



# **City of Brockville Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee Minutes**

**1:00 PM - Tuesday, May 28, 2024**  
City Hall, Council Chambers

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The Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting was called to order on Tuesday, May 28, 2024, at 1:00 PM, in the City Hall, Council Chambers, with the following present:

**Members Present:** Greg Bamber, Doug Hone, Janet Jones, and Louise Severson  
**Regrets:** Mary Ann Greenwood  
**Staff:** Kelly Brintnell, Tourism Advisor, Sheena Earl, City Clerk, Matthew Locke, Supervisor of Transportation & Fleet Services, Lynn Murray, Deputy City Clerk, and Phil Wood, Director of Operations

## **1. Chair's Remarks**

Chair Jones is very impressed with the volume of things that are happening this week. She has heard that The Paddlers and Ryan Billing are very happy to get their accessibility awards.

## **2. Disclosure of Interest**

Nil.

## **3. Adoption of the Minutes**

Moved by: Member Bamber  
Seconded by: Member Hone

THAT the minutes of the Brockville Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting dated April 23, 2024 be adopted as circulated.

**CARRIED**

## **4. Delegations/Presentations**

Nil.

## **5. Correspondence & Communications**

Nil.

## **6. Staff Reports**

### **1. Accessible Tourism Survey – K. Brintnell**

K. Brintnell reviewed the survey her team has created and explained it will be shared on the City's Social Pinpoint. She explained that it is done in two sections; for people planning to visit and for people who have visited. She asked the committee members if they could provide their feedback by the end of this week so the survey can be launched on June 6, 2024.

Member Bamber asked how will people be attracted to the survey? K. Brintnell explained that it will be shared on the website. Member Bamber suggested that maybe they could use the universal wheelchair symbol to draw people to the survey.

Member Bamber asked K. Brintnell, how can we make the boat accessible?

S. Earl explained the tour boat that is in the harbour is privately owned and operated. Member Bamber thought maybe we should have a discussion with him. K. Brintnell will reach out to the operator of the tour boat.

### **2. Inclusive Community Grant – S. Earl**

S. Earl reviewed the grant and noted that Member Bamber had brought it to her attention. The city has applied for the maximum \$60,000 for updating a large number of bus stops. She was thankful for the help M. Locke provided.

Member Hone asked when we will know if the application was successful. S. Earl responded they will likely before August 1, 2024.

### **3. Play structure upgrades – C. Davis**

P. Wood offered an overview of the parks that will be receiving new play structures; John Kno, Kensington, Sophia St, Matthew Fraser, Duke St. and George St. Staff that have been trained to identify accessible features reviewed the parks and found a number that were not compliant or accessible. He reviewed what the standard requires for replacing play spaces and noted they have ordered several that will be getting installed soon.

Councillor Severson felt that paths also need to be installed to provide barrier-free access to these play structures.

Member Bamber asked if the structure at Kyle Crt. could be moved closer to the road therefor offering a savings on the pathway costs. P. Wood says he can have a look at it.

Moved by: Councillor Severson

Seconded by: Member Hone

THAT BMAAC recommend that the 2024 play structure upgrades be reviewed to include accessible paths of travel and present budgetary implications to Council for approval.

**CARRIED**

4. Transit Stop Improvements - Matt L.

M. Locke explained that they will wait on the starting the five known upgrades until after August 1st, to see if we get the funding. They may need to go out to an outside contractor due to the scope of the work.

M. Locke discussed the bus stops in detail; Ormond St. at the hospital, Waltham St. at Bayshore Home Care, Park St. Giant Tiger, Strowger Blvd. at ODSP Office and Court House.

There was a wholesome discussion regarding the five bus stops. BMAAC will review and provide more feedback to M. Locke.

**7. New Business**

1. Role of Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Committee reviewed the attachment from the Provincial Government regarding the OADA.

2. Accessible Playgrounds (Member Bamber)

Dealt with previously on this agenda.

3. Multi-use Recreational Facility

P. Wood circulated a diagram of the proposed Multi-use Recreational Facility. He explained that this is the 50% design. He asked the committee to review this drawing and bring their thoughts back to the next BMAAC meeting.

P. Wood highlighted some of the accessible design features in this plan.

## **8. Member Reports and Project Updates**

### **1. Accessible Taxi letter - feedback**

Owner of Executive Taxi offered the following:

- all of the drivers own their own vehicles
- insurance is higher
- vehicle is more expensive
- gas consumption is higher
- extra time to load and unload
- do they start the meter upon arrival to pick up and turn off after unload or charge an extra fee for this time
- many drivers worry about lawsuits

Member Bamber thinks we should be sending this to the province now.

M. Locke suggested the use of para transit for evening use. It is not seeing much use in the evening currently. They could notify staff at the Brockville Art Centre (BAC) when they need a bus after 9 pm from the BAC.

Member Bamber suggested creating a stop at the train station. M. Locke replied they can have a look at that area. They are looking at re-jigging the routes and can consider adding one there.

### **2. AccessAbility Week - Recognition Event May 28th Council Meeting**

Member Bamber noted he had seen it in the paper and heard it on the news on Bounce radio.

### **3. Charlotte Place**

Chair Jones spoke with people from Charlotte Place, and they are generally very happy with the new drivers. There were a few booking issues, but the dispatch seems to have ironed these issues out. Chair Jones also explained to the group at Charlotte Place that the drivers are there to help and they shouldn't be afraid to ask for assistance. Scheduling can sometime be an issue, if they call too early, they are unable to book a ride, when they call back closer to their event, that spot is taken.

P. Wood asked if this a repetitive incident. As the operator we have the flexibility to make changes if needed. P. Wood noted they have a few no shows who tend to be the same people. By not showing up it uses a time slot for another person who may need a booking. It was

noted that this has been a long-standing issue and there needs to a protocol developed to handle no shows.

4. G. Bamber - Get me through the Door

Member Bamber shared an article that will be featured by the Spinal Cord Injury Ontario as part of their annual AccessAbility Week education campaign. (attached)

[2024 Get Me Through the Door - G. Bamber](#)

**9. Adjournment**

Moved by: Councillor Severson

Seconded by: Member Bamber

THAT the BMAAC meeting be adjourned until its next regular meeting scheduled for June 25, 2024.

**CARRIED**

*The meeting adjourned at 2:28 pm.*

## Get me through the door

People with disabilities often find themselves facing closed doors. Some of them are physical doors that keep them from participating in what is on the other side. Other times they are metaphorical ones that keep them from being part of the community. In either case the only way to the other side is through.

Greg Bamber knows the feeling of being on the wrong side of the door. He was only 50 when a fall off a roof resulted in a spinal cord injury. With a wife and two teenage daughters he faced a new life that impacted them all. “I think my accident help my youngest find her calling in life. She’s an Registered Nurse now” says Greg.

Being a former industrial mechanic, he was used to figuring out what was wrong and how to fix it. While he couldn’t fix the damage done to his body, he soon learned that exercise and physiotherapy could help. The problem was that often the community resources that were supposed to be for the whole community were not accessible. Public pools and weight rooms in local community centres did not meet the needs of the disability community. So with the same fix it attitude that he used to approach machinery he went to work on fixing the issue.

Joining the Accessibility Committee in the City of Oshawa he worked on ensuring that accessibility and universal design was incorporated in many of the new facilities that were being built. Seeing the pool lifts and range of motion equipment at his local community centre was a proud moment. He says, “at the time Oshawa was the fastest growing community in the province so accessibility came easy sometimes.”

Then when his wife retired, they decided to move to his hometown of Brockville. Near to their cottage and their family which now includes five grandchildren it was the right choice for them. However, Greg soon discovered that accessible infrastructure was lacking in the smaller and older community. No accessible taxis and few accessible parking spaces meant getting around town was not easy. But Greg was not going to stay home and let the challenges keep him behind his door. Visibility is key to making changes. “I think the biggest thing a person can do is get out in the community and make yourself known,” he says. “I go to the YMCA, I do my grocery shopping. I talk to people and they see me living my life.”

Working with the town council to build awareness of the need for accessible transportation, like paratransit and accessible taxis is beneficial for the whole community. Brockville is a pretty tourist town on the St. Lawrence but without accessible transportation a person’s visit could end at the train station. The town is making strides to make things better, and it stands as a good example to other municipalities.

Greg takes a pragmatic approach to accessibility. He recognizes that not every business can invest the thousands of dollars it would take to be totally accessible. Retrofitting older buildings is difficult and costly and many businesses can’t afford it. But there are things they can do to make it easier. Greg is starting a campaign he calls “Get me through the door”. He wants to encourage business owners to make whatever changes they can to be more accessible even if it doesn’t meet the full accessibility requirements. “Maybe they can’t afford the \$10,000 for an automated door. They can

put in a doorbell so I can let you know I need help getting in.” A simple ramp can go a long way to helping people do business with you.

Within his own social network Greg has people who have taken measures to welcome him to their homes. He has two friends who made it possible for him to visit. One has installed a porch lift and another has made a ramp so that Greg can come into their homes. They took action to ensure he could “get through the door” and he knows those doors are always open for him.