



ATTENDING

Deputy Mayor, Johanna Kwakernaak, Chair
Elaine Furniss, Citizen Representative, Co-Chair
Councillor, Chris Goddard
Councillor, Adam Lutz
Katie Verrette, Community Development Manager (via Teams)
Taylor Boylan, Staff Lead
Roger Flynn, Recording Secretary / Office Administrative Coordinator
Reta Shay, Citizen Representative
Kenisha Gordon, Citizen Representative, arrived at 6:19 PM.

ABSENT WITH REGRETS

Crystal McCormack, Citizen Representative
Mayor Mike Trinacty

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

A MOTION WAS MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE AGENDA OF MAY 25, 2026, ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING BE APPROVED AS CIRCULATED.

MOTION CARRIED

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 23, 2026, ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING WERE ACCEPTED AS CIRCULATED.

4. ONGOING BUSINESS

a) *Community Accessibility Grant Update*

The committee received an update on the Town's application to the provincial Community Accessibility Grant for upgrades to the Council Chambers space, including sound system improvements, furniture upgrades, and space modifications.



It was noted that the application was submitted prior to the provincial deadline and has been received by the granting body. Provincial funding for this program was reduced, but not eliminated, due to recent changes to provincial grant programs.

The grant is structured as a 70/30 cost-share, with the province covering 70% of approved costs and the Town responsible for the remaining 30%. It was further noted that the Town may receive approval for less than the full amount requested, as the application amount was intentionally maximized to account for rising costs and the possibility of partial approval.

Council has confirmed support for at least the microphone and sound system component of the project regardless of grant approval, though securing the grant remains the preferred outcome. Responses from the grant program are typically received around this time of year, and the committee is currently awaiting a decision.

b) ***Ridership Information, Tidal Transit Bus Shelter***

The committee continued its discussion regarding recommendations to Council for bus shelter placement and received an update following outreach to Tidal Transit (formerly Kings Transit). It was noted that the bus route has changed since the committee's last discussion and now extends to Eden Valley, which may affect ridership patterns at Main Street stops.

Tidal Transit, was contacted regarding stop-level ridership data; however, Tidal Transit currently only collects total daily ridership figures and does not yet have stop-by-stop boarding and alighting data. Trackers to capture this information are being installed and will be available in the future.

In the absence of stop-level data, the committee discussed observed usage patterns and noted that designated stops with visible infrastructure, such as benches, shelters, and signage, naturally attract more users. No indication was provided by Tidal Transit regarding its own plans for shelter installation at this time.

Council has budgeted for one bus shelter this fiscal year, with any project requiring confirmation of anticipated 50/50 external cost-share funding before proceeding. The committee also discussed the current location in front of the Bell Building (formerly Bell Aliant), and that the existing bench and surrounding area are actively used as both a rest stop and bus stop.

It was further noted that new Tidal Transit shelters recently installed in Cambridge on Highway 1, are consistent in size and design and must meet current accessibility standards, including a minimum 5-foot, 7-inches clear interior turning space. A potential crosswalk to improve access to the shelter from the opposite side of the street was also discussed; however, the committee agreed this would require traffic engineering review before any recommendation could be made.

A MOTION WAS MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL THAT THE NEXT BUS SHELTER BE PLACED AT THE BELL ALIANT BUILDING ON COMMERCIAL STREET.

MOTION CARRIED

5. NEW BUSINESS

a) Flag Raising — Access Awareness Week

The committee received information regarding Access Awareness Week in Nova Scotia, taking place from May 31 to June 6, 2026, noting its significance as a long-standing provincial observance and catalyst for National Accessibility Week.

The 2026 theme, *Disability Justice: Stronger Together, First Voice Leading Change*, was highlighted, along with planned public events and educational resources. The committee recognized the importance of the week, particularly given Nova Scotia's high disability rate, and identified a flag raising as an appropriate form of recognition.

It was noted that the Access Awareness Week flag has been purchased and will be raised as soon as weather permits, remaining in place from May 31 to June 6, with consideration given to adding this observance to the Town's annual calendar moving forward.

A social media post will accompany the flag raising, and the recognition will also be included in the Accessibility Advisory Committee report and referenced at the May 26, 2026, Committee of the Whole meeting.



A MOTION WAS MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE WILL RECOGNIZE THE WEEK OF MAY 31 TO JUNE 6 AS ACCESSIBILITY WEEK.

MOTION CARRIED

b) *Build Environment Standards (Gateway Gardens)*

The committee reviewed the built environment accessibility standards as they apply to the proposed Gateway Gardens project, an accessible public garden and observation deck area near the bridge and river adjacent to the fire hall parking lot.

The project includes a public garden space, an accessible pathway from the fire hall parking area to the existing observation deck, and slope planting. It is a collaborative initiative between the Town and community volunteers on jointly owned Town and Fire Commission property.

Support from the Fire Commission was noted, with the request that the area not be formally designated for weddings due to emergency response concerns.

The committee reviewed applicable Nova Scotia accessibility standards for barrier-free paths of travel, including requirements for slope, surface stability, level changes, and accessible parking, while identifying questions around terrain feasibility, engineering needs, construction capacity, and project sequencing.

It was noted that some planting work could potentially proceed ahead of pathway construction, while any formal development or promotion of the site as a public destination would require an accessible route.

Staff were directed to consult with Public Works to assess whether the slope can accommodate an accessible path meeting current standards and whether in-house construction is feasible or if external engineering support is needed. Relevant standards will also be shared with the Gateway Gardens working group, and the matter will return to committee once feasibility feedback is received.

6. REPORTS

a) *Party in the Park – May 16, 2026*

A verbal report was provided on the Party in the Park event held on May 16, 2026, which was very well attended and positively received as a community inclusion event celebrating the diversity of Berwick.



The event was designed to be welcoming and accessible, with strong participation, positive feedback, and suggestions to consider making it a semi-annual event.

b) *Kings Diversity Committee*

A brief report was provided on the most recent Kings Diversity Committee meeting.

Discussion at that meeting centered on gender-based violence as a diversity and community issue, including the influence of social media, particularly the “manosphere,” on attitudes among young men.

The discussion was informational, and no resolutions were made. The committee noted the complexity and growing relevance of this topic at the community level.

c) *Terms of Reference Review*

The Chair noted that the committee’s terms of reference require updating to reflect its expanded mandate, legislative requirements, and operational gaps, including diversity, anti-racism, membership composition, and meeting frequency.

By general consensus, a small working group will be formed over the summer to review and propose updates, with recommendations to be brought forward at the September 2026 meeting.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting will be held on September 28th, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

8. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE AGENDA OF MAY 25, 2026, ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING BE ADJOURNED AT 7:31 P.M.

MOTION CARRIED

Approved by Committee on Month Day, 2025

As recorded by Roger Flynn, Office Administrative Coordinator