

ATTENDING

Councillor Johanna Kwakernaak, Chair

Elaine Furniss, Co-Chair

Councillor Chris Goddard

Adam Lutz, Deputy Mayor

Crystal McCormack

Kaite Verrette (via Teams)

Kenisha Gordon

Recording Secretary Roger Flynn, Office Administrative Coordinator

ABSENT WITH REGRETS

Mike Trinacty, Mayor

Reta Shay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

a. IT WAS REGULARLY MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE AGENDA OF THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF Nov. 24th, 2025, BE APPROVED AS AMENDED. **ADDITION OF ITEM (D) UNDER ON-GOING BUSINESS (ACCESSIBILITY REPORT CARD).**

MOTION CARRIED

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a. IT WAS REGULARLY MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE MINUTES OF THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF **SEPTEMBER 22ND, 2025** BE **APPROVED AS CIRCULATED.**

4. On-going Business

A) Yellow lines at sidewalk curb cutouts completed.

-Following the committee's previous request, Public Works repainted the yellow lines that mark the change in grade on sidewalks. The lines are now wider and significantly more visible, improving accessibility and safety.

B) Request to create accessible opening at KMCC from crossing to main entrance.

-The goal is to create a barrier-free access aisle extending directly from the crosswalk. Staff will consult with Inclusion Nova Scotia and refer to the Nova Scotia Building Code (barrier-free sections) to ensure correct slope, width, and design. To also consult with experts in that area prior to preparing a refined proposal before bringing the recommendation forward to the KMCC Board.

-It was also suggested that the committee reintroduce hard-surface, fixed seating to provide necessary rest areas. It was suggested that the committee consider coordinated advocacy with other user groups (Lions, Curling Club, etc.), and to continue raising the issue every 3–6 months until resolved.

C) The upheavals of sidewalks slabs along Commercial Street have been repaired.

- Recent repairs to lifted sidewalk slabs were completed and appear effective. Public Works used smaller slabs to reduce future frost heaving.

D) Accessibility Plan "Report Card".

- Staff presented a draft version of the annual "report card" summarizing progress on the Accessibility Plan. Many action items remain in progress, as the plan was approved only six months ago. "Not started" items reflect timeline realities rather than inactivity. The committee discussed creating a one-page 'Accessibility Lens' guide for all municipal committees to use when reviewing infrastructure or policy proposals. Some items (e.g., inclusive programming partnerships) will remain permanently ongoing. Staff will email

the draft for individual review prior to January's Committee of the Whole meeting. ***See Attached.***

5. NEW BUSINESS:

Deputy Mayor **Adam Lutz** was welcomed as the new Council representative on the committee.

A) Playground Renewal:

- Residents have expressed interest in replacing or upgrading the Rainforest Park playground, which shows signs of age. Research has begun on accessible playground models and associated costs. The original playground was community-funded 20–25 years ago. It was also noted that the school is also exploring future playground replacements. Coordination will be needed to prevent duplication.

B) Observation Platform:

- As part of recent bridge construction, a viewing platform. The current hard-surface route has a steep grade, creating challenges for those with mobility issues. A local landscaper has offered to create a plan for the surrounding area which will include native, low-maintenance plants, and a gentle-grade accessible path. Potential grant funding has been identified for accessibility enhancements through a grant submitted by the mayor.

C) Bus Shelters:

- The committee revisited the request for a bus shelter at Main & Commercial. Tidal Transit may have funding for future shelters. Priority placement should consider: Ridership numbers (data to be requested) weather exposure, locations where shelters exist on only one side of the street (e.g., Foodland). Infrastructure upgrades, for example repaving Foster Street, may impact future placements.

6. Reports

A) September Accessibility Committee Report

-Committee members were advised that they could review the report independently, as it served as a recap of the September meeting.

B) Diversity Kings Committee Report

- A brief update was provided based on November's meeting which was attended by Heather Morse on Councillor Kwakernaak behalf. Topics of discussion included; a presentation from the Black Educators Association. A presentation on the No. 2 Construction Battalion. And the participation in a cultural event hosted by Annapolis Valley First Nation, including the Strawberry Mawio'mi.

7.The next regular meeting will be held on January 26, 2026, at 6:00pm.

8. ADJOURNMENT

IT WAS REGULARLY MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE REGULAR MEETING OF ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE BE ADJOURNED 7:28 PM

MOTION CARRIED

Approved by Committee on Month Day, 2025

As recorded by Roger Flynn, Office Administrative Coordinator

Accessibility Advisory Committee Report Card
 Timeline: up to December 31, 2025

Progress Guide:
 Completed/ In Progress/Not Started
Action Items

Create guidelines for when and how the Town should consult the Accessibility Advisory Committee during decision making processes	In Progress	Staff plan to have defined guidelines for the January 2026 AAC meeting, following discussions with committee members
Draft and adopt a plain language communication policy.	Not Started	This remains a goal through the Town of Berwick’s Communication Plan and will be a priority for 2026.
Budget for and provide ASL interpreters at community events that include speeches.	In Progress	The budgeting process has begun for 2026-27 and this will be included in the budget
Partner with community agencies to help develop and run inclusive programming.	In Progress	Summer Day Camp training included training from Inclusion Nova Scotia, the Town provides free gym space to Outside the Box. <i>This will continue to be always in-progress as an action item</i>
Review the inclusiveness of current town programs and address those barriers.	In Progress	Working with Inclusion Nova Scotia, staff continue to self-identify strengths and weaknesses of programs, balanced with community needs

<p>Develop a zero-tolerance policy for hate and discrimination in municipal spaces and events.</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<p>Staff have gathered information from other municipalities to find best practices for this item</p>
<p>Provide foundational training on equity, diversity, and inclusion for municipal staff</p>	<p>Not Started</p>	<p>Staff will investigate training opportunities in the new year, and include this in the 2026-27 budget process</p>
<p>Support local community organizations by sharing training opportunities, and assisting with external grant applications for funding, particularly for equity initiatives.</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<p>Staff continue to assist organizations with grant applications, including those for equity and accessibility initiatives</p>
<p>Engage with residents who indicated interest in providing future input through focus groups or interviews by using a form to collect their contact information.</p>	<p>Not Started</p>	<p>This is a priority for January 2026 for staff</p>
<p>Collect feedback from these residents to guide the planning of a mid-year engagement session</p>	<p>Not Started</p>	<p>This is a priority for January 2026 for staff</p>