



ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Date: Wednesday, June 26, 2024, 6:30 p.m.
Location: VIA ZOOM
Members: Councillor M. Albano, Chair, Councillor D. Keene, J. Bray, L. McKenzie, J. Pearce, W. Farrow-Reed, S. Calvert

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY/CONFLICT OF INTEREST
3. RECEIPT OF PREVIOUS MINUTES
 - a. Minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting held on February 28, 2024.
4. SCHEDULED ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION
 - a. Update - John Elliott Theatre
 - b. Update - All Gender Accessible Washrooms at the Gellert
 - c. Update - Lead Pedestrian Signal Timing - Mountainview Road North and Dominion Gardens Drive
 - d. Request for Funding - Hearing Loops at the John Elliott Theatre
5. ITEMS TO BE SCHEDULED FOR NEXT MEETING
6. ADJOURNMENT

**MINUTES OF THE
ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting held on Wednesday February
28, 2024, Via Zoom

Members Present: Councillor M. Albano, Chair, Councillor D. Keene, J. Bray,
L. McKenzie, W. Farrow-Reed, S. Calvert

Regrets: J. Pearce

Staff Present: A. Matthews, Director of Facilities J. Smith, Facility Supervisor,
T. Forbes, Facility Supervisor, M. Roj, Traffic Coordinator,
R. Brown, Deputy Clerk - Administration

1. CALL TO ORDER

Councillor M. Albano, Chair called the meeting to order.

Committee and staff briefly introduced themselves.

2. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY/CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary or conflict of interest.

3. SCHEDULED ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

**3.a Minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting held on
November 22, 2023.**

Recommendation No. HHAAC-2024-0001

THAT the Minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting held on
November 22, 2023, be received.

CARRIED

4. ITEMS TO BE SCHEDULED FOR NEXT MEETING

4.a Update on Accessible Stairs for Acton Pool

T. Forbes advised the committee that the accessible stairs have been well received and are being utilized daily for all sorts of programming including Aquafit. The stairs can be easily removed when the area they are situated in is required for lane swims.

4.b Funding Request - Accessible Push Buttons for Accessible Washrooms at the Gellert

T. Forbes noted that at the November meeting it was brought to staff's attention that there were no push buttons on the accessible washrooms located in the public area and the pool deck of the Gellert Community Centre. The facility is now 20 years old, although built in accordance to building code at the time the two standalone accessible all gender washrooms were not equipped with automatic openers. Staff support the request by the committee and are requesting funding to rectify this situation. For provision and installation of two (2) power operated door openers, the cost will be \$8023.96 plus tax. This cost does not include electrical, staff will have the electrical funded from the operating budget.

Recommendation No. HHAAC-2024-0002

THAT the Accessibility Advisory committee approves funding for two (2) power operated door openers at the Gellert Community Centre in the amount of \$8023.96 (+HST) to be taken from the Municipal Accessibility Plan Capital Project Account.

CARRIED

4.c Update - Accessibility at the Cultural Centre

A. Matthews and J. Smith provide the Accessibility Committee with information regarding audience accommodation at the John Elliott Theatre, particularly concerning sold-out events and general seating availability. The presentation highlighted the ongoing efforts and procedures in place to ensure accessibility for patrons with special needs during events at the theatre.

The theatre offers both General Admission and Reserved Seating configurations for events, with event organizers having the autonomy to choose the seating arrangement. The Front of House Manager is on-site to oversee ushers and assist patrons with special needs and other issues that arise. Volunteer ushers are often provided by the organization running the event, and while they receive an orientation, they may not have extensive experience dealing with patron special requests. The John

Elliott Theatre has 6 positions where seats can be removed to accommodate the placement of a wheelchair. Because the theatre layout uses stairs to access the individual rows, the positions are in the front row (Row A, 2 locations) and the back row (Row N, 4 locations).

Efforts are made to accommodate patrons with diverse needs if seating is available. The theatre is not obligated to prevent seats from being sold to patrons without special needs to reserve seats for potential patrons with special needs. Since all ticket sales are conducted on a first-come, first-served basis, it is a possibility for a patron to not be able to be accommodated based on availability.

The theatre is equipped with a hearing assistive loop system to accommodate patrons using hearing assistive devices. The hearing assistive loop system allows patrons with compatible devices to receive audio signals directly to their hearing aids or cochlear implants, enhancing their listening experience during performances and events.

The Town has long been aware of the preference to install sliding doors at the main entrance of the facility. This was not included in the original plan due to cost constraints at the time. In 2024, the Town has approved a capital expenditure to retrofit the front entrance with sliding doors. The work is anticipated to take place in the third quarter of this year.

The theatre is committed to providing a welcoming and accessible environment for all patrons, including those with special needs. Measures are in place to address accessibility challenges during events, such as sold-out performances with General Admission seating, while adhering to fire code regulations. The facility has ample Accessible Washrooms that can be accessed by elevator. The elevator and link hallway provide access the accessible seats in the front row.

J. Smith advised the committee that staff recently had a situation where accommodation did not occur for a patron on the autism spectrum, this resulted in a complaint that staff have taken seriously and have been addressing. The complaint arose out of a sold-out general admission event with a waitlist. Staff have looked into the situation and noted that due to the general admission and the multiple stakeholders running the event the accommodation was not done. Staff are addressing the matter with the complainant and are looking at their practices and procedures to see if they can try to better accommodate in the future.

The committee expressed disappointment that this situation occurred and requested that staff review their policies, practices, and procedures for future accommodation requests. Staff will report back to the committee on their review and any actions they may be taking in the future.

4.d AODA Improvements for Signalized Intersections 2024

M. Roj made a presentation to the Accessibility Advisory Committee 2024 AODA Improvements for Signalized Intersections.

M. Roj noted that it has been an 18-year journey to where we are in terms of AODA Improvements for Signalized Intersections. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, (AODA) 2005 came into effect and with that the first Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) installation at Guelph Street (Hwy 7) and Mountainview Road in 2006. In f December 2012 the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, added new design standards for the Design of Public Spaces that apply to new construction and the redevelopment of elements in public spaces. New or redeveloped pedestrian crossings with curb ramps or depressed curbs must have tactile walking surface indicators with “raised tactile profiles” that have a high tonal contrast to the adjacent surface. The Town of Halton Hills as part of its commitment to AODA has committed to installing or updating three (3) Signalized Intersections per Year

M. Roj reviewed Accessible Pedestrian Signals, Tactile Walking Surface Indicators, Sidewalk Platforms, and other Pedestrian Safety Improvements with the committee, explaining the requirements and what the Town has done to meet those requirements.

M. Roj advised that the Town has 3 signalized intersection projects for 2024 they include;

- Main Street North (Hwy 7) and Moore Park
- Guelph Street (Hwy 7) and Mountainview Road - addition of tactile plates
- Main Street and Mill Street in Acton

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Briefing Note

Follow-up on Theatre Accessibility

Purpose

As per direction at the February 24, 2024, meeting, to update the Committee on:

- Existing policies and procedures in place to ensure Accessibility to the Theatre.
- To provide a response to the special circumstance encountered at the Town of Halton Hills 50th Anniversary event.

Key Points

The theatre currently has the following messages on the box office information website:

Hearing Assistance: Sound reinforcement systems for the hearing impaired are available at the Box Office in the lobby.

Special Needs: The John Elliott Theatre is wheelchair accessible. Please notify the Box Office when purchasing your ticket should you require special assistance. We will be pleased to help.

As per the AODA, the responsibility for enforcing accessibility standards falls under the purview of Town staff. In response, our staff have been trained to proactively address accessibility needs, particularly at the time of ticket purchase. When an individual requests accommodation of any sort at the time of ticket purchase, staff make every effort to meet that need. For example, if a patron advises that a wheelchair space is needed, staff take immediate action to ensure accommodation, including reserving the appropriate seating area and providing necessary assistance.

We recognize that some patrons may require accommodations on the day of the event without prior notification. In such cases, our staff are trained to handle these requests promptly and efficiently. For last minute and day of show requests:

ACTION: Measures have been implemented to ensure that staff are equipped to respond to last-minute accessibility needs, including having designated staff available to assist patrons with disabilities and providing flexibility in seating arrangements to accommodate unforeseen requests.

It has been identified that third-party groups running events at the theatre may not always be fully informed or invested in meeting accessibility needs.

ACTION: The Town is committed to improving communication with these groups to ensure they understand and prioritize accessibility while using the venue. We will work collaboratively with third-party organizers to educate them on accessibility requirements and encourage their cooperation in meeting the needs of all patrons.

ACTION: Additionally, staff will emphasize that attempts to circumvent our accessibility efforts will not be tolerated, and measures will be in place to ensure compliance with accessibility standards.

ACTION: In order to further reinforce our commitment to accessibility, staff will review the addition of an addendum to the permit information to confirm that Town accessibility policies and

Briefing Note

Follow-up on Theatre Accessibility

procedures are specifically included in all rental and permitting administrative packages. This addendum will ensure that all renters and permit holders are informed of their responsibilities regarding accessibility accommodations and compliance with AODA standards.

Special Circumstances on January 10

The case of missed accommodations during the sold-out event on January 10 was acknowledged as the result of special circumstances that are not likely to occur again. While efforts to accommodate patrons with disabilities are a priority, it was recognized that unforeseen challenges may arise during high-demand events. Steps, as reviewed in the previous section will ensure that 3rd party vendors/theatre renters not only abide by required accessibility guidelines but that they make every effort to accommodate those with needs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the discussions and considerations outlined above reflect our commitment to addressing accessibility concerns at the John Elliott Theatre. Moving forward, we will continue to explore opportunities for enhancing accessibility within the constraints of available resources and operational considerations.

Authored By: Jamie Smith

Title: Facility Supervisor

Date: April 24, 2024

Received By:

Title:

Date:

Administration Follow Up:













Briefing Note

Subject: Request for Funding for Hearing Assistive Listening Devices

Executive Summary

The theatre recently installed a hearing loop system to enhance the auditory experience for patrons with cochlear implants and hearing aids. However, a gap in service for patrons with hearing difficulties who do not use these devices has been identified. Currently, there are only two handheld assistive listening devices available, which proved insufficient during recent events with larger groups of senior patrons. To better serve the theatre audience and ensure inclusivity, the Theatre is requesting funding to purchase additional handheld devices. The cost for two kits (10 devices total) is approximately \$5,000.

Background

Accessibility and inclusivity are core values of the theatre. The hearing loop system installed last year significantly improved the experience for many patrons with hearing impairments. However, theatre patrons have identified a critical need for more handheld assistive listening devices to accommodate those patrons who do not have hearing aids or cochlear implants. During recent events, several seniors were unable to fully enjoy the performances due to a shortage of these devices.

Current Inventory and Usage

- **Existing Equipment:** 2 handheld assistive listening devices.
- **Recent Event Feedback:** Several seniors reported difficulty hearing during performances due to a lack of available devices.
- **Average Attendance:** Many events attract a significant number of senior patrons, indicating a consistent need for additional devices.

Proposed Purchase

To address this issue, theatre staff propose purchasing two additional kits of handheld assistive listening devices. Each kit includes:

- 5 handheld devices
- 1 recharging stand

Total Cost: \$2,500 per kit

Total Funding Requested: \$5,000 for two kits

Benefits

1. **Enhanced Accessibility:** Ensures all patrons, regardless of whether they have hearing aids, can enjoy performances.

Briefing Note

Subject: Request for Funding for Hearing Assistive Listening Devices

2. **Inclusivity:** Supports the Town's commitment to providing an inclusive environment for all audience members.
3. **Improved Patron Experience:** Reduces frustration and enhances enjoyment for patrons with hearing difficulties.
4. **Community Support:** Demonstrates the Town's dedication to accommodating the needs of our diverse community, particularly our senior patrons.

Budget and Justification

Itemized Costs:

- **2 Kits of Handheld Devices:** \$2,500 each, totaling \$5,000

These devices are essential for providing an inclusive experience and accommodating all patrons. The investment will ensure the theatre can adequately serve groups and avoid situations where patrons are left without the necessary equipment.

Conclusion

Staff respectfully request the Town Accessibility Committee to approve funding of \$5,000 for the purchase of two kits of handheld assistive listening devices. This will significantly improve the ability to serve all patrons, particularly those with hearing difficulties who do not use hearing aids or cochlear implants.

Authored By: Jamie Smith

Title: Facility Supervisor

Date: June 7, 2024

Received By:

Title:

Date:

Administration Follow Up:

Notes indicating outcome, i.e approved to proceed, recommended report for a report for Council, R&P or DMT, etc.