

**Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities**  
**September 23 – 24, 2015**  
**Salon D, Holiday Inn, 180 Portugal Cove Road**  
**Meeting Notes**

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**Attendees**

Paul Walsh, Delia Connell, Patricia Moores, Elizabeth Chaulk, Katarina Roxon, Dennis Gill, Bruce Oldford, Donna Piercey, Don Connolly, Mackenzie Mitchell, Nancy Reid, Justin Mercer

**Regrets**

Norman Austin, Lorna Gilbert, Paula Jacobs-Corcoran, Philip Lundrigan, Freeman Wiseman

**Opening Comments and Correspondence**

Paul Walsh, Chair, welcomed members and introduced Mackenzie Mitchell who was recently appointed as interim member.

Tabled correspondence

- Letter to Minister of Justice and Public Safety from Council Chairperson regarding supported decision-making
- Acknowledgement from Minister of Justice and Public Safety
- Invitation to Phase 2 Launch of Understanding Changes Everything, the provincial Mental Health Campaign

Chair and members' updates

- 2015-16 Annual Report will be posted on House of Assembly site on Sept. 30.
- Colonial Building accessibility tour - Due to safety concerns with going into the building mid-construction, the accessibility tour with Nancy Reid and the Minister Responsible will be scheduled for a later date when it is deemed safe.
- Supported Employment – Dennis reported his initial meeting with Advanced Education and Skills about re-activating the Advisory Committee on Employment was positive and he expects their decision in the next few weeks.
- Mackenzie shared his experiences as an individual who is Deaf and his hopes and expectations for Council.
- Raised issue: students with accessible transportation arrangements being excluded from part of school day. Council supportive of having this situation addressed.

**The Learning**

Presentations

- Media and Communications: Roma Bridger, Centre for Learning and Development presented information and tips on media and communication within the Provincial Government and Council's role.
- Accessible voting: Kim White, Coalition of Persons with Disabilities; Adrienne Luther, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer and Don Connolly, Elections Canada presented information on accessibility of upcoming elections including accommodations in Braille, sign language interpreters, and support person to assist in voting.
- DPO News - Council was briefed on:

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- New position with Disability Policy Office; welcome to Catherine Shortall
- Inclusion Action Plan implementation, including:
  1. Grants: inclusion, accessible taxi and accessible vehicle grant programs
  2. Partnerships with community groups: positive image of disability within marketing and media, inclusive service delivery within government services, promotion of visual fire alarms, Inclusion Summit for 2016, and paraSport and recreation
  3. Inter-governmental initiatives: assistive technology program development, framework for disability-related supports
- Legislative amendments to the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Appointment of disability rights expert to NL Human Rights Commission
- Universal design session with leading expert: Betty Dion Enterprises
- Texting services for emergency services

### **The Work**

#### Dialogue with Chair of Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board

Cecilia Carroll, Chair of the Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board updated the Council on the Board's work including primary issues of compliance and the need to revamp legislation, concerns about inaccessibility of lifts and functionality of washrooms. Council reaffirmed support for the Board's work and to continued communications.

#### Work Plan

Council reviewed their 2015-16 work plan and brainstormed employment themes:

- Attitudinal – Individuals with disabilities and employers
- Education and Awareness – build disability confidence amongst employers
- Human Rights – right to equitable employment and the duty to accommodate

#### Assistive Technology

Council reviewed the draft advice paper on assistive technology; revisions will be made as noted and the paper re-circulated.

#### Dialogue with Deputy Minister, SWSD

Brent Meade, Deputy Minister, met with members on the behalf of the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Council shared their appreciation working with Minister Jackman, who is retiring as a Member of the House of Assembly. Updates and issues for discussion included accessibility of the provincial electoral process, inclusive education for transgendered children, Buildings Accessibility legislation compliance, supporting Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board, universal design, and universality versus accommodation.

A focused discussion on employment included:

- Engaging employers in dialogue presenting the disability business case model, accommodations, workplace accessibility, and universal design
- Brent hosting a panel discussion with champion employers to celebrate what is working well and identify solutions to the challenges

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- Increasing effectiveness of transition planning from school to post-secondary/employment

Definition of Accessibility

Council participated in an interactive activity to form a working definition of accessibility for future use by Council supporting consistent messaging and understanding. The outcome definition was “Accessibility enables freedom of choice in all facets of life”.

**Actions**

Disability Policy Office will:

1. Revise Council’s Assistive Technology advice paper and re-circulate
2. Prepare for next meeting topics: mental health, employment panel
3. Follow-up on question raised during meeting about accessibility of the Mariner’s Memorial in Grand Bank and new ferry terminal for St. Pierre.

Next Meeting

Next meeting is December 3 and 4 in St. John’s.