Amanda Stark (arrived 9:50 a.m.)

Ed Vandermaarel (arrived 9:09 a.m.)

Absent

Joe Docherty Jr.

City Officials

Jon Hindley, Deputy City Clerk

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

NIL

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Motion by Councillor Gibson - J. Allen:

THAT: The minutes of the meeting held on September 21, 2023, be confirmed.

Carried.

WELCOME

The members welcomed Sarah Savoie to the Committee.

REPORTS of COMMITTEES

1. Budget

The members reviewed the 2023 expenditures and discussed other items future budget monies could be spent on such as helping with the City's accessible projects and creation of a bursary program.

The members discussed the fact that a bursary had been discussed and not supported in the past, but that it could be time to reconsider.

The members discussed utilizing any leftover monies for the purchase of accessible picnic tables, which cost approximately \$500 each.

2. Special Events

S. Rodaway provided an overview of recent events that had been approved by the Special Events Committee.

3. Site Plan Control

The Vice Chair provided an overview of recently approved Site Plan Control applications including a craft brewery at 44 St. Catharine Street, a 5-storey apartment building at 220 Highview Drive and a townhouse development at Wellington Street and Manor Road.

The members discussed other developments in the City that have yet to submit site plan applications or may not be required to submit applications.

E. Vandemaarel advised that site plan control is not always triggered by internal renovations and that new legislation was introduced last year which exempts residential projects under ten units from requiring site plan control.

The members discussed the Ontario Building Code and how it addresses the number of accessible units required in multi-residential developments.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Provincial Funding and Grant Opportunities

The Chair provided an overview of some of the age-friendly and accessibility grants that are generally available, although the application period is currently closed.

The members discussed the fact that the Parks and Recreation Department had been successful in obtaining grant funding for accessible playground features and that there may be some funding opportunities for wheelchair and scooter charging stations.

The members discussed monitoring opportunities for future Council recommendations.

NEW BUSINESS

1. 2024 AccessAbility Open House

The Deputy City Clerk advised that Memorial Arena would be unavailable on June 1, but that the Doug Tarry Room in the Joe Thornton Arena had been tentatively booked. He further advised that this date corresponds with National AccessAbility Week and that food trucks would not be permitted, as there is a concession contract in the arena.

The members discussed the need to request for additional transit resources again and that moving the event to a Saturday would open it up to more families.

The members discussed needing to review the technical components of the Doug Tarry Room and utilizing a projector and Closed Captioning depending on the components of the event. S. Savoie advised that there was feedback last year to consider having an interpreter for the entire event.

The members discussed partnering with the County of Elgin - Central Elgin Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee again.

S. Savoie advised that the County may have some technology that could be borrowed, that staff support for the Joint Committee is still being confirmed and that the County and Central Elgin may be willing to commit some funding again.

The members discussed preliminary ideas for new vendors and having multiple organizations present for shorter time periods, such as on the hour.

The members discussed the potential for an ad-hoc sub-committee to undertake vendor requests.

The Deputy City Clerk advised that he would update the planning tools for the 2024 event for inclusion on the February meeting agenda.

Motion by C. Topping - J. Allen:

THAT: The St. Thomas Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee hold the 2024 AccessAbility Open House on Saturday, June 1, 2024 in the Doug Tarry Room at the Joe Thornton Arena.

Carried.

2. Committee Member Terms

The Deputy City Clerk advised that consideration was being given to make a recommendation to Council to have the committee's member term be for the term of Council, instead of the current two-year terms.

The members supported moving to term of Council.

3. Senior's Centre - Request for more Accessible Parking

Councillor Gibson provided an overview of a request from the St. Thomas Senior's Centre for additional accessible parking spaces out front.

The members discussed the potential additional spaces, as well as the installation of tactile stripping.

The members discussed the fact that the Senior's Centre should officially make the request to City Council and that a letter of support could also be provided from the Committee in conjunction.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for February 22, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councillor Gibson - S. Rodaway

THAT: The committee adjourned at 10:29 a.m.

Carried.