



MINUTES
Accessibility Advisory Committee
April 18, 2012
Council Chambers, Town Hall
Meeting No.4

Committee Members:	Councillor Brown Sepelene Deonarine Dawn Gabriel Camille Gooden Kathreen Smith, Vice Chair Vincent Plouffe, Chair Michel St-Arneault
Staff:	Sarah Moore, Committee Coordinator Jack Mamo, Chief Building Officer
Guests:	Michael Hopkins, Co-Founder, StopGap Luke Anderson, Co-Founder, StopGap
Regrets:	Yvonne Andrews, Marion Dunning, Jibran Vahidy

1. Call to Order

Chair Plouffe called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

With consent of all Members present, Item 4.1 StopGap Ramp Project was brought forward.

4. Presentation/Discussion Items

4.1 StopGap Ramp Project

Mr. Luke Anderson and Mr. Michael Hopkins, Co-founders of StopGap, thanked the Committee for the opportunity to share information on their ramp project. The goal of the StopGap program was identified as a means to raise awareness about barriers in the built environment. Mr. Anderson shared details of his spinal cord injury and the inspiration to start the project. He noted that the project launched less than a year ago and currently involves partnership with local small businesses to create simple, portable, temporary ramps that can provide increased access to single step store fronts. Mr. Anderson indicated that the ramps are not only beneficial to persons with disabilities, but couriers, parents with strollers, and anyone who accesses the business. .

To date, StopGap ramps were identified in the Junction in Toronto as well as in Stouffville. Plans to expand the project in Roncesvalles, Mississauga, Oakville, Thunder Bay, and Kenora were noted. Mr. Anderson and Mr. Hopkins indicated that Ajax is the first municipality to express interest in the project.

Mr. Hopkins outlined the requirements for taking on the project. He identified the need for a project lead to ensure that ramps are built soundly, coated with non-slip grip coating and maintain a minimum 1:6 ratio. He emphasized that the ramps built are temporary and painted bright colours not only to promote awareness but provided tone differentiation to prevent tripping. Mr. Hopkins discussed partnership with Home Depot as well as potential partnership with Tridel Construction. He indicated that the vision for StopGap is to be able to offer support, experience and contacts, and to act as a resource hub to assist others with expanding the initiative across communities. It was noted that the ramp is not the ideal built environment solution, but it is a start to promote awareness and encourage thought for accessibility.

Ms. Gooden entered the meeting (6:20 p.m.)

Members inquired about whether the project had received any negative feedback. Mr. Anderson noted that concern has been expressed relative to liability and tripping hazards. Mr. Hopkins reinforced that the ramps should be treated as temporary ramps and should only be used on demand when required. The Committee proposed having a StopGap sign or decal placed in the window or on the door of an establishment to identify that a StopGap ramp is available for use. Mr. Anderson also discussed accessibility mapping and noted interest in the Rick Hansen Global Accessibility Map. Councillor Brown expressed interest in detail relative to removal of a StopGap ramp from an establishment in the Toronto Beaches community. The permanent ramp was recently removed as a result of encroachment on City property.

Mr. Hopkins reviewed details of a StopGap ramp noting it is light weight, cost-effective, brightly coloured, painted with non-slip traction, built strongly with 5/8 inch plywood with a gusset and grip pads. The ramp can carry a load of at least 400 lbs. Members posed questions relative to the height limit of a step that the ramp could be used for. Mr. Hopkins noted that the maximum height of the step should be 8 inches at a slope no steeper than 1:6. Ms. Gooden encouraged StopGap to contact the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to share information on the project. She emphasized the importance of advocacy to promote awareness.

Ms. Moore inquired what barriers could be anticipated relative to implementing the project and asked for advice on the steps the Committee can take to look towards feasibility of implementing the project. Mr. Hopkins noted that the ramp may be considered a tripping hazard, so it is important to express to business owners that it is a temporary device that is to be in place only when required. Mr. Jack Mamo, Chief Building Officer, identified conflict with the Ontario Building Code if the device be referred to as a ramp. Mr. Hopkins concurred with the tripping hazard concern. He encouraged Members to look into applying for a community project with Home Depot, or perhaps engaging the local hardware store to obtain partnership and material donation. Partnership with local high schools for community hours, local scout groups as well as Habitat for Humanity was also suggested. Mr. Anderson and Mr. Hopkins agreed to forward additional materials explaining the project and measurement documents to Ms. Moore via email.

On behalf of the Committee, Chair Plouffe thanked the presenters for taking the time to meet with Members and provide detail on the StopGap initiative.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

None

3. Approval of Minutes

Moved by: P. Brown
Seconded by: C. Gooden

That the Minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting held on March 21, 2012 be adopted.

CARRIED

4. Presentation/Discussion Items

4.2 National Access Awareness Week Discussion

Ms. Moore confirmed that a performance agreement has been authorized by ITV Global Entertainment to screen the film "A Smile as Big as the Moon" on June 2, 2012 at the Ajax Public Library Main Branch. She circulated a draft event poster and noted that event information also had been forwarded to the Ajax Public Library for inclusion in their May/June newsletter. Additional communications methods will be employed closer to the event date.

Members discussed information to include in the Committee delegation to Council on May 28, 2012 Ms Gabriel noted that she had compiled information on invisible and visible disabilities. Ms. Moore proposed that whatever information that was not included in the delegation presentation could be used during a brief introduction presentation before the film screening. A display at Main branch or other Town facilities to promote accessibility awareness was also discussed.

4.3 Regional AAC News Letter

Ms. Moore reminded members that content is requested for the Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee Newsletter. She indicated April 30, 2012 as the submission deadline. Members briefly discussed suggestions for content topics. The Committee agreed that information on the June 2 film screening should be included as well as a general update on Committee activity noting the Committee's interest in the StopGap program and development of an information package for local businesses with accessibility resources. Ms. Moore agreed to draft materials and forward to the Committee via email for review and contribution.

Ms. Smith emphasized the need for local businesses and schools to be aware of their accessibility, especially concerning access to automated door openers. Members discussed opportunities to educate the community about such concerns. Interest was expressed in revising the accessible customer service brochure for businesses and developing an information package for local businesses with accessibility resources. Ms. Moore agreed to

forward a copy of the brochure via email for Member's review and comment in preparation for discussion at the May 16, 2012 Meeting.

With consent of all Members present Item 7. Council Update was brought forward.

7. Update from Council

Councillor Brown reminded Members of the online Town Hall meetings with Council to discuss objectives of the Community Action Plan. She noted that the first meeting was successful and approximately 150 residents participated. For those who were unable to participate, a transcript of both meetings will be made available online.

Councillor Brown existed the Meeting to attend the "Let's Talk Ajax" Online Town Hall Meeting. (6:55 p.m.)

4.4 Durham Region Employment Network Awards

Ms. Moore reviewed the Durham Region Employment Network Awards and noted the opportunity to nominate individuals or businesses for outstanding commitment to accessibility. She noted the May 11, 2012 nomination deadlines. Members expressed interest in pursuing nomination of Mr. Allan Angus, former Committee Member, for his advocacy, activism and exemplary spirit towards accessibility awareness. Members requested that Ms. Moore draft nomination content and forward to the Committee for review and comment. Ms. Moore agreed to do so by April 25 and requested comments to be forwarded by May 2, 2012.

4.5 Revised Accessibility Plan Timelines

Ms. Moore reviewed the revised time lines for development of the multi-year accessibility plan. She noted that she continues to meet with various departments to identify content requirements. Ms. Moore indicated that a draft plan will be presented to the Committee for review at its September Meeting and will include the opportunity for two weeks of public comment. A final plan is anticipated for presentation at the October Meeting, and once approved by the Committee would then be presented to Council for approval in November 2012.

5. Standing Items

5.1 Work Plan

Ms. Moore indicated that the Committee is moving forward with the initiatives and objectives identified on the work Plan. She noted updates relative to time line changes and forthcoming presentations. Members expressed interest in adding two additional work plan items relative to investigating the implementation of the Stop Gap program in Ajax, as well as development of an accessibility resources package for local businesses, which will include the process of reviewing and revising the accessible business brochure.

6. Correspondence

None

8. New Business

8.1 Registered Disability Savings Plan

Ms. Smith provided information relative to a federal government financial program for people with disabilities (Registered Disability Savings Plan). She indicated that the government's contribution to the plan is income based. She indicated that she knows of contact person who may be available to attend a forthcoming meeting to present further details on the program, if the Committee is interested in receiving additional information. Members expressed interest in further details.

8.2 Discussion/Presentation Item Updates

Members inquired about the status of the taxi by-law review. Ms. Moore agreed to look into the matter and report back to the Committee. Chair Plouffe indicated that the Environmental Assessment for the Bus rapid Transit Corridor on Highway #2 is currently open for public comment and review. Ms. Moore agreed to forward a copy of the document to the Committee for consideration.

9. Adjournment

Moved by: M. St-Arneault

Seconded by: C. Gooden

That the April 18, 2012 meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee be adjourned (7:55 p.m.).

CARRIED