

**HURON COUNTY ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE MUNICIPAL WORKING GROUP  
MINUTES  
VIRTUAL MEETING TO BE HELD VIA ZOOM  
Monday, March 25, 2024 AT 11:00 AM**

**Attendees:**

ACW	Florence Witherspoon
Central Huron	Rachel Anstett
Goderich	Michaela Johnston
Huron County	Susan Cronin, Sahil Kaushal, Ljubica Blazevic
Huron East	Jessica Rudy
Morris-Turnberry	Trevor Hallam
North Huron	Carson Lamb
South Huron	Alex Wolfe, Stacey Jeffery

**Action Items:**

Each Municipality is to provide to Susan Cronin and Sahil Kaushal, one (1) building, project, program, trail, etc. that they would like to highlight from their Community in terms of accessibility. These should be provided as soon as possible so that the social media may be created for National AccessAbility Week.

**1. Call to Order at 11:04 AM**

**2. Land Acknowledgment**

Read by Sahil Kaushal

**3. Welcome to Huron County Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility (IDEA) Specialist & Accessibility Coordinator, Sahil Kaushal**

Sahil Kaushal has joined the County of Huron as the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility (IDEA) Specialist & Accessibility Coordinator and will be joining the Huron County Accessibility Committee and the Working Group.

**4. Introductions**

Members of the Committee introduced themselves to Sahil, each responsible for accessibility within their respective roles.

**5. Adoption of Agenda**

Moved by: Florence Witherspoon

Seconded by: Susan Cronin

THAT the Agenda be adopted as circulated

CARRIED

## **6. Adoption of Minutes of November 3, 2023**

Moved by: Trevor Hallam

Seconded by: Stacey Jeffery

THAT the Minutes of November 3, 2023 be approved as presented

CARRIED

It was also decided to circulate the Minutes as Draft with a watermark going forward for inclusion in Council agendas for information.

## **7. Review of Working Group's Terms of Reference**

Susan Cronin proposed updating the Working Group's Terms of Reference for inclusivity and current relevance, with Sahil Kaushal agreeing to make the necessary revisions.

## **8. Discussion on Multi-Year Plan and Annual Plan**

Sahil Kaushal will be reviewing the Plan and revising same to make it more relevant. Once reviewed, it will be provided to the Working Group for comments and finally sent to the Huron County Accessibility Committee for final review and approval.

## **9. National AccessAbility Week runs from May 25 to June 1, 2024**

Following discussion, the team decided to highlight each municipality during National AccessAbility Week. Each municipality is tasked with providing information about one (1) area, place, or program that their municipality has and they would like to highlight in terms of accessibility. The County will then work on a media piece to be rolled out during National AccessAbility Week.

## **10. Roundtable on Municipal Accessibility Activities in 2024**

ACW noted they just finished a washroom project in the fall/winter and didn't have any concrete plans for 2024.

Goderich noted they will be providing two accessible wheelchairs at the waterfront this year and are working on downtown revitalization plans with accessibility in mind.

Morris-Turnberry has no projects planned this year and are continuing their work to make sure their online material is accessible.

North Huron has just finished renovations to their Council Chambers and are also remediating online documents for accessibility. They would like to have the Accessibility Committee do a walk-through of municipal buildings once more for recommendations and suggestions. They are also looking at installing an accessible podium, as is the County of Huron.

South Huron is undergoing a website migration and reviewing documents for accessibility. They are also hosting an event on April 23, 2024 featuring Julie Sawchuk who will be speaking and taking individuals on tours of the new recreation centre to highlight its accessible attributes. South Huron is also

preparing a resource package for businesses and has projects underway in Dashwood and Port Blake.

Huron East has applied for a couple of grants. They are focusing on making downtown Brussels more accessible.

Central Huron will be installing a library lift this year and are continuing updates to their website. In 2023, an accessible washroom was installed in Millenium Park and they have received SLED funding for more accessible projects in Clinton's downtown area.

Rachel Anstett suggested we have a representative from the Ministry to provide the Working Group with some information about legislative expectations for 2025. Susan Cronin and Florence Witherspoon supported the idea, highlighting the importance of being proactive about expected upcoming audits. It was noted that each municipality except for Huron East has undergone an audit within the last year.

Rachel Anstett will arrange a meeting in June for the Working Group and the Ministry.

#### **11. HCAAC Coordinator Updates and How They Can Assist Us**

Sahil Kaushal advised he started his role by providing education to corporate employees and sending out resources about IDEA in general. He has been meeting different departments and focusing on digital accessibility during his first two months which have been busy.

It was noted that any municipally owned, operated, or leased property undergoing renovation or new construction (including playgrounds) must be reviewed by the Accessibility Committee as part Council's mandate. The Committee's role is to provide recommendations, not enforce them, and they would love to be part of the process from the planning stage where suggestions and recommendations are easiest to implement. Susan Cronin clarified that the Committee's mandate does not cover non-municipal properties, but they can review those for a fee.

Stacey Jeffery noted that she likes to hear about best practices, stories and tips. These often provide the best information and lessons learned.

#### **12. Roundtable for all / other discussion on accessibility**

Sahil Kaushal suggested expanding the scope of the Committee beyond the physical side of accessibility and expanding their scope to include cognitive, emotional, and cultural aspects of accessibility. Michaela Johnston agreed and shared their recent project on creating an accessible playground for infants focusing on sensory items as well as a sensory room.

#### **13. Moving Forward in 2024/5 – Implementation Plan (see Section 4.0 of the Terms of Reference)**

- a. Development of tools and resources
- b. Education for municipal staff
- c. Special events

Sahil Kaushal emphasized the importance of education for municipal staff and suggested utilizing free resources. Susan Cronin suggested taking this to the Education Subcommittee in order to discuss an implementation plan. It was noted there are a lot of free resources including AccessForward and that education does not have to mean holding a special event.

#### **14. Selection of Working Group Chair and Secretary for 2024/2025**

Following alphabetical order of municipalities attending,

Moved by: Florence Witherspoon

Second: Alex Wolfe

THAT the election of Michaela Johnston (Goderich) as Chair of the Working Group for 2024-25 and the election of a representative from Howick as Secretary be approved.

CARRIED

#### **15. Next Meeting**

Michaela Johnston will send out a doodle poll for a September meeting.

Rachel Anstett will coordinate a meeting with the Ministry for June 2024.

#### **16. Adjournment**

Moved by: Florence Witherspoon

Seconded by: Trevor Hallam

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 12:04 PM.

CARRIED