



Safety Codes Council

MINUTES OF THE FIRST BARRIER FREE SUB-COUNCIL MEETING OF 2019

DATE: February 6, 2019

TIME: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Safety Codes Council Office, Edmonton

PRESENT: **Sub-Council Members**
Barry McCallum, Chair
Tracy Douglas-Blowers
Michael Francon
Matthew Kay
Bev Knudtson
Robert Lipka
Bob Macklon
David Morton
Karen Muir
Chris Schamber

Safety Codes Council
Allison Karch, Susan Rossmann, Kathryn Derkach, Andrea Snow

Alberta Municipal Affairs
Linnie Tse (Administrator)

Guests
Kim Johnson, CART

REGRETS: Tang Lee, Keith McMullen, Lee Ramsdell (Vice Chair), Tanya Marsh, Greg Beck (BSC Liaison)

RECORDER: Sandi Orr

2019 MEETINGS: April 17, October 2, November 20

1. Meeting Opening

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. and a round table introduction was held.

1.1. Agenda Adoption

Karen Muir / Bev Knudson moved that the agenda be adopted, as circulated, with a flexible order of business; CARRIED

A report from the Continuing Education Working Group will be added to the next agenda.

[Council Administration]

1.2. Adoption of Meeting Minutes

Michael Francon / David Morton moved that the minutes of the November 14, 2018 be adopted, as circulated; CARRIED

2. Matters for Decision

2.1. Chair Election

At the end of the meeting, the floor was opened nominations. Karen Muir was nominated. After three calls and no further nominations, ***Karen Muir was appointed as the Chair of the Barrier Free Sub-Council, by acclamation, for a 2-year term.***

The Council will look into the term of the Vice Chair.

[Council Administration]

3. Review Matters Arising/Action List

There were no current items on the Action List.

4. Matters for Discussion

4.1. Feedback on Premier's Council Strategic Plan

The Premier's Council 2018-2020 Strategic Plan can be found the November 2018 meeting folder. There was no specific feedback provided on the plan. It was noted that correspondence has been sent to the Premier's Council with an open invitation should they have any issue to bring forward.

There was discussion around the United Nation's Decade of the Disabled Persons and the International Day of Disabled on December 3 More information is available at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/united-nations-decade-of-disabled-persons-1983-1992.html>.

It was suggested that historic information about the sub-council should be gathered and retained. Further discussion was deferred to the next meeting to discuss whether to consider a

working group to gather this information. It was noted that a historical document does exist and this will be posted in the portal. [Council Administration]

This led to a broader discussion regarding New Zealand's Accessible Journey, residential housing and whether consideration should be given to bringing forward a policy recommendation on residential barrier free housing.

4.2. Feedback from Nominating Organization on Potential Priorities

High priority feedback from Spinal Cord Injury Alberta on behalf of the mobility disabilities segment included:

- Education on barrier free code enforcement
- Maintenance and Law Enforcement of barrier free requirements for the life-cycle of the building
- Reference to the Barrier Free design guide in the Alberta Building Code
- Urban exterior environment
- Housing accessibility – visitable / universal housing

High priority feedback from the Alberta Building Officials Association on behalf of the code enforcement industry segment included:

- Education on barrier free code enforcement
- Awareness – industry/marketplace
- Maintenance and Law Enforcement of barrier free requirements for the life-cycle of the building
- Accessibility in existing buildings
- Barrier Free Design Guide to be free or affordable and available online only

Feedback from other nominating organizations included:

- Education regarding invisible disabilities - such as persons with communication and cognition disabilities
- Paths of travel for those visible disabilities is an issue, including finding buttons for street crossing, elevators and signage
- Funding for non-profit organizations to improve barrier free housing and accessibility is a challenge
- Restaurant layouts and lack of accessibility for aging customers
- Snow removal and clearing of walkways
- Accessibility in schools and colleges
- Ensuring the designers have a good understanding of barrier free requirements
- Identifying ambiguity and how to clarify them
- How to assist other organizations who are doing similar work

During discussions it was noted that by having the Barrier Free Design Guide available for free and online, builders and contractors would be less resistant to best practices for barrier free

design. The Administrator reminded everyone that the Alberta Building Code lists the minimum requirements and requirements above and beyond that are unenforceable.

The Manager of Stakeholder Relations reported on the significant costs of the guide. A discussion is being held internally regarding the potential of having it available online in the future, with restrictions.

The Chair suggested that a survey be developed for circulation to all architects, including all disabilities to gather feedback. It was clarified that the intent was to gather high-level feedback to determine priorities for the sub-council to consider pursuing. It was suggested that if a survey were to be developed, it be generic enough to gather feedback from all nominating organizations.

4.3. Prioritization Activity

The sub-council went through the priority list, addressing each item and identifying the root issues. To help determine the top priorities, each member was given five votes to give to their highest priorities.

The following priorities were identified:

- Lack of awareness that the Barrier Free Design Guide exists, low adoption/use/awareness of Barrier Free Design Guide (7)
- Barrier free minimum requirements are being missed at the design, plans review, permitting and/or construction stages (6)
- Minimum barrier free standards need to be re-evaluated against today's realities (5)
- Buildings are not being built with barrier free best practices (4)
- Certain disabilities (communication, cognitive) are not covered by the minimum standards (3)
- Lack of awareness of magnitude of barrier free needs among public / owners (3)
- Not maintaining barrier free requirements over the life cycle of the building (3)
- Insufficient wheelchair and companion seating in fixed seating situations (2)
- Lack of provincial barrier free requirements for outdoor public realm (2)
- Existing buildings are not meeting current barrier free standards (2)
- Lack of awareness of bariatric needs and design requirements (2)
- Many organizations may be duplicating work (2)
- Persons with certain disabilities are not getting notification of emergency signals (1)
- Lack of awareness of public / owners that barrier free minimum requirements exist (1)
- Lack of awareness of barrier free design beyond accessibility (1)
- Minimum requirements for accommodations may not be adequate (1)
- Lack of availability of convenient accessible transportation (1)
- Current barrier free parking stalls/lots do not meet all accessibility needs (1)
- The current turning radius for wheelchairs does not meet all accessibility needs (1)
- There are ambiguities (e.g. language) that could be clarified (1)
- Lack of barrier free lens at other sub-councils (0)
- Lack of awareness of different types of disabilities (0)

- Lack of awareness of terms (0)
- Lack of products to meet barrier free requirements (0)
- Confusion about governing standards (0)
- Not enough stock of barrier free housing (0)
- Buildings are not being built with minimum barrier free requirements (0)
- Elevation changes create an accessibility challenge (0)

4.3.1. Next Steps

It was suggested that many priorities can be grouped together under higher level issues (e.g. education, meeting current reality, etc.). The Council will categorize, and group together issues for ratification by the sub-council. [Council Administration]

It was recognized that more work will be needed on the issues, specifically to define how significant the issues are and develop rationale to show that it is an issue. Members were also reminded that there may be some issues that are out of the scope of the sub-council.

4.3.2. Educating Other Sub-Councils re. Barrier Free

It was suggested that this is something tangible that the sub-council can easily put into place. Communication will be provided to the appropriate sub-councils when issues are brought forward. This item will remain on the agenda to provide the opportunity for sub-council members to bring forward issues that may be pertinent to other sub-councils.

4.4. BSC Liaison Report

Karen Muir reported on the following topics being discussed by the Building Sub-Council:

- Building and Fire Occupancy Load Working Group
- A presentation from Alberta Health on ‘Rental Housing Safety – A New Approach to Collaboration’ where Public Health Officers and Safety Codes Officers can consult and work together
- Discussion was held regarding continued concerns about care facilities relative to two recent fatalities in PDD housing; the BSC has asked AMA for an update on the PDD and SLALA topics.
- An overview was provided regarding the Fernie fatalities and the video that is available in the Building Sub-Council portal

Members were reminded that they have read-access to all sub-council folders on the portal.

4.5. AMA/Administrator Report

It was reported that the final edits are being done to the codes. It was noted that the numbering of accessibility-related code clauses in the 2019 Building code may change, but since there are no substantive changes to the accessibility-related code requirements a new Barrier Free Design

Guide will not be released. A brief discussion was held regarding future codes being available at no charge.

4.6. Council Updates

The following report was provided:

- Sub-council members were asked to submit expense claims within 30 days
- An overview was provided regarding upcoming training; all information is listed in the portal calendar
- Sub-council members were reminded of the Dr. Sauer Award nominations
- The Council now has video conferencing capabilities; please contact Council Administration staff if you would like to participate in a future meeting by video conference.
- Links to Council documents (e.g. Business Plan, etc.) are in the November 2018 meeting folder

4.6.1. Code of Conduct and Ethics Revisions and Related Policies

A link was included in the portal to the revised Code of Conduct & Ethics and related policies. All sub-council members were encouraged to review all revisions.

5. Meeting Finalization

5.1. Meeting and Agenda Feedback

There was nothing new to bring forward.

5.2. Next Meeting

The next meeting was reconfirmed for Wednesday, April 17, 2019 at the Council office at 9:00 a.m.

5.3. Meeting Adjournment

Tracy Douglas-Blowers moved that the meeting be adjourned; CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

-- NEW ACTION ITEMS --

1.1. Agenda Adoption

A report from the Continuing Education Working Group will be added to the next agenda.

[Council Administration]

2.1. Chair Election

The Council will look into the term of the Vice Chair.

[Council Administration]

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[Council Administration]

4.3.1. Next Steps

It was suggested that there are likely many that fall under the same high-level issue (e.g. education, meeting current reality, etc.). The Council will categorize, and group together issues for ratification by the sub-council.

[Council Administration]

-- MOTIONS --

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