



The Corporation of The Town of Cobourg

Accessibility Advisory Committee

MINUTES

March 1, 2021, 1:00 p.m.

Electronic Participation

Members Present: Jerry Ford
Susan Caron
Elizabeth Sheffield
Aaron Burchat
Kathryn Richards
Troy Mills

Staff Present: Jamie Kramer

Staff Absent: Laurie Wills, Director of Public Works
Brent Larmer, Municipal Clerk/Manager of Legislative Services
Krystal Christopher

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sue Caron called the Meeting to Order at 1:00 P.M.

2. TRADITIONAL LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

3. APPROVAL/ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Moved by Kathryn Richards

To add to the agenda the discussion by Jamie Kramer, Accessibility Coordinator, about the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative Grant application.

Carried

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

There were no Declarations of Interest Declared by Committee Members.

5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Approval of minutes will be deferred until the next regular Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting on March 17, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

6. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

7. COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

8. REPORTS

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1 Members at large discussing the draft of the WHEELS application form.

- E. Sheffield: Requested to know if the application should be reviewed now.
 - J. Kramer: Provided explanation that the application could potentially be updated based upon the information that is brought to the Town by Century and if the service is updated.
- J. Ford: The application has become too much and having the need for them to initial. Just need a simple line that they read the policies and procedures.
 - R. Champagne: Laurie and I have discussed it and will be taking out the policy jargon and taking out the policy and adding in a line. There will be a preamble about the major points of the WHEELS policy.
 - E. Sheffield: All of that preamble is a moot point and is under draft, so none of that will be affected depending on what is stated from Century.
- S. Caron: What can we accomplish today then?
- E. Sheffield: Maybe I misunderstood - my understanding is if you use a motorized scooter or wheelchair for accessibility, you cannot access the conventional Town bus - is that correct?
 - R. Champagne: That is incorrect, we can load certain wheelchairs onto the bus.

- E. Sheffield: What about Jerry's wheelchair? Will he be able to get on in the motoized wheelchair to be able to get on the bus.
- R. Champagne: That has not been brought to my attention but I can look into it and talk to Century.
- J. Ford: I cannot get onto the bus now because of the size of the wheelchair. It's not about the turn, but you have to face forward on the bus and with the electric wheelchair or scooter, it is impossible unless it is small.
- E. Sheffield: My understanding of a motorized wheelchair cannot access the conventional bus. So the rest is moot because they cannot access the conventional bus. There are some situations when you don't need to provide documentation because this is the only option to navigate for transportation.
- R. Champagne: I would be cautious about not allowing the user to fill out the rest of the application in case the Town purchases new buses. But it is nice to get the information about the rider and where the wheelchair is oversized and we would like to hear that.
- K. Richards: If they could go to a bus stop and go on the conventional, they would not be applying for WHEELS, so that question should not be on the application.
- R. Champagne: Some users in manual wheelchairs can use it in the summer but not in the winter months due to safety concerns. We do have users who only use it in the winter months.
- T. Mills: I can see what Jerry is saying - we have six wheels on the wheelchair so it does change, but I can go in three different directions: walker, manual chair, or motoized chair. That's why Renee is correct about the weather or any of the other otions, including that there are bus stops in certain locations that make it easier for me to use the conventional transit. There has to be flexibility rather than a straight occurrence of one or the other.
- J. Ford: The other comments I would like to point out is in the section for medical practitioners, the options to approve is this is a little broad. It includes care workers and not licensed care workers. I would want it to be emphasized that it is from a doctor. Another thing to consider is a renewal process. The Town wants to go to a three year renewal which makes sense because things change for a number of us and it,

unfortunatley, tends to get worse. But I don't think that the application should be redone. Something simple should go to the doctor.

- R. Champagne: Laurie, Jamie, and I are looking to do something shorter and simpler for people to renew.
- J. Kramer: Our current policy also has it that there can be a case-by-case basis of renewal to not have to do the full form.
- J. Ford: Doesn't this already happen for the change of phone number and address since we have to confirm them.
- R. Champagne: It doesn't get updated through Century to us, we need to be notified by the persons.
- E. Sheffield: The Medical Professional piece will have the person sitting in front of them. I think it is redundant but a cursory sign off is necessary. So when the person has agreed they have filled it out to the best of their knowledge.
- E. Sheffield: Why is there a detailed question about the conventional system?
 - R. Champagne: It's to help those who may not realize that our system has these accessible options.
 - J. Ford: It is redundant if they have read the policy and procedures.
 - E. Sheffield: I think we have already crossed it, if they are this far into the application, then they need WHEELS. This should be moved to the front. I think we are worried people are trying to scam the system and use WHEELS.
 - J. Kramer: Provided an explanation that these types of questions aren't used to weed out the people who may be "scamming" but that there may be cases where the Town will have to make a decision about who is more or less eligible without having to recreate or update the application form.
- J. Ford: My wife went to book a while back and they said the membership has run out and needs to be renewed. However, the question is why are we doing it by telephone when they go to book and not receiving something in the mail.
 - R. Champagne: We found with the mail outs that people have moved or are deceased, so we are cleaning up our WHEELS list.

With RouteMatch, we decided that if you are a WHEELS member and you call and we tell you that the membership is expiring or expired, we don't take away the service. It allows Century to contact me to send out an application to the person who needs it rather than just sending it out.

- S. Caron: I have a question for Renee, in the accessibility part, as Elizabeth has shined a light on them, a lot of people do not have computers so how would they know where to get an application?
 - R. Champagne: They would call and book or if they were told they need to apply, they would be given my phone number and I would send it out to them by mail.
 - S. Caron: What if they don't have a doctor?
 - R. Champagne: There are specialist appointments or registered physio therapist or someone at the hospital. We're accommodating here, especially if there is an emergency use.
 - S. Caron: When I was having my chemo after my stroke and I would get the WHEELS, I called and there was no time slot available even with calling a week in advance.
 - R. Champagne: I didn't get them the appointment, I just got them the service. Medical takes priority, so dialysis and chemo should take priority. Normally people are bumped because medical are our top priority. We bump for the medical appointments.
- T. Mills: If someone needs to get to an appointment, WHEELS and passengers should be more flexible. Booking an hour around each of the pick up and drop offs is important.
- E. Sheffield: How many WHEELS buses are there?
 - R. Champagne: The Town owns one and Century has a back-up. There is only one driver at a time and one bus operating at a time.
 - E. Sheffield: Does the Town keep that data so we know if we ever need to increase service?
 - R. Champagne: Yes, Century keeps this information and works to accommodate everyone that needs it.
 - E. Sheffield: We don't have a back-up because there are no taxis as an alternative.

- A. Burchat: With the new On Demand service, will some of these issues be alleviated since the buses will be converted to accessible?
 - R. Champagne: That's correct and if the pilot goes well, we will be looking to purchase new accessible buses and servicing even further in the Town.
 - E. Sheffield: Does that make this application process not necessary?
 - R. Champagne: Even if we blend the services, WHEELS is curb to curb whereas if you are riding conventional, you are pointed to the nearest bus stop. The service tells the bus driver to go to the door for the WHEELS member.
 - E. Sheffield: To get rid of the barrier and provide as much independence as possible, that is the world we hope to live in.
 - J. Ford: Keep in mind the new service is a year to two years out before it is functioning. I think it is a great move forward by the Town. Ultimately having everything integrated and ensuring that people get where they need to go on time is an ideal thing. It is something to look forward to but we have this gap to bridge until then.

Aaron Burchat joined the meeting at 1:12 pm.

9.2 Jamie Kramer, Accessibility Coordinator, about the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative Grant application.

- J. Kramer outlined the Town of Cobourg's submission to the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative Grant that would allow for the creation of an accessible dock in the Town of Cobourg.
- The application must be submitted by March 9th and there are two rounds of funding opportunities in the upcoming year.

Moved by Jerry Ford

THAT the Accessibility Advisory Committee is in favour of the grant application for the Canadian Healthy Communities Initiative Funding.

Carried

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

11. ADJOURNMENT

Municipal Clerk B. Larmer

Mayor J. Henderson