

TOWN OF AMHERST
Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Advisory Committee
Minutes

Date: September 17, 2025
Time: 4:30 pm
Location: Council Chambers, Town Hall

Members Present Councillor Kathy Wells, Chair
Deputy Mayor, Hal Davidson, Vice Chair
Marina Godfrey, Citizen Representative
Jim Prendergast, Citizen Representative
Tammy Gero, Citizen Representative
Vanessa Jones, Citizen Representative
Victoria Vance, Citizen Representative

Members Regrets LJ Barquilla, Citizen Representative

Members Absent Clifford Pinchbeck, Citizen Representative

Staff Present Sharon Bristol, Director, Community Living
Mallory Klooster, Community Well-Being Manager
Lori O'Connell, Marketing & Communications Officer
Sean Payne, Marketing & Communications Officer
Natalie LeBlanc, Municipal Clerk
Cindy Brown, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM.

1.1 Territorial Acknowledgement

The Chair gave the Territorial Acknowledgement.

1.2 Approval of Agenda

Moved By Vanessa Jones

Seconded By Jim Prendergast

That the agenda be approved as circulated.

Motion Carried

1.3 Acceptance of Minutes - May 28, 2025

The Chair called for any errors or omissions in the minutes. There being none, the minutes of the May 28, 2025, meeting of the Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee were accepted as included in the agenda package.

2. Discussion Items

2.1 Week Events for September 13 - 22, 2025 - Klooster

Mallory discussed the events that were planned for September 13 - 22, 2025, including the Transit Study In-Person Public Session being held on the evening of September 17th at the Community Credit Union Business Innovation Centre and Welcoming Week (September 13 - 22, 2025) with the Welcoming Party being held September 20th from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Amherst Curling Club. Further information is included in the agenda package.

2.2 Fall Events 2025 - Klooster

Mallory discussed the events that are being scheduled for the month of October 2025, including events for Truth and Reconciliation Day, Esther Fest, along with several other events as outlined on the calendar included in the agenda package.

2.3 Emergency Preparedness - Klooster

Mallory discussed Emergency Preparedness for those with disabilities. Mallory mentioned the Accessibility Directorate has several emergency preparedness resources, that are available to the Committee and the community, further information included in the agenda package. Town of Amherst staff will share these resources with emergency services.

The Chair suggested the Town's communication team advertise these resources on the Town's website and social media platforms.

Vanessa asked if there is a list of people with disabilities so if there is an emergency the proper staff can do a wellness check on them. Sharon Bristol suggested creating a data base, she will work with the Fire Chief and Operations Director to see what is needed to get this started.

Jim indicated that his mother used an oxygen tank, he had to inform Nova Scotia Power and the Fire Department that there was oxygen in the house, and he had to post a sign in the front and back door stating this. Nova Scotia Power would inform him when there was a planned power outage so he could ensure the generator was set up. Jim will provide Sharon with any information he may still have from the oxygen service provider regarding this.

Sharon suggested that perhaps staff could create an information video / bulletin on what to do in case of an emergency for those who are vulnerable.

2.4 Fall Training Manual - Klooster

Mallory discussed the Fall Training Manual Review, adding the training will include accessibility, equity and anti-racism.

Deputy Mayor Davidson asked that members of council be included with the target audience for this training and requested that any "Evaluation & Feedback" report also be forwarded to this Committee and not just Council.

Jim asked if this training will be available online. Mallory answered yes, adding that it is easily accessible.

2.5 Government of Canada Technical Guides - Klooster

Marina arrived at 4:48 PM.

Mallory discussed the Government of Canada Technical Guides which have been produced to support organizations on their accessibility journey. They include Procurement of Accessible Goods, Procurement of Accessible Services, Design and Delivery of Accessible Programs and Services, including Customer Services. Copies were included as part of the agenda package.

The Chair asked if staff know if there is easy access to grants that might be available to those in the community needing to make accessibility improvements. Mallory answered that there is a wide variety of grants available and will look into how this information can be better communicated and well known to our community.

2.6 Accessible Playground Update - Klooster

Mallory reviewed her memo included in the agenda package, noting that the Internal Playground Committee has finalized the budget for the Accessible Playground Project and will be applying for several grants to assist with funding support.

Tammy asked if the Internal Playground Committee has looked at other communities with similar playgrounds. Mallory answered yes, the committee has information from several other communities with accessible playgrounds.

Tammy asked if there is a location for the Accessible Playground. Mallory answered it will be located at the Beacon Street playground.

3. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting for the Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity Committee will be held on Wednesday, November 12, 2025, at 4:30 PM.

Going back to the Fall events calendar, Tammy thought there could be better advertising for these events as sometimes they can be hard to find on social media.

Deputy Mayor Davidson suggested that perhaps there could be hyper links included on the digital calendar for each event for people to click on for more information.

Marina advised that she can have the events read off on air at the radio station that she works at (CFTA 107.9).

Victoria mentioned that NS Works / CANSA on the corner of Church and Victoria Street has what she calls a "Speakers Corner Window", where the calendar of events could be posted.

4. Adjournment

There being no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting.

Natalie LeBlanc
Municipal Clerk

Councillor Kathy Wells
Chair